



## Step 3: Tightening Tension

### Seven Steps Writing Tips

The tension scene comes just before the big climax at the end. In movies this is the scene of the soccer final, the exciting car chase or the heroine fighting for her life in a raging river. Great tension scenes should be strong and long.

We all know the tension scene in *Little Red Riding Hood*. Little Red Riding Hood arrives at the cottage and the wolf is in bed in Granny's clothes. Little Red Riding Hood (who obviously needs glasses!) says:

'Oh, Grandmother, what big ears you have!'

'All the better to hear you with.'

'Oh, Grandmother, what big eyes you have!'

'All the better to see you with.'

'Oh, Grandmother, what big hands you have!'

'All the better to hold you with.'

'Oh, Grandmother, what big teeth you have!'

'All the better to eat you with!'

See how the scene slowly builds up to be more and more dangerous – and thus frightening? We don't start with the teeth, we start with the ears and the wolf trying to coax Little Red Riding Hood to come nearer and nearer.

#### TOP TIP:

Emotion always takes time to build up, so in tension scenes remember to start small and 'escalate' to a powerful climax.



#### ACTION ACTIVITY:

Read picture books with your children and look for tension scenes. Picture books are short, so it's easy to find where the all-important tension builds before the ending. Here are some suggestions to get you started: *The Gruffalo*, *Wombat Stew*, *The Three Little Pigs*, *Hansel and Gretel*.

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