



MYSTERY & SUSPENSE

Book Discussion



What Makes a Story a "Mystery"?


- **The Puzzle:** A mystery needs to be solved, such as "who took the class pet?" or "how did the painting vanish?".
- **Clues:** The characters look for clues, like footprints or secret notes, to help solve the case.
- **Suspects:** The story often lists people who might have done it, keeping the readers guessing.
- **The Reveal:** At the end, the hero explains how they used the clues to solve the mystery.








What Makes a Story a "Suspense"?

Suspense is the feeling of being on the edge of your seat, wondering what will happen next

- **Tension:** The story makes you feel excited or nervous (in a fun way!) about what might happen.
 - **Delayed Answers:** The author waits to give the answers, making you want to turn the page.
 - **Atmosphere:** These books might have eerie settings like old houses or spooky woods, or even a regular home environment.
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Talk the Talk


- **Twist / Plot Twist:** A surprise turn in the story.
 - **Cliffhanger:** A dramatic end to a chapter that makes you want to read more.
 - **Red Herring:** A false clue to trick you
 - **Enigma / Riddle:** A puzzle or mysterious person/thing.
 - **Sleuthing:** The act of investigating or searching for clues.
 - **Whodunit:** A story focused on figuring out who committed the crime.
 - **Thriller:** A fast-paced, high-stakes, exciting story.
 - **Cryptography:** The process of hiding or coding information
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Codes

Codes replace words or phrases with code words or symbols.

- **A1Z26:** A simple code where A=1. B=2. Z=26.
 - **Morse Code:** A system using dots and dashes to represent letters.
 - **Polybius Square:** A grid that converts letters into pairs of numbers
 - **Code Talker:** These are words from remote cultures, like the Native American language, Navajo. They might use 'iron fish' for 'submarine'
 - **Commercial Code:** To avoid long messages as they were charged per letter, codebooks with short hand were made e.g: LIΟΥΥ ("Why do you not answer my question?"). BMULD ("You're a skunk!")
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Ciphers

A cipher is a system for encryption and decryption, transforming plain text into a scrambled, secret format. They often use a specific key.

- **The Caesar Cipher:** One of the earliest known ciphers. It was used by Julius Caesar. It shifts the letters in the alphabet in place by three and wrapping the remaining letters to the front
- **Atbash Cipher:** It reverses the alphabet (A becomes Z, B becomes Y).
- **Pigpen Cipher:** A geometric substitution cipher that uses symbols based on a grid.







Fun Facts

- You can write secret messages using lemon juice, which can be revealed by holding it up to a candle.
- The Beale ciphers are a set of three unsolved, 200-year-old ciphertexts, supposedly revealing the location of over \$60 million in buried treasure in Virginia, USA. Only one of the three papers has been solved.
- A 128-bit key is a binary string of 128 zeros and ones with 340 billion billion billion potential combinations. It is used to protect online data, like your passwords.





Essentials for a Gripping Tale

- The Hook: An immediate, engaging opening—often a crime or unexplainable event.
 - A Relatable Sleuth: A protagonist with unique skills, strong motivations, and flaws.
 - Setting: A location that enhances the ominous, tense, or claustrophobic mood.
 - Suspects & Motive: Multiple characters with believable reasons to have committed the crime, allowing for misdirection.
 - Clues & Red Herrings: A trail of legitimate clues interspersed with misleading trails to keep the reader guessing.
 - Suspense & Pacing: Carefully controlling information to create anxiety and managing the speed of revelations to heighten tension.
 - High Stakes: Highlighting what the protagonist stands to lose, ensuring the reader is emotionally invested.
 - Fair Play Resolution: Providing a satisfying, logical ending that makes sense based on clues given early on.
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Solve It



D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z A B C
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

d e f g h i j k l

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Start with the letter that
will decode the message

Message:

D LW ZDV PH ZKR VWROH f GLDPRQGV







Microfiction / Flash Fiction

As per Britannica, the short story is usually concerned with a single effect conveyed in only one or a few significant episodes or scenes. It usually has 1,000 to 7,500 words. Flash fiction generally ranges from 500–1,000 words, while microfiction sits under 300.

Some examples:

- For sale: baby shoes, never used. – **Ernest Hemmingway**
 - The chauffeur lit a cigarette and leaned over the gas tank to see how much fuel was left. The deceased was twenty-three. – **O. Henry**
 - The last man on Earth sat alone in a room. There was a knock on the door. – **Fredric Brown**
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Micro Mysteries

Who's in my bed?


A father went to say good night to his seven year old son, very well knowing that if he didn't his son would have trouble sleeping. It was a nightly routine between them. He entered the dimly lit room where his son waited under his blanket. With the first glance the father could tell there was something unusual about his son tonight, but couldn't put his finger on it. He looked the same but had a grin that drew from ear to ear.

"You okay, buddy?" the father asked.

The son nodded, still with the grin, before saying, "Daddy, check for monsters under my bed."

The father chuckled a bit before getting on his knees to check only to satisfy his son.

There, under the bed, pale and afraid, was his son. His real son. He whispered, "Daddy, there someone on my bed".



THANK
YOU

