

What is the setting of a story?

The setting is the time and place a writer chooses for a story. A setting can be a real time experience and location or a fictional world with historical or futuristic time episodes. It answers the questions when? and where? Setting also includes the landscape, climate, weather and the cultural environment.

Why is the setting important?

The setting is important because it serves as a backdrop for the action and dialogue of a story. It helps develop the plot alongside the character action and sets the mood.

How to describe the setting?

If the setting is described so that the readers can imagine it then that will engage the readers. How does the writer keep the readers interested in the setting?

- Immerse them immediately in the location of a story using the five senses.
Example setting: A section of the backyard in the morning.
Sights- butterflies scatter and flutter, new species, the rainbow had vanished, shielded her eyes from the morning sun, out of the shadows
Sounds- scurried along, pecking at pegs
Smells- morning rain ended
Tastes- some settings have only what tastes the characters have with them- magpies finding bugs for breakfast, ravenous
Feelings/sensations- short, spongy lawn protected her knees, snuggled against the leaves, flat on her stomach, leaned back against the fence
- Incorporate real-life locations and keep the descriptions simple.
The place of a story can change throughout the plot or story-line. To maintain reader engagement short, multisensory descriptions of changing or evolving settings are necessary. E.g., the main characters move locations from **backyard** to Luka's **bedroom**.

Sights- away from the glare, desk covered with sketches and notes

Sounds- a sudden thump, enormous bang, snapping its teeth, knock at the door

Smells- fill it with jasmine leaves air-holes in the side of the box and close the lid

Tastes- liquid form, mixture of milk and honey, sweet milk

Feelings/sensations- sat down on the only chair in the room, glanced painfully, jumping and swatting, clasped her hand, bruised and sore

How to teach the setting?

Start simple + daily practice

1. Provide a clear definition of setting.
2. Identify the setting.
3. Describe the setting using multi-sensory descriptions.
4. Discuss your descriptions and how it affects the mood of the story. E.g., sad, happy, cheerful, humorous, hopeful, scary, gloomy, exciting
5. Add precise verbs and adverbs, nouns, adjectives and figurative language to enhance the meaning and mood of the setting. **Mood** is how the story made the reader feel.