

Flashbacks in Literature Worksheet

What Is a Flashback?

A **flashback** is a literary device in which a story temporarily moves from the present action to an event that happened **earlier in time**. Writers use flashbacks to provide background information, explain a character's behavior, reveal important details, or help readers understand the present situation.

Example:

Maria stood outside the old house. She suddenly remembered the summer when her family had moved away. She could still picture herself riding her bicycle down the driveway for the last time.

The story has moved from the **present** to an event from the **past**. This is a flashback.

Part I – Identify the Flashback

Directions: Read each passage. Decide whether the passage contains a flashback. Write **Y** for yes or **N** for no.

1. ____ James opened the letter and smiled. He remembered the day his grandfather had taught him how to fish.
2. ____ Samantha walked into the classroom and took her seat. Her teacher handed out the test.
3. ____ As Marcus drove past the baseball field, he thought about the championship game he had played there three years earlier.
4. ____ The rain began to fall harder. Elena grabbed her umbrella and hurried toward the bus stop.
5. ____ When Daniel heard the song, he was suddenly transported back to his first school dance. He could remember exactly what the gym had looked like that night.
6. ____ The dog barked at the mail carrier, and Mrs. Wilson closed the curtains.
7. ____ Looking at the old photograph, Olivia remembered the family vacation they had taken when she was eight years old.
8. ____ The team practiced for two hours before heading home for dinner.

Part II – What Happened in the Flashback?

9. Caleb stood at the edge of the lake. He had not returned there since the accident. Suddenly, he remembered the summer afternoon when he and his brother had built a small raft and tried to sail across the water.

a. What is happening in the present?

Caleb is standing at the edge of the _____.

b. What event does the flashback describe?

He remembers building a _____ and trying to _____ across the lake with his brother.

c. Why might the author include this flashback?

The flashback provides background _____ and may help explain Caleb's _____ about the lake or the accident

10. Nora held the trophy tightly. As she looked at it, she remembered the day she had almost quit the soccer team. Her coach had encouraged her to keep practicing, and eventually she had become one of the team's strongest players.

a. What is happening in the present?

Nora is holding and looking at her _____.

b. What does Nora remember?

She remembers almost _____ the soccer team and receiving _____ from her coach.

c. How does the flashback help readers understand Nora?

It shows that Nora _____ hard, overcame _____, and did not _____.

11. The old photograph made Marcus stop walking. In the picture, he was standing beside his childhood best friend, Tyler. Marcus remembered the afternoon they had promised to stay friends forever. They had not spoken in ten years.

a. What triggers the flashback?

Seeing the old _____ triggers the flashback

b. What event from the past is revealed?

Marcus remembers promising to _____ with Tyler.

c. What information does the flashback give the reader?

It reveals that Marcus and Tyler were once _____ and establishes background for their current relationship.

Part III – Purpose of the Flashback

12. Why might an author use a flashback?

- A. To make the story shorter
- B. To provide information about the past
- C. To remove the main character
- D. To change the setting permanently

13. A flashback can help explain:

- A. Why a character behaves a certain way
- B. Only what will happen in the future
- C. The author's favorite book
- D. The number of chapters in a story

14. Which event would most likely trigger a flashback?

- A. A character seeing an old photograph
- B. A character eating breakfast
- C. A character closing a door
- D. A character putting on shoes

15. A character becomes nervous whenever she hears thunder because she remembers being caught in a dangerous storm as a child. The memory of the storm is an example of:

- A. Foreshadowing
- B. Flashback
- C. Setting
- D. Conflict

16. Which statement best describes the relationship between the present and a flashback?

- A. The flashback always happens after the ending.
 - B. The flashback interrupts the present action to show an earlier event.
 - C. The flashback predicts what will happen next.
 - D. The flashback changes the story into a poem.
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Part IV – Flashback or Foreshadowing?

Directions: Determine whether each example uses **Flashback** or **Foreshadowing**.

17. As Lily walked toward the abandoned house, she remembered the time she had visited it as a child.

Answer: _____

18. As Lily walked toward the abandoned house, she noticed that one of the windows was broken. She had no idea that what happened inside that night would change her life forever.

Answer: _____

19. James remembered the first time he had met his best friend.

Answer: _____

20. James had no idea that his best friend would soon reveal a secret that would change everything.

Answer: _____

21. When Ana smelled fresh bread, she remembered baking with her grandmother when she was young.

Answer: _____

22. The dark clouds gathered over the town, and Ben wondered whether the storm would become something much worse.

Answer: _____
