

# Rhythm and pace

# Rhythm and pace

Listen to the music and think about their:

- rhythm and pace
- mood.

## Rhythm and pace

Rhythm and pace can also be used in sentences, often through sentence length and structure. Writers use sentence length and structure to create different rhythms to help to convey the meaning and mood of their text.

Look at the following sentences and try to consider the rhythm and pace of each as well as the choices that have been made to achieve this.

# Rhythm and pace

Double, double toil and trouble;  
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

*Macbeth*, William Shakespeare

## Rhythm and pace

Marley was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that. The register of his burial was signed by the clergyman, the clerk, the undertaker, and the chief mourner. Scrooge signed it.

*A Christmas Carol*, Charles Dickens

# Rhythm and pace

He has to breathe. The compulsion to inhale is huge. But he can't, he mustn't.

*Flip*, Martyn Bedford

# Tension and pace

**How does Flip feel here? Do you think the author effectively conveys his feelings?**

- frightened/terrified he might die
- anxious
- desperate to breathe
- filled with panic



**Look at the first two sentences. How do they help to create pace?**

This time he is underwater, running, feet sinking deeper and deeper into the bed. The surface is within his reach if he raises his arms, but he can't get his head out of the water.

- The sentence structure mimics Flip's quick movements.
- The sentences are long, building up the pace and reflecting Flip's growing anxiety as he struggles to free himself.
- Use of connective 'and' shows how his situation is worsening 'deeper and deeper' as does connective 'but': 'but he can't get his head out of the water.'

**Now look at the following three short sentences:**

He has to breathe. The compulsion to inhale is huge.  
But he can't, he mustn't.

What happens to the rhythm of the writing here?

Do you think it is effective at conveying Flip's growing sense of panic?

He has to breathe. The compulsion to inhale is huge.  
But he can't, he mustn't.

Short sentences heighten the dramatic impact of Flip being unable to breathe anything other than water. It's terrifying and we share Flip's overwhelming sense of fear.