

What Makes a Story Suspenseful?

One way authors keep their plots exciting is by building suspense.

They do this by giving you clues that make you curious about what's going to happen next.

In this activity, you will look closely at the sentences in *The 39 Clues: The Maze of Bones* that keep you on the edge of your seat and make the play so thrilling to read.

Directions: Read *The 39 Clues: The Maze of Bones* again, paying close attention to each sentence or group of sentences listed below. Write down what you think makes them so suspenseful.

How do they move the plot along? Do the last one on your own.

1. "Dan, maybe you're right. Maybe we'll inherit something." (p. 26)

Why are these sentences suspenseful? _____

How does it move the plot along? _____

2. "My relatives, you stand on the brink of our greatest challenge." (p. 26)

Why is this sentence suspenseful? _____

What does it make you wonder? _____

3. "All of you are free to decline the challenge. If you do, you will receive what is under your chair." (p. 27)

Why are these sentences suspenseful? _____

What do they make you wonder? _____

4. "If you claim the clue instead, you will receive no money. Just a clue that might lead you to the most important treasure in the world and make you powerful beyond belief. You have five minutes to decide." (p. 27)

Why are these sentences suspenseful? _____

How do they move the plot along? _____

5. Suspenseful sentence from the play:

Why is this sentence suspenseful? _____

How does it move the plot along? _____

Critical Thinking

On a separate piece of paper, write a well-organized paragraph describing a suspenseful event that happened in your life. Remember to use exciting and thought-provoking sentences like the ones you found in *The 39 Clues: The Maze of Bones*. Then trade paragraphs with a partner.

Hopefully, neither of you will be able to put the other paper down!