

Rhythm & Pacing Quick Reference

Module 2.2 · Advocacy Academy · Steampunk Farms

The Emotional Gear System

Sentence length controls the listener's emotional experience. Vary your gears deliberately — the music of a story comes from shifting between them.

Gear	Length	Effect	When to Use
1st (Short)	3–8 words	Punchy, urgent, stark	Key moments, reveals, emotional hits
2nd (Medium)	10–20 words	Conversational, steady	Setup, explanation, transitions
3rd (Long)	20+ words	Reflective, immersive	Scene-setting, memory, depth

Pacing Rules

■ Slow Down For	■ Speed Up For
Emotional turning points (the moment something shifts)	Background context (don't linger on setup)
Sensory scenes (setting the listener in a place)	Escalation and tension (momentum builds urgency)
Key dialogue (let important words breathe)	Transitions between scenes (keep the story moving)

The Flat vs. Alive Fix

Ask: "Could someone close their eyes and be there?" If not, apply these three moves:

1. **Add one sensory detail** — pick the sense most vivid for that moment
2. **Vary sentence length** — add one short punch and one long flow
3. **Slow down the moment that matters** — give it space to land

The Rule of Two

You don't need all five senses in every scene. Pick **two**: one **dominant sense** (what hits first) and one **surprise sense** (what the listener wouldn't expect). Two details, and the listener is standing in your scene.