



# Grade 7 English Language Arts

Week of October 12 – October 16

## Lesson 1: Writer’s Workshop – Short Stories

### Setting

One of the most important parts of any story is the setting: **LOCATION, TIME, ATMOSPHERE**

<p><b>LOCATION</b> <i>Where the story occurs</i></p>	<p><b>Example</b></p>	<p><b>Commentary</b></p>
	<p>“The wind swirled around, picking up sand and covering the camel train in grit. Dunes stretched endlessly into the horizon. The vast expanse of the desert seemed to go on forever, and the fierce storm could only make things worse.”</p>	<p>Location is described quite clearly in this passage. A group of people are travelling across the desert in a storm. The reader does not have to guess where they are.</p>
<p><b>TIME</b> <i>When the story occurs</i></p> 	<p>“It was a dangerous time to be a spy. SS officers were everywhere, and many weren’t in uniform. The war had taken a terrible toll on many Dutch citizens, but there were still those who refused to submit, and they were the ones who helped Jewish people hide and protected Allied spies from capture.”</p>	<p>While the time the time is never stated directly, details such as the war, SS officers, and the hiding of Jewish people point to some time during WW2 between 1939 and 1945. The reader has to read carefully to put the details together to establish time.</p>
<p><b>ATMOSPHERE</b> <i>The mood or feeling of the story</i></p> 	<p>“Her loneliness was only made all the more real by the fact the nearest neighbor was three miles away. She could barely see the light in the Jensen’s homestead on a clear night, and during a blizzard, everything was an enveloping whiteness, like tonight. Very few people came to visit during the winter. Travel was difficult, and you could get lost in the blizzard, probably never to be found until spring thaw. The days were always busy, but since Herman died, she had no one to talk to save the cat. Amelia felt like an insignificant speck in a hostile universe of white.</p>	<p>In this passage, the setting is on a farm in the winter. There is a blizzard, and the character, who is alone, feels even more isolated. The author uses the setting to emphasize this mood of loneliness and despair. This sense of loneliness would probably not be as effective if the main character was with her family on a crowded city street in the summer.</p>

The setting describes:

### **The location of the story**

- in a small town in northern Canada, in the woods, on a distant planet, etc.

The author usually describes the setting(s) in a story with lots of detail. This helps the reader really picture the scene.

### **The time of the story**

- a long time ago, today, 2050, etc

The time when a story takes place affects many things. If the story were to take place in the early 1800s for instance, then everything the characters do, wear, say, and how they live must match the time period.

### **The mood or feeling of the story**

- is it a happy place? A sad place? A scary place?

Authors carefully choose their settings in order to create a certain mood. For example, a story set in a haunted house on a dark, stormy night would be rather frightening. Another story set on a tropical island with a gentle breeze and waves lapping against the shore would be peaceful and relaxing. Skillful writers often take you through many different moods as they tell their story.

### **Example of "Setting"**

Here is a passage from a sample short story. Notice how the location, time, and mood are developed in this passage.

#### **Example:**

The old barn is cool and cavernous. Its walls offer shelter to many creatures. Particles of straw and dust dance in the shafts of light that pierce the gentle gloom. Earthy smells drift by. In the distance a dusty road winds uphill through a tunnel of maple trees. The scent of lavender perfumes the air, and the early afternoon sun glitters on the wings of bees.

Can you identify the location, time, and mood?? Here are some ideas:

#### **Location**

- An old barn, probably out in the country somewhere. In the distance is a dusty road that winds through a tunnel of maple trees.

#### **Time**

- Early afternoon. It probably takes place in the summer (the scent of lavender and presence of bees hints at this).

#### **Mood**

- Very peaceful and quiet.

**Now complete the Setting activity on the next page**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## 1.2 Setting

Where will your story take place? Will it be in the past, present, or future? Will it be set in another country, in an imaginary world, or in your own backyard? Will it be happy, scary, or exciting? Describe this setting in the space provided.

This assignment can be done as point form notes, paragraphs (see example), a web outline, drawing with captions, or another form of your choice.

### Example:

The story takes place in Nepal and in the lower regions of Mount Everest. It is quite muddy at the bottom and kind of like a jungle. As they climb, the air gets thinner and colder. The mountain is covered with snow and ice. There is a lot of fog making it hard for the climbers to see where they are going at times. The mountain is very steep in places

Return to your online lesson book.