

## Concept List: Suspense

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### Five Ways You Might Use This Concept List

1. Pick five verbs, five nouns, and five descriptors and see what materializes.
2. Need a new scene or setting? Head straight toward the 'Things/Places' section.
3. When my stories drag, I aim for the 'Verbs' section. I mean, really, how can you turn down 'assume a false identity'?
4. The 'Abstractions/Intangibles' category keeps me focused on themes in my stories, especially if I've leaned too hard on the 'Verbs', 'Varieties/Examples' or 'People/Animals'.
5. 'Activities/Events/Processes' can give a kick in the seat of the pants to the mushy middles.

## **SUSPENSE NOVEL**

espionage/spying

### **[Varieties/Examples (espionage/spying)]**

24-hour surveillance  
aerial reconnaissance  
aerial survey  
armed reconnaissance  
bank surveillance  
black-bag job (illegal government activity)  
clandestine operation  
corporate spying  
counterespionage  
covert activity  
covert operation  
data invasion, (destruction)  
espionage  
industrial espionage  
industrial spying  
reconnaissance  
shoulder surfing (watching phone dialing)  
space surveillance  
spy mission  
stakeout  
surveillance

### **espionage/spying**

### **[Varieties/Examples (spy equipment)]**

attache' case chained to wrist  
Big Bird satellite  
binoculars  
briefcase  
bug (hidden microphone)  
burn bag  
camera  
camouflage clothing  
codebook  
concealed weapon  
cyanide  
dark glasses  
diplomatic mail pouch  
diplomatic passport  
disguise

electronic decoder  
electronic surveillance system  
false-bottomed suitcase  
false identification  
gun disguised as umbrella  
hidden camera  
hidden microphone  
infrared glasses  
invisible ink  
Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird (spyplane)  
microdot  
miniature camera  
observation balloon  
one-way mirror  
paper shredder  
reconnaissance aircraft  
reconnaissance vehicle  
satellite (Earth-orbiting device)  
signal decoder  
spyglass  
spy plane  
spy satellite  
spy ship  
submarine  
subminiature camera  
telephoto lens  
truth serum  
TV camera  
U-2 airplane  
unmarked car

### **espionage/spying**

### **[People/Animals]**

Agent 99  
agent provocateur  
ally  
ambassador  
Arnold, Benedict  
authority (expert on a subject)  
Big Brother (George Orwell character)  
Chambers, Whittaker  
Chief of Control  
commando  
Communist party official

counter-terrorist  
courier  
cryptanalyst (cryptographer)  
defector  
delegation  
diplomat  
diplomatic corps  
diplomatic courier  
double agent  
eavesdropper  
embassy staff  
emigrant  
enemy  
FBI agent  
federal agent  
fictional character  
fifth column  
Fleming, Ian  
foreigner  
foreign national  
foreign service officer  
Free French  
Fuchs, Klaus  
future competitors  
Hale, Nathan  
Hiss, Alger  
hostage  
house detective  
informant  
informer  
insider  
James Bond (007)  
jingoist  
Le Carre, John  
lookout  
Lord Haw Haw (William Joyce)  
Mata Hari (Gertrud Zelle)  
Maxwell Smart  
military advisor  
mole (spy)  
Navajo code talkers (WWII radiomen)  
peeping Tom  
Philby, Kim  
politician  
POW (prisoner of war)

Powers, Francis Gary  
 saboteur  
 secret agent  
 secret police  
 secret shopper  
 spy  
 spy network  
 stalker  
 terrorist  
 traitor  
 triple agent  
 turncoat  
 undercover agent  
 unnamed source  
 war collaborator  
 war criminal

espionage/spying [Things/Places]

aerial photograph  
 Allied nations  
 American embassy  
 Axis nations  
 beady eyes  
 Berlin (East/West)  
 Berlin Wall  
 camouflage (means of concealment)  
 classified document  
 classified information  
 computer screen  
 country  
 cryptogram  
 Cuba  
 document  
 dossier  
 Eastern Europe  
 embassy  
 Europe  
 FBI's 10 Most Wanted list  
 fingerprint  
 foreign country  
 Germany (reunited)  
 hiding place  
 keyhole  
 listening post  
 locked door

locked file  
 locked room  
 Lubyanka (U.S.S.R. secret police hdqtrs, Moscow)  
 microfiche viewer  
 microfilm  
 Middle East  
 military base  
 money (currency/coins)  
 Moscow  
 nation  
 observation post  
 observation tower  
 peephole  
 photograph  
 polygraph (lie detector)  
 report (detailed account)  
 room with a view  
 safe house  
 sanctuary  
 secret compartment  
 secret entrance  
 secret hiding place  
 secret weapon  
 situation room  
 Soviet Union (USSR)  
 Spy (magazine)  
 strategic military location  
 suitcase full of jewels/money/drugs  
 superpower (nation)  
 timetable  
 U.S.S.R.  
 United States  
 unobstructed view  
 Washington, D.C.  
 weapon

espionage/spying

[Abstractions/Intangibles]  
 acuity (acuteness/keenness)  
 advantage  
 alias  
 alibi  
 allegiance

anonymity  
 anxiety  
 assignment  
 backing (aid/support)  
 bad news  
 balance of power  
 bravery  
 brinkmanship  
 bureaucracy  
 business  
 cause (principle/movement)  
 charisma  
 cipher (code system)  
 clear and present danger  
 clue  
 code (symbol system)  
 code name  
 code of conduct  
 code of silence (in the Mafia)  
 code word  
 Communism  
 composure  
 confidence  
 conspiracy theory  
 courage  
 creativity  
 curiosity (inquisitiveness)  
 democracy  
 denial  
 detente  
 deterrent  
 devotion to a cause  
 diplomatic immunity  
 disastrous outcome  
 disinformation  
 disloyalty  
 Eastern bloc  
 East-West relations  
 economics  
 emotions (feelings)  
 enemy nation  
 esprit de corps  
 executive privilege  
 failure  
 foreign government  
 foreign policy

## Suspense Concept List

freedom  
geopolitics  
government  
inside information  
intelligence (information)  
intrigue  
Iron Curtain  
kiss-and-tell memoir  
message  
military capability  
military technology  
motive  
mystery  
mystique  
name, rank, and serial number  
national security  
numbered account  
objective (aim)  
password  
politics  
postwar years  
risk (danger)  
sanitized version of the truth  
secrecy  
secret (something kept hidden)  
secret bank account  
secret code  
secret formula  
secret message  
secret service (government agency)  
security  
security clearance  
Soviet bloc  
spy novel  
state of war  
stealth technology  
success  
suspense  
suspense novel  
suspicion  
Swiss bank account  
tension (emotional stress)  
thriller (fiction/drama)  
tip (information)  
trade secret

vision (sense of sight)  
window of vulnerability  
witness protection program  
worst-kept secret  
X-ray vision (X-ray eyes)

### espionage/spying [Verbs]

air-drop  
assume a false identity  
betray  
blend in with  
break a code  
break a confidence  
build in deniability  
camouflage (conceal)  
capture  
carry a secret to the grave  
chase (pursue)  
collaborate (cooperate with enemy)  
commit treason  
conceal  
cover your tracks  
creep up on  
debug  
deceive  
decipher  
decode  
defect (verb)  
deport  
destroy evidence  
detect  
die for a cause  
disappear  
disappear into thin air  
disarm  
distrust  
double-cross  
eavesdrop  
eavesdrop on cellular phone conversation  
enter into war  
erase a tape  
escape  
escape detection  
escape suspicion

evade  
exile  
expatriate (banish/exile)  
expel  
fake your own death  
fear (be afraid of)  
feel as if you're being watched  
fight  
flush an object down the toilet  
gather data  
gather information  
get caught  
give a tip (information)  
go through customs  
go through the trash  
grant asylum  
hear through the wall  
hide (conceal)  
hold an envelope up to the light  
infiltrate  
inform  
interrogate  
investigate  
keep a secret  
keep a straight face  
keep up appearances  
leak information  
lie (tell a lie)  
lie low  
look over your shoulder  
look through a keyhole  
make a drop  
make a mistake  
misrepresent  
observe  
overthrow the government  
plant evidence  
protect a source  
refuse to talk to an interrogator  
register under an assumed name  
rummage through garbage cans  
sabotage  
scramble a message  
scrutinize  
sell secrets  
send a message

send overseas  
 shred the evidence  
 sift the evidence  
 smuggle  
 sneak  
 sneak in  
 sneak out  
 snoop  
 speak a foreign language  
 speak in a hushed tone  
 spy on  
 steam open an envelope  
 swap  
 synchronize watches/timepieces  
 take by surprise  
 tell all  
 trade spies  
 travel  
 unmask  
 vanish  
 walk into a trap  
 wipe off fingerprints

espionage/spying

[Activities/Events/Processes]

act of heroism  
 arms race  
 arms smuggling  
 assassination  
 betrayal  
 brainwashing  
 Communist plot  
 confession  
 conspiracy  
 conspiracy of silence  
 conventicle (secret meeting)  
 counterintelligence  
 counterrevolution  
 coup d'etat  
 cover-up  
 crime  
 crisis  
 cryptanalysis (cryptography)  
 dead drop (spy message delivery)  
 deathbed confession  
 debriefing

disinformation campaign  
 double-dealing  
 double life  
 fiasco  
 forced confession  
 foreign affairs  
 government cover-up  
 hacking (computer activity)  
 high treason  
 industrial sabotage  
 information leak  
 infrared photography  
 international intrigue  
 international relations  
 kidnapping  
 military alert  
 military buildup  
 military coup  
 military maneuvers  
 mission (task/operation)  
 mounting crisis  
 mysterious disappearance  
 national defense  
 nuclear-weapons testing  
 photography  
 political unrest  
 public confession  
 rescue attempt  
 scandal  
 secret experiment  
 secret life  
 secret mission  
 secret project  
 secret research  
 show trial (rigged)  
 space race  
 spy swap  
 subterfuge  
 subversion  
 supreme sacrifice, the  
 surprise attack  
 telephone scrambling (security measure)  
 terrorism  
 terrorist attack  
 theft of proprietary information

torture  
 treason  
 undercover operation  
 war  
 war games  
 wave of change in Eastern Europe  
 weapon testing

espionage/spying [Descriptors]

abroad  
 behind enemy lines  
 cautious  
 clandestine  
 classified (confidential/secret)  
 cloak-and-dagger  
 cloaked in secrecy  
 complex  
 covert  
 dangerous  
 dead  
 deep in enemy territory  
 difficult  
 disciplined  
 disloyal  
 elite  
 good-looking  
 in a safe place  
 incognito  
 invisible  
 in the line of duty  
 loyal  
 patriotic  
 professional (descriptor)  
 secretive  
 sharp-eyed  
 sneaky  
 stealthy  
 stressful  
 subversive  
 successful  
 top-secret  
 unable to keep a secret  
 under cover of darkness  
 underground (in hiding)  
 undetected  
 whereabouts unknown

espionage/spying

[Miscellaneous]

Abscam affair, 1979 (FBI sting)  
 All's fair in love and war.  
 Bay of Pigs Invasion, 1961  
 Big Brother is watching you.  
 but one life to lose for my country  
 CIA (Central Intelligence Agency)  
 Cold War  
 Communist party  
 Cuban missile crisis, 1962  
 End of the Cold War, 1990  
 FBI (Fed'l Bureau of Investigation)  
 Foreign Agents Registration Act, 1938  
 Get Smart (t)  
 Interpol (int'l police agency)  
 Iran-Contra scandal, 1986  
 Iranian hostage crisis, 1979-81  
 I Spy (t)  
 KAL flight 007 incident, 1983  
 KGB  
 Know thine enemy.  
 Loose lips sink ships.  
 MI-5 (British intelligence agency)  
 Mission accomplished.  
 Mission Impossible (t)  
 My country, right or wrong.  
 My lips are sealed.  
 Nat'l Security Agency (NSA)  
 Nat'l Security Council (NSC)  
 None of your business.  
 Office of Strategic Services (OSS)  
 Pentagon Papers, The (t)  
 Pentagon, the (military establishment)  
 Reilly, Ace of Spies (t)  
 Rosenberg espionage trial, 1951  
 Sacco-Vanzetti trial, 1921  
 seizure of US Embassy, Tehran, 1979  
 Tonkin Gulf incidents, 1964  
 U.S. Army Special Forces  
 U.S. Secret Service

U-2 spy plane shootdown incident, 1960

Walker family spy case  
 Watergate scandal, 1972

excitement/thrills/adventure

[Verbs]

announce a contest winner  
 attract attention  
 beat (win)  
 blanch (become pale)  
 break the bank  
 break the record  
 break your neck  
 carouse  
 carry the victor aloft  
 celebrate a victory  
 challenge (verb)  
 chase a fire engine  
 cheer a person on  
 cover your eyes  
 dance for joy  
 dare  
 defy convention  
 discover  
 dream of traveling the world  
 electrify  
 enjoy  
 escape  
 escape danger  
 escape from everyday life  
 excite  
 explore  
 fall head over heels  
 fantasize  
 fear (be afraid of)  
 feel a shiver up and down your spine  
 feel your hair stand on end  
 frighten  
 get away from it all  
 get cold feet (back out)  
 go over Niagara Falls in a barrel  
 have a fling  
 have your heart in your mouth

hit the jackpot  
 hold on for dear life  
 hype up (excite/stimulate)  
 join the Foreign Legion  
 jump a freight train  
 jump for joy  
 jump out of a plane  
 jump to your feet  
 jump up and click heels  
 land a fish  
 live dangerously  
 lose in the last moments of a game  
 lose track of time  
 love (verb)  
 paint the town red  
 pant (breathe rapidly)  
 play fast and loose  
 play hooky  
 play war  
 play with a gun  
 play with fire  
 play with matches  
 push your luck  
 quiver (shake/tremble)  
 race (go fast)  
 race a train  
 radio for help  
 rappel  
 reach safety  
 receive an award  
 receive a standing ovation  
 rescue  
 ride on handlebars of a bicycle  
 ride out the storm  
 ride the rapids  
 risk everything  
 risk your life  
 roam  
 run away from danger  
 run away to join the circus  
 run for your life  
 sail around the Horn  
 scream  
 separate the men from the boys  
 shake in your boots

shiver with pleasure  
 shoot the rapids  
 shriek  
 stick head into an animal's mouth  
 survive  
 take a big trip  
 take a chance  
 take your breath away  
 tell stories around a campfire  
 throw caution to the wind  
 tie the score  
 toss your hat into the air  
 travel  
 tremble  
 walk a tightrope  
 wander  
 whoop it up  
 win (vs. lose)  
 win a contest  
 win a game in the last seconds  
 win a prize  
 win a race  
 win by a nose  
 win in the last moments of a game  
 win the lottery  
 win the pennant  
 yell  
 yell FIRE!  
 yell for help

excitement/thrills/adventure

**[Descriptors]**

afraid  
 against all odds  
 apprehensive  
 ashen  
 awesome  
 Bacchanalian  
 boisterous  
 bold  
 bored and wanting a change  
 bound and determined  
 brave  
 breathless  
 can't sit still  
 careful

careless  
 cautious  
 confident  
 courageous  
 crazy  
 dangerous  
 daring (reckless)  
 dashing  
 difficult  
 dizzy  
 do-or-die  
 eager  
 elated  
 electrifying  
 enthusiastic  
 euphoric  
 excitable  
 exciting  
 exhausted (tired)  
 exhilarating  
 extroverted  
 exuberant  
 fast (vs. slow)  
 fearless  
 fervent  
 fiery (spirited)  
 flushed  
 frightened  
 gallant  
 gung ho  
 gutsy  
 hair-raising  
 harmless  
 hazardous  
 headstrong  
 heroic  
 high (euphoric)  
 high risk, high gain  
 high-strung  
 impetuous  
 impulsive  
 in a tight spot  
 injured  
 interesting  
 intrepid  
 invincible

invulnerable  
 jittery  
 lost  
 macho  
 masculine  
 melodramatic  
 on the spur of the moment  
 passionate  
 precarious  
 pushed to the limit  
 quick-witted  
 rambunctious  
 raucous  
 reckless  
 record-breaking  
 restless  
 risky  
 romantic  
 rowdy  
 scared  
 scared stiff  
 scary  
 sensational  
 shot from a cannon  
 snatched from the jaws of death  
 spine-chilling  
 spine-tingling  
 spirited  
 spontaneous  
 stouthearted  
 strange  
 stressful  
 strong  
 stupid  
 tempestuous  
 terrified  
 terrifying  
 thrilling  
 too close for comfort  
 too scary for young children  
 touch-and-go  
 unafraid  
 undaunted  
 under fire  
 undisciplined  
 unharmed

unhesitating  
 uninhibited  
 unpredictable  
 unsafe  
 up (excited)  
 up for the big game  
 vivacious  
 wild (vs. tame)  
 wild-eyed  
 willful  
 zany  
   excitement/thrills/adventure  
 [Miscellaneous]  
   excitement/thrills/adventure  
 [Abstractions/Intangibles]  
 action adventure  
 anticipation  
 apprehension  
 body language  
 boredom  
 bravery  
 butterflies in your stomach  
 buzz  
 challenge (difficult undertaking)  
 childhood  
 chivalry  
 Christmas season  
 clear and present danger  
 cliffhanger  
 cost  
 courage  
 danger  
 daring (venturesome boldness)  
 dead heat  
 desire to talk about a new love  
 elation  
 emotion  
 emotions (feelings)  
 endurance  
 energy  
 enjoyment  
 enthusiasm  
 enthusiasm of youth  
 epic poem  
 escapist literature  
 euphoria

excitement  
 exhilaration  
 expectation (anticipation)  
 facial expression  
 fame  
 fear (emotion)  
 fortune (luck)  
 freedom  
 fun  
 gest (romantic tale)  
 get-up-and-go  
 ghost story  
 gold fever  
 great moment in sports  
 gripping story  
 health hazard  
 heat of passion  
 hedonism  
 heroism  
 high spirits  
 holiday  
 holiday spirit  
 imagination  
 intensity  
 joie de vivre  
 last day of school  
 legend (story)  
 literature  
 love of adventure  
 mania (intense enthusiasm)  
 masculinity  
 mass hysteria  
 military, the  
 misattribution of arousal  
 mischief  
 moment of glory  
 monkey business  
 moving day  
 mystery  
 myth  
 nerve (daring)  
 nerves of steel  
 nervous energy  
 nervous tension  
 never to return  
 obsession

passion  
 peals of laughter  
 pleasure  
 Rebel yell  
 risk (danger)  
 roar of the engine (sound)  
 romantic love  
 rush (euphoria)  
 saga  
 self-confidence  
 self-fulfillment  
 self-gratification  
 siren song  
 speed (rate of motion/rapidity)  
 spirit of adventure  
 split-second timing  
 stories for boys  
 story  
 Super Bowl Sunday  
 superhuman strength in  
 emergency  
 survival skills  
 suspense  
 suspense novel  
 teenage girl's obsession with horses  
 tension (emotional stress)  
 Theseus and the Minotaur (myth)  
 thrill  
 thriller (fiction/drama)  
 thrill of a lifetime  
 thrill of victory  
 triumph (joy of victory)  
 unbounded enthusiasm  
 uncontrollable urge  
 Viking saga  
 wanderlust  
 whoop (loud shout/shrill cry)  
 winning lottery number  
  
   surprise/amazement/the  
   unexpected [Verbs]  
  
 act as if nothing has happened  
 ad-lib  
 amaze  
 ambush



## Suspense Concept List

announce a contest winner  
attack from the rear  
attract attention  
become the man of the family  
bite down on a hard object  
bite into a worm  
blurt out  
break the news  
bump from a flight  
bump into  
burst  
burst into song  
buy a pig in a poke  
catch a person off guard  
catch unawares  
clothesline (grab by encircling neck with arm)  
collapse  
come to a screeching halt  
cover your eyes  
crash a party  
crash into a crowd  
defy convention  
die in the prime of life  
disappear into thin air  
discover  
discover your son or daughter is in jail  
draw a crowd  
drop a bombshell  
drop a glass  
drop in on  
electrify  
elevate a table (medium's trick)  
explode  
fake (practice deception)  
fall overboard  
fall through the ice  
fart  
fear (be afraid of)  
feel a shiver up and down your spine  
feel overwhelmed  
feel your hair stand on end  
feign surprise  
find

find a body  
find a worm in your food  
find out  
flinch  
gape  
gasp  
gawk  
get caught  
go against the tide  
goose (jab)  
have an ace up your sleeve  
hide behind a door  
hit a ball through a window  
hit a bump  
hook an old shoe  
jerk awake (jump)  
jolt  
jump (verb)  
jump for joy  
jump out at  
jump out of bed  
jump to your feet  
jump up  
kiss  
leap to your feet  
let the cat out of the bag  
lie in wait  
lift a car with your bare hands  
lose in the last moments of a game  
lose your concentration  
lose your passport  
love (verb)  
moon (expose buttocks)  
notice police car in rear-view mirror  
open a gift  
open presents  
plan (devise/prearrange)  
play a record on the wrong speed  
play a trick on a person  
plow into (ram)  
pop a balloon  
pop a paper bag  
pop out of a cake  
pounce

pronounce a live person dead  
pull a ball (in baseball)  
pull a rabbit out of a hat  
pull down the basketball backboard  
pull the rug out from under  
push a person into a swimming pool  
rain during vacation  
read tea leaves  
realize  
receive an award  
recoil  
reveal  
run into an old acquaintance  
scare (frighten/alarm)  
scream  
shock (cause surprise/horror)  
shriek  
shudder  
slander someone  
sneak up on  
spook  
spring (verb)  
spring a surprise  
spring from behind  
spring open  
squeal (utter high, shrill cry)  
stare at  
start (jump)  
suddenly/involuntarily  
startle  
step on an animal's tail  
stumble upon (happen upon)  
stumble upon a dead body  
stumble upon a secret  
stun (astonish)  
surprise  
switch political parties  
take by surprise  
take your breath away  
throw a curve  
throw for a loop  
throw into water with clothes on  
tingle  
toilet-paper a house or yard

trap (catch/ensnare/trick)  
 trick (dupe/deceive by cunning)  
 turn the tables  
 uncover  
 underestimate  
 unearth  
 unwrap  
 vanish  
 walk into a trap  
 watch (observe)  
 watch a child grow up  
 whirl and kick  
 win (vs. lose)  
 win a game in the last seconds  
 win in the last moments of a game  
 win the lottery  
 yell FIRE!

surprise/amazement/the unexpected

[Abstractions/Intangibles]

ace in the hole  
 amazement  
 amount of destruction  
 anticipation  
 April Fools' Day  
 archaeology  
 awe  
 awful truth, the  
 bad luck  
 bad news  
 bag of tricks  
 bang (loud, sudden noise)  
 battlefield confusion  
 beginner's luck  
 bequest  
 bonanza  
 burglar alarm (sound)  
 Christmas bonus  
 cliffhanger  
 cost  
 creativity  
 detective story  
 disbelief  
 doozy (humdinger)

effect  
 election returns  
 element of surprise  
 emotions (feelings)  
 excitement  
 expense  
 facial expression  
 fast-breaking story  
 fortune (luck)  
 good luck  
 Hollywood gossip  
 horror  
 hush (sudden absence of sound)  
 idea  
 imagination  
 incongruity  
 innovation  
 instant success  
 joy  
 last-minute details  
 late-breaking news  
 late returns  
 lead story  
 long shot (race entry)  
 lucky guess  
 magic  
 message  
 murder mystery  
 news  
 news scoop  
 nine days' wonder  
 O. Henry story  
 parapsychology  
 plan of attack  
 play on words  
 posthumous revelation  
 prophecy  
 remark  
 scare (sudden fright)  
 science  
 science fiction  
 secret (something kept hidden)  
 serendipity  
 sharp sound  
 shocking news  
 shocking truth

sonic boom  
 stealth technology  
 story that ends with a twist  
 sudden insight  
 superhuman strength in  
 emergency  
 suspense  
 suspense novel  
 technology  
 thriller (fiction/drama)  
 time to pay holiday bills  
 trouble  
 unintended consequences  
 verdict  
 virtual reality  
 voice from the past  
 wedding night  
 whodunit (mystery novel)  
 whoop (loud shout/shrill cry)  
 windfall (unexpected good luck)  
 world's record

stress/anxiety/frustration [Verbs]

aggravate  
 agonize over a decision  
 annoy  
 apply for a job  
 argue  
 argue over money  
 arrive late  
 ask for a date  
 beat your head against a wall  
 be chronically late  
 become the man of the family  
 berate  
 bicker  
 bite your lips (nervous habit)  
 bite your nails  
 blame  
 blame yourself  
 blow off steam  
 boo the umpire  
 break a deadlock  
 break someone's heart  
 break with your bare hands  
 bring suit

bump from a flight  
 calm down  
 chain-smoke  
 change a flat tire  
 change your mind  
 chew on a pencil  
 chew out (upbraid)  
 chill out (calm down)  
 choke on your words  
 choose sides  
 clench your teeth  
 climb the walls  
 come apart at the seams  
 compete against yourself  
 complain  
 control your emotions  
 cope  
 count to ten  
 crack or pop your knuckles  
 criticize (find fault)  
 critique (criticize/evaluate)  
 cry  
 curse (blaspheme/swear)  
 cut off your nose to spite your  
 face  
 cut up your credit cards  
 disappoint your parents  
 discipline  
 discriminate against  
 dislike  
 drink in private  
 drink too much  
 drive slowly in the fast lane  
 drum fingers on flat surface  
 escape into drugs  
 exaggerate  
 exchange harsh words  
 express emotion  
 face up to  
 fail  
 fear (be afraid of)  
 feel as if you're being watched  
 feel cheated  
 feel guilty  
 feel rejected

feel responsible for another  
 person  
 feel sorry for yourself  
 feel that people are talking about  
 you  
 feel that the audience is against  
 you  
 feel that you have been wronged  
 feel threatened  
 feel trapped  
 fidget  
 fight  
 fight about money  
 fight the traffic  
 fire an employee  
 fix blame  
 flinch  
 flip out  
 flip the TV channels incessantly  
 fool yourself  
 freak out  
 frown  
 frustrate  
 fuss  
 gain weight  
 get a grip on yourself  
 get cold feet (back out)  
 get lost  
 get nowhere  
 get stuck in an elevator  
 get turned down for a loan  
 get up on the wrong side of bed  
 give birth  
 give the finger (obscene gesture)  
 give up  
 gnash your teeth  
 go off the deep end  
 go over the edge  
 go through a phase  
 go to a new school  
 go under the knife  
 grate on your nerves  
 grimace  
 grin and bear it  
 grind your teeth while sleeping  
 grip a person's lapels

gripe  
 hang up (the telephone) on  
 have too many irons in the fire  
 have your back to the wall  
 have your heart in your mouth  
 heckle  
 hit back  
 hit or kick a vending machine in  
 frustration  
 hold a grudge  
 hold down two jobs  
 hold tight  
 hyperventilate  
 inflict psychological damage  
 insult  
 intimidate  
 jiggle your crossed leg (habit)  
 juggle family and career  
 kick a habit  
 kick dirt  
 kick the dog  
 kick the lockers  
 leave home  
 leave loved ones behind  
 leave the room  
 let off steam  
 lie (tell a lie)  
 lie awake  
 litigate  
 look for a parking space  
 look over your shoulder  
 lose control  
 lose your composure  
 lose your concentration  
 lose your head  
 lose your job  
 lose your mind  
 lose your passport  
 lose your temper  
 lose your wallet or purse  
 make a mistake  
 mislay keys, tickets, or glasses  
 miss a bus  
 miss a flight  
 miss an appointment  
 miss an important call

## Suspense Concept List

miss a train  
nag (complain/find fault)  
negotiate  
nickel-and-dime to death  
overdraw your checking account  
overeat  
pace (walk back and forth)  
pace the floor  
pay taxes  
perspire  
plug your ears with your fingers  
pop the question  
pound a pillow  
procrastinate  
protest  
pull the rug out from under  
push over the edge  
push the wrong button  
quarrel (argue/fight)  
quit  
quit cold-turkey  
quit smoking  
quit your job  
quiver (shake/tremble)  
race against time  
raise taxes  
raise your voice  
rant and rave  
refuse to cooperate  
refuse to listen  
remain silent  
remove bandages  
renegotiate  
resign in disgrace  
retaliate  
return to school (resume education)  
reveal your feelings  
roll your eyes  
run away from a problem  
run from the truth  
run into a brick wall  
say goodbye  
scowl  
scream  
see red

shake your fist  
shift weight from foot to foot  
shock (cause surprise/horror)  
sigh  
sign a contract  
sink to your knees  
sit on (delay/suppress)  
slam the door  
slam your fist through the wall  
smoke a cigarette  
spin your wheels  
splutter (talk fast and incoherently)  
squirm  
stammer  
stamp your foot in anger  
stand up for yourself  
start over  
stutter  
surrender  
swear (curse)  
take a test  
take the bad with the good  
take your personal problems to work  
take yourself too seriously  
tap your fingers  
tap your foot impatiently  
tear up  
threaten litigation  
throw a fit  
throw your golf club  
toss and turn  
travel  
try out for the team  
try to open  
try your wings  
unload your cares  
use humor to relieve anxiety  
vacillate (hesitate/waver in mind)  
wait in doctor's office  
wait in line  
wait to be bailed out  
wait up for  
wake up screaming  
walk out

walk out in a huff  
walk the floor with a sick child  
wallow in self-pity  
watch the clock  
weep (cry)  
wet the bed  
whine  
work (verb)  
work two jobs  
worry and fret  
wring a person's neck  
yell