

The Ultimate Cliffhanger Checklist

CELT_X

Step 1

Decide what the audience should feel, not what they should learn.

Step 2

Build tension before the cliffhanger, not at the last minute.

Step 3

Reveal or threaten, but never both at once.

Step 4

Cut the scene early, sooner than feels comfortable.

Step 5

Decide what the cliffhanger will cost narratively and emotionally.