

Grade 4 English Language Arts  
Week of February 16 – February 19

**Before You Read – Setting and Dialects**

## Learning Targets

*By the end of this lesson, you should be able to say YES to the following questions.*

- Can I construct meaningful personal connections to what I am reading?
- Can I use a variety of comprehension strategies and thinking skills before reading, listening, or viewing to construct meaning from my novel?



## All About Setting

One of the most important parts of any story is the **setting**. The setting describes:

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

- *In a small town in northern British Columbia, in the woods, on a distant planet, etc.*

**2. The time of the story** - 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.

- *A long time ago, today, 2050, during a war, in the future...*

**3. 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.

- *Frightening: a story set in a haunted house on a dark, stormy night.*
- *Peaceful and relaxing: a tropical island with a gentle breeze and waves lapping against the shore.*

Skillful writers often take you through many different moods as they tell their story.

## Examples of Setting

Here is a passage from a sample short story. Can you read 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.

## Accents, Dialects, and Setting

Have you ever listened to people that use accents and words that are different from your own? Sometimes, you can tell what part of Canada someone is from by his or her accent.

A regional dialect is a variety of language spoken in a particular region. It may have unique vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation from other regional varieties of the language - a bit more than just a different accent. This happens in Canada, where words are pronounced differently depending on where you live. Examples include tomato, about, caramel, route, aunt, iron, pecan, and more. Sometimes, a story or novel will have characters with accents or dialects.

What is the author's purpose when using dialect?

- To make characters seem more real.
- To make the speaking fit the setting.

## Fun With the Appalachian Dialect

Some characters in *Bridge to Terabithia*, one of your novel study choices, speak an Appalachian dialect from an area in the United States that is south of Ontario.

For example, the characters may:

- leave out the subjects or verbs in sentences
- use incorrect grammar (like “Don’t pay me no mind.” Instead of “Don’t pay attention to me.”)
- use words in different and colourful ways



As you watch the video, pause and try out the accent for fun: <https://youtu.be/hbHccbzDlol>