

## Sensory Power in Ghost Stories

The difference between a story that comes alive and one that doesn't comes down to how well it engages our senses. The traditional 5 senses are the tip of the iceberg. And those senses below the iceberg really make a ghost story come to life. Let's take a look.

### The 15 Senses Every Ghost Story Teller Needs to Know

There is actually a lot of information on this—and lots of variation in how many senses humans actually have. For the purposes of story, and ghost stories in particular, let's go with 15. The traditional 5 (included at the top of the list) are still important in telling a ghost story but others that have been identified are also powerful tools for the ghost story teller/writer.

1. Sight
2. Sound
3. Smell
4. Taste
5. Touch
6. Time
7. Pain
8. Hunger
9. Suffocation
10. Movement
11. Balance
12. Life
13. Emotion
14. Temperature
15. Ego (sense of self, other)

### Activities

- How might you include each of these senses in your story?
- As an exercise, write a sentence that could be part of a story that evokes each of the 15 senses listed above.
- Bonus points if the 15 sentences are part of one cohesive story—either alone or in addition to other sentences.
- Can you think of other senses not included here that could enrich your ghost story?
- Include at least 7 sensory details in your story—2 from the traditional 5, 2 from the expanded list, and 3 of your choice.
- Think about some emotions (#13 on the list mwah-ha-ha) that are perfect for ghost stories; include at least one in your story—without ever naming it in the story . . . that is, reveal it through dialogue or using descriptive prose.

### Resource for Further Exploration

<http://www.meditation24-7.com/page18/page19/page19.html>

This is an interesting article about the various senses (beyond and including the usual 5) in terms of what happens during meditation, but it is a great resource for translating sensory data to make the story extra scary.