

Name: _____ Date: _____

Exploring Mood

Mood is the feeling you get from reading a piece of writing. Another way to describe mood is *atmosphere*. When you walk into a place, it has an atmosphere that makes you feel a certain way; when you “walk into” a story, it too has an atmosphere that creates a feeling. Writers create mood through word choice, imagery, dialogue, setting, and plot.

suspense [suh-SPENS]:

a feeling of nervousness or excitement caused by wondering what will happen

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In this activity, you will analyze how the writer creates a **suspenseful** mood in each scene.

PROLOGUE

Read the summary of dialogue from the prologue below and the explanation of how it creates suspense.

Detail: The Ravens say that Edgar Allan Poe, author of “The Tell-Tale Heart,” wrote “bloodcurdling tales” about murder, morgues, gargoyles, and graveyards.

How this creates suspense: This gives the audience a clue that the story they are about to hear will be spooky and strange—that it will likely involve a murder or some other sort of death.

SCENE 1

1. Below are two plot points that build suspense in Scene 1. We explained how one detail creates suspense. You explain how the other one does.

Detail: The Old Man tells the Villain that he does not look well.

How this creates suspense: The Old Man’s comment creates uneasiness; the audience gets the feeling that something is not right about the Villain and wonders, anxiously, what is going to happen.

Detail: The Villain explains that his “blood ran cold” when he looked at the Old Man’s eye and tells the audience that he decided to kill the Old Man.

How this creates suspense: _____

SCENE 2

2. The playwright does not go right to the Old Man's murder, but rather draws the scene out, slowly building up to the moment when the Villain pounces on the Old Man. Explain how the writer stretches out the time before the murder and how this creates suspense.

SCENE 3

3. In Scene 3, the Villain has already killed the Old Man, so there's no more suspense about that. About what new event does the playwright begin to build suspense in Scene 3? Explain.

SCENE 4

4. The details below all create suspense in the play. Choose TWO details from the list and explain how they create suspense.

- ☐ The Villain serves the police officers tea above the spot where the Old Man's body is hidden.
- ☐ As the officers drink their tea, the Villain grows pale and begins to sweat and fidget.
- ☐ The police officers chat lightly throughout the scene, talking about tea and the countryside.
- ☐ The Villain and the audience begin to hear the Old Man's heart beating ever more loudly from under the floorboards.

How the first detail I chose creates suspense: _____

How the second detail I chose creates suspense: _____

WHOLE PLAY

5. *Suspenseful* is not the only word that can be used to describe the mood of the play. Choose one other word that describes the mood. You may choose a word from the list below or come up with your own word.

angry

dreamy

nightmarish

confused

exciting

relieved

creepy

festive

sad

Another word that describes the mood of the play is _____.

6. Write two details from the play that help create the mood you identified in question 5. Explain how each detail helps create that mood.

Detail: _____

How this creates the mood: _____

Detail: _____

How this creates the mood: _____
