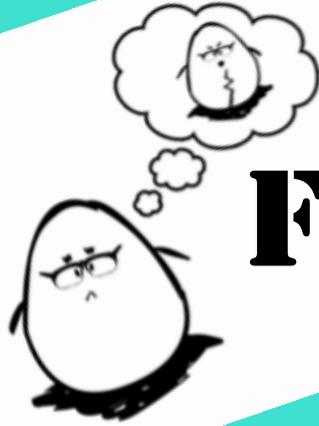


# FLASHBACKS AND FORESHADOWING



Have you ever seen a movie scene shift back to the past?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lVzoVqzXNI>

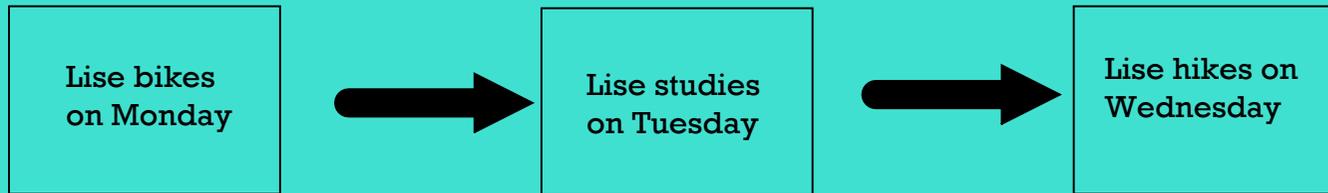
Check out this movie clip  
from *Toy Story 3*.

What was happening in that clip that let us know it was a shift into the past?

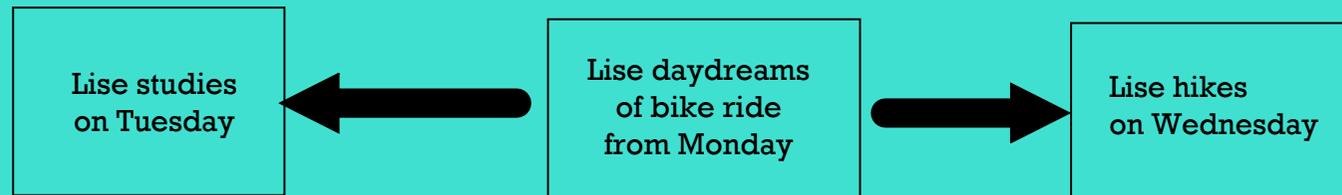
When we have a shift in time, like when we see an adult character as a child or a crime committed at an earlier time, that is called a ***flashback.***

- **Flashback** is a device that allows the writer to present events that happened before the time of the current events.
- **Flashback techniques include:**
  - \* **memories**
  - \* **dreams**
  - \* **stories of the past told by characters**
  - \* **an interruption by the author (That is, the author might simply say, "But back in Tom's youth . . .")**
- **Flashback is useful for exposition, to fill in the reader about a character or place, or to explain the background to a conflict.**
- **An example of flashback occurs in Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol when the Ghost of Christmas Past takes Scrooge into his past to see scenes from his youth.**

These events are in chronological order. They form a simple plot.



Flashbacks affect a story's sequence. They break up a plot's forward movement to tell an event from the past.



What does this flashback (Lise daydreaming) reveal about Lise??

## How to find a Flashback in literature:

\*Look for a place where the writer breaks up the chronological order of the plot to tell about something that took place earlier.

\* Look for time words such as *years ago*, *in the past* and *then*:

### Examples:

- I thought about what had happened earlier....
- Images from years ago flooded my brain....
- A memory from the distant past surged up.....

## How to find a Flashback in literature:

\* Look for dates, characters' ages, and words about youth or old age:

Examples:

- When Carlita was nine, her father taught her to swim.....
- Before I became the old man you see before you.....

\*Look for time words such as now, today, and these days. Such phrases can indicate the stopping point of a flashback.

Examples:

- Now I am a grownup.....
- These days I live more slowly than when I was in the army.

DIRECTIONS: Below is an excerpt from "Last Cover" by Paul Annixter. Read the excerpt. Then circle the sentence or phrase that signals the beginning the flashback in this passage.

At supper that night, Colin could scarcely eat. Ever since he'd been able to walk, my brother had had a growing love of wild things, but Bandit had been like his very own, a gift of the woods. One afternoon a year and a half before, Father and Laban Small had been running a vixen through the woods with their dogs. With the last of her strength, the she-fox had made for her den, not far from our house. The dogs had overtaken her and killed her just before she reached it. When Father and Laban came up, they'd found Colin crouched nearby holding her cub in his arms.

from My First Two Women  
by Nadine Gordimer

"Doesn't she ever have to go home?"

"This is her home, and yours, and Daddy's."

"Why?"

Because she is married to me now, Nick. She is my wife, and husbands and wives love each other and live together in the same house."

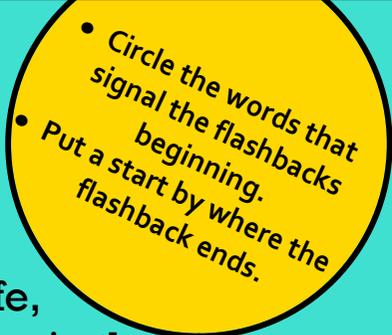
There was a pause, and when I spoke again, what I said must have been very different from what they expected. They did not know that while I was away on holiday at the sea I had been taken, one rainy afternoon, along with the other children, to the cinema. There I had seen, in all the rose and crystalline blur of Technicolor, a man and woman dance out beneath the chandeliers of a ballroom. When I had asked what they were doing, I was told that this was a wedding—the man and the woman had just been married.

"Do you mean like this?" I asked my father and my stepmother, taking my father's hand, bending my knees, and shaping out my arms in a jiglike posture. I hopped around solemnly, dragging him with me.

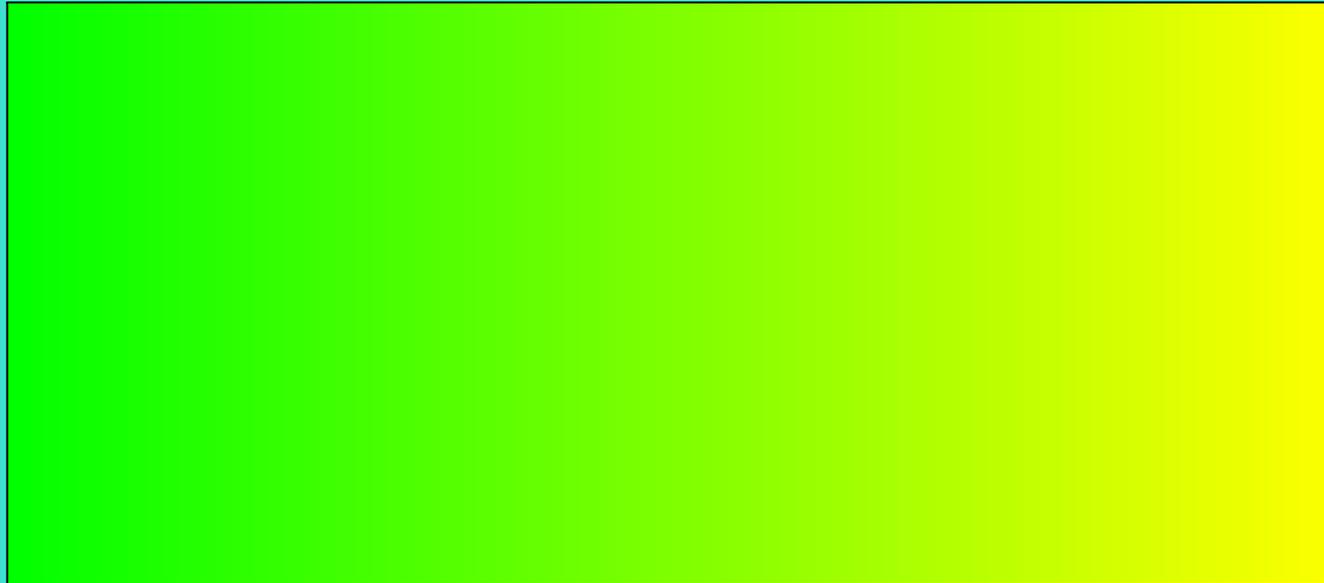
"Dancing?" guessed my father.....

"Oh, that's wonderful!" she cried in sudden delight...

I was now nearly five years old and due to begin going to school.

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- Circle the words that signal the flashbacks beginning.
  - Put a start by where the flashback ends.

**How does this flashback help the reader understand the character's response to his father's announcement?**



**The snowball smacked Walter in the shoulder. He turned and saw Crenshaw and his friends laughing. Like a flood, the memory of a snowball exploding into his face in fourth grade filled him. Big Andre had thrown that one. The kids had had a good laugh. Walter charged Crenshaw. "How do you like it?" he yelled, as he pushed Crenshaw's startled face into the snow.**

What words signal the start of the flashback?

At what point does the plot return to chronological order?

How does the flashback offer insight into the character motivation and conflict?

# What is a flashback?



Now that we have a good idea of  
a flashback, let's talk about  
foreshadowing!



What do you think  
foreshadowing is?

Tell your neighbor about a time when you could tell by the environment that a storm was coming.



Signs in the weather, signaling events to come, are similar to foreshadowing events in a story.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nJdXA6zNgqU>

Check out some of these movie clips to see great examples of foreshadowing in film.

- **Foreshadowing** is an author's use of hints or clues to suggest events that will occur later in the story.
- **Not all foreshadowing is obvious. Frequently, future events are merely hinted at through dialogue, description, or the attitudes and reactions of the characters.**
- **Foreshadowing frequently serves two purposes.**
  - 1) It builds suspense by raising questions that encourage the reader to go on and find out more about the event that is being foreshadowed.**
  - 2) Foreshadowing is also a means of making a narrative more believable by partially preparing the reader for events which are to follow.**

In literature, foreshadowing usually consists of only one or two sentences, and is especially effective when ending a scene or chapter. An example of foreshadowing:

*Sam wished he could rid himself of the sick feeling in his gut that told him something terrible was going to happen, and happen soon.*

## Analyzing Foreshadowing:

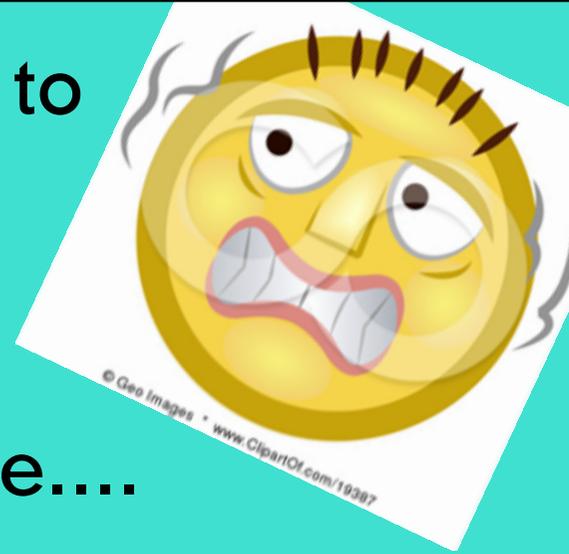
- \* Think about plot events
- \* Look for clues in dialogue or description
- \* Predict what will happen next



**Ari and his dad were driving home from soccer practice when the snow began. Mr. Gold switched on the windshield wipers and frowned. "I wish I'd had a chance to get new tires," he said. "Ours are really worn out."**

- 1) What is the "plot" so far?
- 2) Are there any clues in the dialogue or descriptions that you think might be foreshadowing?
- 3) What do you think will happen next?

Foreshadowing can help to build suspense in literature.



When analyzing suspense....

- \*Examine your feelings as you read
- \*Identify the rising action of the plot
- \*Focus on the main questions you have about the story's outcome

By now, the snow was falling so hard that the windshield wipers couldn't keep up. Trying to climb Bear Hill, the car fishtailed left, then right. "I don't know if we can make it up," muttered Mr. Gold, shifting into low gear. Suddenly, at the top of the hill, an 18-wheeler truck jackknifed into their lane. Mr. Gold slammed on his brakes, but nothing happened.

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- 1) What are your feelings about the situation the two characters face?
- 2) What else might happen to further increase suspense as this story moves toward its climax?
- 3) Do you have any "burning questions" in your mind about Ari and his father?

**1) What is foreshadowing?**

**2) What is flashback?**

**3) What is suspense?**

**Now you will complete  
a practice page to identify  
foreshadowing, flashback  
and suspense.**