

CONTROLLING THE PACE OF A STORY

Faster Pace	Slower Pace
The reader keeps moving along; quick images don't require extra effort	The reader slows down to take it all in — to think, absorb, imagine
Use dialogue (if short and to the point)	Use narrative, exposition
Short sentences, incomplete or sentence fragments	Longer sentences, compound sentences
Break up long paragraphs	Larger paragraph blocks
Only essential detail	Add details/description
Limit internal dialogue	Include internal dialogue
Action scenes, creating suspense	Backstory, flashbacks, intense moments/scenes
Focus on the what and how*	Focus on the who and why*
Follow a fast-paced scene or chapter with a slower one – a bam-bam-bam pace can be exhausting. Allow time for readers to take a breath and absorb what has happened.	

**Slower-paced scenes are good places to play up the who and why, while action scenes usually focus on the what and how. ~ [Janice Hardy](#)*