

The Busy Writer's Tips on Mystery and Crime

Checklist 1 – Building Tension and Suspense

Aspect of Building Tension and Suspense	Your Assessment		
	Works Well	Needs Work	Poor
Have you begun the story in the middle of action, with a strong hook to keep the reader involved?			
Have you given the reader a reason to worry about either the main character or possibility of another crime/murder?			
Have you created a credible villain?			
Is the villain a worthy adversary for the lead character?			
Have you raised the stakes throughout the story?			
Have you ensured that each scene will engage the reader? If you have any dull scenes, does the story need them? If it does, how can you fix them?			
Does the reader have a reason to keep reading at the end of each chapter?			
Does the reader have a reason to keep reading at the end of each scene?			
Does the action build towards the climax near the end of the book?			
Is there a black moment when all seems lost?			
Have you arranged the scenes in your story in the best way to build tension and suspense?			
Have you tied off as many loose ends in the story as possible before the final confrontation?			
Have you finished the story in a way that will satisfy the reader without dragging out the ending?			
<i>Other Aspects of Building Tension and Suspense:</i>			