

SURPRISE

What is the purpose of surprise ?

To jolt the audience with a sudden shock and thus interest/involve the audience more in the world of your play

To unsettle the audience

To break down barriers between audience and actors

To remove the audiences' inhibitions

To wake the audience up

To draw the audience closer in to the play

To excite the audience

To thrill the audience

To make the audience laugh

Examples of surprise

A character reveals a secret (i.e. There is bomb in the room.)

A character reveals a secret about themselves (i.e, I'm actually the King of Siam)

An incident/event (i.e, stranger arrives, a wall falls down revealing a secret room)

A character(s) discovers something about the setting (i.e, the button for the secret room)

Characters reveal a shared history (i.e, We were once married)

Characters reveal hidden feelings (i.e. I love you.)

Characters reveal hidden affiliations or links (i.e, I'm actually backing your opponent in the upcoming election, I'm actually your long lost brother.)

A character reveals a hidden quality/weakness (i.e, Courage/greed)

REMEMBER TO MAKE A SURPRISE WORK IT IS IMPORTANT IT IS IN SOME WAY PLANTED EARLIER IN THE PLAY.

What is a plant ?

A subtle hint earlier in the play that doesn't give away the surprise but because of the plant when the surprise comes it makes sense.

A surprise should be unexpected but possible

An impossible or even improbable surprise will lose the audience's belief in the world of your play and thus interest or involvement in your play. The trick is to make your surprise as credible as possible but still keep it a surprise.