

The 12 Key Pillars of Novel Construction

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Inspection Checklist #8

Tension Ramped to the Max

	QUESTION	YOUR ANSWER
QUESTION #1	What is the central <i>inner</i> conflict your protagonist is dealing with as it pertains to the concept? Can you increase it?	
QUESTION #2	Look through each scene. What is the key conflict in it? How can you make it more complex? Make the characters more conflicted?	
QUESTION #3	Can you find a moment for each of your main characters to want the opposite of their heart's desire? Can you make it bigger, more emotional?	
QUESTION #4	Go through all your dialog. Can you find places to add subtext and mystery? Tighten and make it fresher?	
QUESTION #5	Print out your novel and toss the pages. Pick up 10 pages. Can you find 5 places on each page in which to add microtension? Repeat.	
QUESTION #6	Where can you have characters say something other than what they mean (subtext)? Hint at something secret?	

	QUESTION	YOUR ANSWER
QUESTION #7	Can you find/add 5 places in your novel where a character acts rashly, inconsistently, contrary? 10 places?	
QUESTION #8	Can you find/add at least one place in each scene where the character thinks, reacts, or does something wholly unexpected?	
QUESTION #9	Look for high-action passages where tension should be high. Are the sentences short, packed with strong words, and showing strong emotion?	
QUESTION #10	Find your lowest-tension scenes. How can you make your MC more conflicted emotionally to ramp up the tension?	
QUESTION #11	Do you have any scenes where everyone is happy and all is well? Can you think of a monkey wrench to throw in there to upend things?	
QUESTION #12	Have you gone through your latest draft to eliminate extraneous, boring, flat words and phrasing? If not, do so!	

Write a one-paragraph summary of your novel highlighting Tension Ramped to the Max: