

Setting

Important details about setting.

All stories have a setting.

The setting helps tell the story and hook readers.

It generally includes time (time of day, time in history, time of the year...); location; environment; the kind of environment (realistic or imagined; dangerous or safe; crowded or desolate...)

The setting helps readers understand the plot of a story.

The setting can influence the mood, tone, emotional and/or physical and social state of the characters.

The setting affects the characters in the story. The setting can determine what they do (or don't). It determines how characters interact with each other.

The setting can be vague or specific; it can be detailed or general or nondescript (backdrop setting).

The setting is connected to other aspects of a story such as theme, characterization, plot, imagery...

Writers often include buildings, landscapes, weather, scenery (imagery) to contribute to the plot.

Below is an example of setting from ***The Dark Witch*** (2013) by Nora Roberts (1950). The bold printed words help the reader get a vivid picture of where the character is. Examples of setting (and imagery)

“The **cold carved bone deep**, fueled by the **lash of the wind, iced by the drowning rain** gushing from a **bloated sky**. Such was Iona’s welcome to **Ireland**. She loved it. How could she not? she asked herself as she hugged her arms to her chest and drank in the **wild, soggy view** from her window. She was standing **in a castle**. She’d sleep in a castle that night. An honest-to-God castle in **the heart of the west**.”

Example Two: Setting from ***Oliver Twist*** (1838) by Charles Dickens (1812 – 1870)

Activity: Can you share what words help to illuminate the setting?

“The public-houses, with gas-lights burning inside, were already open. By degrees, other shops began to be unclosed, and a few

scattered people were met with. Then, came straggling groups of labourers going to their work; then, men and women with fish-baskets on their heads; donkey-carts laden with vegetables; chaise-carts filled with livestock or whole carcasses of meat; milk-women with pails; an unbroken concourse of people trudging out with various supplies to the eastern suburbs of the town. As they approached the City, the noise and traffic gradually increased; when they threaded the streets between Shoreditch and Smithfield, it had swelled into a roar of sound and bustle."