

Using Inside and Outside Details to Pace Your Piece

Writers can learn how to write better stories by studying great writing.

Skilled authors learn to vary the pace of their stories by slowing down at certain parts. Sometimes they do this to create more tension during an intense part of the story, or at times when they really want the reader to feel a certain emotion or create a visual image of what's happening. This helps to pull the reader into the story.

Select a novel to use for the following activity. Read about each kind of description, and then look through your novel to find two examples of each kind. Record the information in the table.

1. **Outside details** are vivid descriptions, sometimes called imagery, that create a picture in the reader's mind. These descriptions can include:

- The way something looks
- The way something smells
- The way something tastes
- The way something feels
- The way something sounds



Examples of imagery:

The eerie silence was shattered by his scream.

The girl grabbed the sandwich like an eagle diving for its prey.

Page	Outside Detail Example (quote from the book)

2. **Inside details** are the internal thoughts and feelings of a character. These help us feel empathy and relate to the character.

My heart stopped and the world around me slowed to a blur when I learned the devastating news.

I bit into the warm, gooey cookie and the melted chocolate chunks swam in my mouth.

Page	Inside Detail Example (quote from the book)