

Name _____



Growing Tension

Jan Brett's *The Mitten* is a simple story, but its structure builds suspense in a fun and exciting way. The way the events unfold—one after another—makes readers wonder what will happen next. As each new animal squeezes into the mitten, the tension grows, making the final moment feel both surprising and inevitable.

The story starts with Nicki losing his white mitten in the snow. This moment seems small, but it sets up the main problem:

the mitten is now available for anyone to find. The first sign of suspense comes when a tiny mole discovers the mitten and crawls inside. The mitten is already quite small, so readers might wonder: will it be able to hold even one animal?

Then, the story follows a repeated pattern—each time a new animal appears, it tries to fit inside the mitten. A rabbit arrives, then a hedgehog, then an owl. The mitten keeps stretching, and the tension builds. The story becomes more exciting because each new animal is larger than the last. Readers start to wonder, How much more can the mitten take?

Jan Brett also adds to the suspense through her illustrations. On each page, side panels show the next animal approaching before it enters the mitten. This makes readers anticipate what is coming, making them feel like they are in on the secret. They might even try to guess what will happen next before they turn the page.

The suspense reaches its peak when a huge bear arrives. The mitten is already packed full, but somehow, the bear manages to squeeze in. By this point, readers know that something has to give. Then, a tiny mouse arrives. Compared to the bear, the mouse seems harmless. But when it tickles the bear's nose, the suspense suddenly turns into action! The bear sneezes, sending all the animals flying. This moment is both surprising and satisfying because it answers the big question: How much can the mitten really hold?

The story's structure, with its repeating pattern and growing tension, keeps readers engaged. They know what to expect, but they don't know when the mitten will finally burst. This clever use of suspense makes *The Mitten* a fun and engaging read, full of humor and excitement.