



Visit a friend or relative's house (with their permission) or go through your own house, but it is hard to be objective about your own house!

Pick a room or several rooms.

1. Note what you see, smell, and hear.
2. What do the contents tell you about the owner: habits, likes, dislikes, and demographics?
3. What do you find in the cabinets, the drawers, on the tables, on the floor?
4. What is tucked away in closets or boxes or hidden from common view?
5. What do the items in the room tell you about the way that room is used and who uses it?
6. If they wanted to hide something, where are the best places to do so?
7. What are they trying to disguise or hide?
8. What are they proud of?
9. What do the items prominently displayed tell you about them?
10. How easy is it to get in and out? What are the points of egress: doors, windows, connecting rooms?



11. Do they have security systems or deadlocks? Do they lock their doors?

12. How is the room decorated? What does the decor say about the current owner or prior owners?

13. What items would a thief walk away with?

14. How hard would it be for someone to go in and out without being heard or seen?

15. Pay attention to line of sight. Stand in the middle of the room. How much of the house can you see?

Whether you examine your own room or someone else's, learn to think like detective when you walk around. Too often we ignore what is right in front of our noses.

Hopefully, this exercise has helped you look at your surroundings in a new way and you can better assist your characters with their detection.

Even if you don't write mysteries, these exercises are a good way to hone your observational skills because every character lives, works, and plays somewhere!

For more information on scene writing visit <http://www.dianahurwitz.com> for free downloads and pick up a copy of Story Building Blocks: The Four Layers of Conflict available in [e-book](#) and [print](#).