**1. Foreshadowing with a "Pre-Scene"**

Picture the scene...

We are in the cockpit of an airplane. The plane hits turbulence and the captain struggles to regain control. It doesn't last long, and everything is soon seemingly fine again...

But the reader implicitly understands that this is going to be anything but a trouble-free flight.

Or we are in a Wild West saloon. The hero walks in and orders whiskey. Over in the corner, the baddie watches him drink. As the hero leaves, the baddie spits on the floor. And that is it...

But we know that their next meeting will probably not be so uneventful.

A pre-scene is simply a smaller version of a larger scene to come. They are not significant by themselves, but they imply that there is something more spectacular waiting to happen right around the corner.

In fiction, unlike in real life, everything happens for a reason. Every cause has an effect. If the reader of a novel witnesses an event that fizzles out before anything dramatic happens, they know that the drama will come later in the story.

## 2. Foreshadowing by Naming an Approaching Event

Simply naming the event and indicating why it is likely to be momentous is one of the simplest ways of foreshadowing there is. So you might begin a chapter in a novel like this...

**Fred left the house at eleven o'clock and drove into town. He was meeting his father for lunch at Brown's. Officially, they were just 'catching up', but they both knew Fred needed money again - and not such a small amount this time, either.**

Out of all my examples of foreshadowing, this one is hardly the most subtle - but it does the job.

Fred is on his way to a difficult meeting and, as readers of this story, we are looking forward to seeing how it plays out before either character has even reached the restaurant.

For added impact, you could foreshadow this lunch date earlier - the night before perhaps. Or else you could give Fred several other tasks to perform in town before he meets his father.

That way, the reader will anticipate the upcoming meeting for several pages, not just for a paragraph or two.

## 3. Using Irrational Concern

A teenage girl leaves the house for an evening out with her friends. Her mother makes her promise to be back before midnight. The girl kisses her mother and tells her she worries too much. She'll be fine, she says.

...but us readers know she won't be.

* In the real world, mothers worry over nothing all the time, however old their children are (it's part of their job description).
* In fiction, however, there is no such thing as irrationality. If a character worries, the reader expects - indeed, demands - that these worries are for a reason.

The obvious outcome here is that the daughter does not make it home safely. But how about using some of that misdirection I talked about earlier...

**Here is how it might play out...**

Midnight has come and gone and the mother is standing at the window. She hears the back door and runs to meet her daughter. But it is a masked intruder carrying a knife.

The reader would have been expecting bad things to happen to the daughter, but in the end it was the mother who was in trouble.

Foreshadowing, in this case, has enabled you to create both suspense and surprise.

## 4. Foreshadowing Through Apprehension

As a man gets ready for work, we see that he is tense and sweating. His wife kisses him goodbye and wishes him good luck. The man throws her an uneasy look and picks up his briefcase. We don't even know what is about to take place yet, but we are certainly looking forward to finding out how it turns out.

If a character in a novel is apprehensive about something, the readers will also be apprehensive (assuming they care about the character, that is).

In the previous example, I created both suspense and surprise. Here, I have managed to create suspense and mystery. So not only are the readers uncertain about how this upcoming event will work out, they don't even know what the upcoming event is.

## 5. Using Narrator Statement

**When Ruth Jones's alarm clock woke her at seven o'clock that morning, she had no idea that today would be the longest day of her life.**

Again, as examples of foreshadowing go, there is nothing subtle about this. And it also pre-supposes the fact that you are using a disembodied narrator, rather than showing the events of the novel solely through the viewpoint character's eyes.

If you are writing a first person novel, or a third person novel in which the "camera" is positioned behind the viewpoint character's eyes throughout, this method of foreshadowing won't be an option.

## 6. Showing the Reader a Loaded Gun

An old man is sitting at his desk looking at his stamp collection. When he opens the drawer for his magnifying glass, his fingers brush against a revolver. He finds the magnifying glass and closes the drawer...

But us readers know that the gun wouldn't have been shown to us at all if it wasn't going to be fired later in the novel.

I said at the top that these examples of foreshadowing are just suggestions to give you the idea of how to foreshadow. You can use them any way you like. For example...

* It doesn't have to be a gun in the drawer - it could be a bottle of poison or an unidentified object wrapped in brown paper or an unopened letter.
* Or how about making it the absence of something - an empty bottle of heart medication, a fuel gauge close to empty.

## 7. Foreshadowing Through Opinion

Here is the final line from a chapter in a first person private-eye novel...

**I told myself there would be no more bodies, but I didn't believe a word of it.**

When the leading character in a novel states an opinion, us readers believe them. The private eye above might have no rational reason for believing there will be more murders.

In the real world, he could well be wrong.

But in fiction, opinions and hunches and gut instincts on the part of the hero and rarely wrong.

## 8. Foreshadowing Through Prophecy

As a novel writer, you have the gift of being able to predict the future. At any given point in the story, you know precisely what is coming next (because you invented it!)

The characters in the story do not have this gift. But you can give them (and the readers) premonitions about what happens next...

* When a fortune teller looks into her crystal ball, she closes her eyes and crosses herself.
* When the leading woman reads her horoscope, it promises a troubled week ahead.
* When a man goes downstairs for breakfast, he sees his lucky horseshoe has fallen off the shelf.

If any of these events happened to me personally, I wouldn't be troubled in the least. To me, crystal balls and newspaper horoscopes are meaningless. But as a reader and writer and teacher of fiction, I know there is no such thing as "meaningless" in a novel.

Now for the last of my examples of foreshadowing...

## 9. Foreshadowing Through Symbolic Omens

**The first thing Mary saw when she pulled back the curtains was a solitary magpie sitting on the fence. She waited for a second bird to appear, but no magpie came.**

Any reader who knows the magpie rhyme "one for sorrow, two for joy..." will immediately suspect the worst for Mary, even if Mary herself is untroubled by the sighting and soon forgets about it.

The same thing would apply if Mary had opened her curtains to see storm clouds gathering on the horizon.

In novels, [symbolism](http://www.novel-writing-help.com/symbolism.html) counts. Here is how Ernest Hemingway famously foreshadows an early death in the opening line of *A Farewell to Arms*...

**The leaves fell early that year.**

And that is it. Like I said, there are countless ways to foreshadow events in a novel, so you really mustn't take these examples as a complete list. The best thing is to take an event you want to foreshadow and see what methods of foreshadowing are suggested by the event itself.