

# Unit 5 Imaginative Writing: Creating a Setting

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## WRITING ASSIGNMENT

A setting is the time and place in which the story happens. Writers reveal setting by describing the landscape, scenery, buildings, furniture, clothing, weather, and season. Writers can also reveal setting by describing how characters talk, look, and act. Your assignment is to describe the setting for a story. One kind of setting you might enjoy writing is the setting for a scary story.

### PREWRITING

**FINDING YOUR VOICE.** You will want to use a voice that creates the right tone and mood for your setting. A tone is the writer’s attitude toward the subject or the reader. A writer’s tone for a spooky story might be mysterious, suspenseful, or serious. A mood is the feeling or emotion the writer creates in a literary work. By working carefully with descriptive language, the writer can evoke emotional responses in the reader such as fear, discomfort, or anticipation.

Imagine you and a friend discover an old abandoned house. Write a couple of sentences in which your voice reflects fear, mystery, or discomfort.

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Imagine you and a friend discover a hidden pond with a perfect swimming beach. Write a couple of sentences in which your voice reflects surprise, anticipation, and joy.

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**WRITING WITH A PLAN.** Do some freewriting about the situations described below.

Describe an abandoned space station. On your own paper, freewrite for three minutes. Use all six of the following words and phrases: *an opened hatch; control settings that had been changed; echoing noise; coldness; steel.*

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Describe an ancient temple hidden deep in the rain forest. Consider how things look, sound, feel, smell, and taste in the temple. First, list three words or phrases that you could use to describe the temple. Use those words plus these three words: *dank*; *whispering*; *skincrawling*. Freewrite for three minutes.

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Describe a dark, eerie attic. Brainstorm a list of words and phrases you could use. Then freewrite.

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**GRAPHIC ORGANIZER**

**Setting** \_\_\_\_\_ **Audience** \_\_\_\_\_

**Tone and Mood** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sight**

**Sound**

**Smell**

**Touch**

**Taste**


**STUDENT MODEL—GRAPHIC ORGANIZER**

**Setting** Western Town      **Audience** younger kids

**Tone and Mood** spooky and scary

**Sight**

**Sound**

**Smell**

**Touch**

**Taste**

tumbleweed blown by wind	wind whistling	musty saloon	sand stinging my face	dust

"Where am I?" I said. <sup>✓</sup>"I must be dreaming!" Around me it was like the <sup>Use more senses to describe this.</sup> old west. There was a saloon, a jail, even a dirt road. The wind blew a <sup>Cap</sup> tumbleweed from the road and dust flew into my face. I started to run <sup>How did the dust feel?</sup> when I noticed nobody was around. I looked around: nobody in sight. But I had this weird feeling someone was watching me. I ran inside the <sup>— Add more details here.</sup> saloon. It was empty except for a man with a patch over his eye in cowboy clothes. <sup>This doesn't make sense.</sup>

**UNIT 5 LANGUAGE, GRAMMAR, AND STYLE: PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES**

A preposition is used to show how a noun or pronoun is related to other words in the sentence. Examples of common prepositions: *after, among, around, at, behind, beside, for, in, into, on, of, off, over, through, under, until, and with*. A preposition always has an object. The object is a noun or pronoun. The preposition and its object and any modifiers are called a prepositional phrase.

**3.27 Identifying Prepositional Phrases**

No basic part of the sentence is ever in a prepositional phrase, so before determining the subject and verb of a sentence, cross out the prepositional phrases. In the example below, *off* is a preposition. The phrase *off her roller skates* is a prepositional phrase.

EXAMPLE She fell off her roller skates.

**EXERCISES****A. Identifying Prepositional Phrases**

Look at the following sentences from "Pets." Underline the prepositional phrase(s) in each sentence.

1. Eve went to the window of her room and looked into the backyard.
2. The night sky was lit up by a three-quarter moon of great brightness.
3. Eve felt about with her toes.
4. There were no cats on her bed.
5. The fur along his black back was standing up.
6. Eve looked across the room.
7. Eve hurried down the steps and into the yard.

A prepositional phrase should be placed next to the word or phrase that it describes. Otherwise, the meaning can be confused. See the example below. Does this mean that Ishmael had a vacation in English class or that while he was in English class he talked about his vacation?

**CONFUSING**

EXAMPLE Ishmael talked about his vacation in English class.

**CORRECTED**

Ishmael talked in English class about his vacation.

**B. Fixing Prepositional Phrases**

Look through this early student model draft and circle the prepositional phrases you find. Are there any sentences you would rewrite to make the prepositional phrases work more effectively? Rewrite them on the lines given below.

“Where am I?” I said. “I must be dreaming!” Around me it was like the old west. There was a saloon, a jail, even a dirt road. The wind blew from the road a tumbleweed and dust flew into my face. I started to run when I noticed nobody was around. I looked around: nobody in sight in the area. But I had this weird feeling someone was watching me. I ran inside the saloon. It was empty except for a man with a patch over his eye in cowboy clothing.

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**C. Using Prepositional Phrases**

Draft a short description or use the descriptive setting from the writing assignment. Identify the prepositional phrases in your draft. Correct any that are misplaced. Add prepositional phrases where needed to make your writing more precise and descriptive.

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## SELF-EVALUATION—SETTING

BY \_\_\_\_\_

As you evaluate your draft, ask the following questions:

- Is the description appropriate for the intended audience? Why, or why not?

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- If you were reading this description alone at night by yourself, would you be scared? What details would make it scarier? Which details might be deleted?

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- Which descriptions are precise? Which words are vague? How could vague descriptions be improved?

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- Which words help set the mood and tone? What words could you change or add to help set the mood and tone?

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- What is the most effective part of your description? What is the least effective part of your description? How could you change it to be more effective?

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- How does your use of prepositional phrases help you clarify your meaning and add more precise information to your description?

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**PEER EVALUATION—SETTING**

BY \_\_\_\_\_ FOR \_\_\_\_\_

As you evaluate the draft of a classmate, ask the following questions:

- Is the description appropriate for the intended audience? Why, or why not?

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\_\_\_\_\_

- If you were reading this description alone at night by yourself, would you be scared? What details would make it scarier? Which details might be deleted?

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

- Which descriptions are precise? Which words are vague? How could vague descriptions be improved?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Which words help set the mood and tone? What words could you change or add to help set the mood and tone?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

- What is the most effective part of the description? What is the least effective part of the description? How could the writer change it to be more effective?

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- How does the use of prepositional phrases help clarify the writer’s meaning and add more precise information to the description?

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**Level 3 Model (Textbook Model)**

“Where am I?” I said while getting up from the dirt road. “I must be dreaming!” Around me it was like the old West. I saw a saloon with swinging, creaking doors, a jail, even a dusty, dirt road with pot holes big enough to fit your foot into. The wind blew a dusty tumbleweed from the road. A cloud of dust leaped up, the sand stinging my face. I started to run to the nearest building and that’s when I noticed nobody was around, not even a wagon on the road. I looked around: nobody in sight. But I had this weird feeling someone was watching me. I ran inside the saloon. It smelled of dust, mold, and old sarsaparilla. Behind the piano, a man in cowboy clothes with a patch over his eye blinked at me.

**Level 4 Model**

As I walked toward the swamp, I noticed that it was getting dark. The woods beyond looked deep and completely dark. I knew I had to cross the boggy area and enter the woods to find the cabin where my family was staying. The bugs were biting like mad and sometimes all I could hear was the buzz of them. All of a sudden I felt cold and itchy. I was making my way through the grass when I felt like I was being watched by someone or something. As I approached the standing water I smelled mildew, rotting wood, stale water, and vegetation. I could hear the rustling of the grass and birds. When I had gone only fifty feet, everything felt slimy, wet, gooey, and cold. I stepped on a slippery plank of wood. The moisture from the muck oozed through my shoes. Again I felt someone staring at me.

I looked to the left, then right. Nothing. Then I looked forward. Nothing. I jumped around so I could face the direction from which I had come. Nothing.

Fear quickened my pace. I heard myself splashing through the water, soaking my canvas shoes to my ankles, but I kept my gaze forward. Moments later I broke through the swamp onto higher, drier ground. There in the woods I made out the bare glimmer of the light. Now a welcoming campfire blazed in safety. I shortened my strides, and caught my breath so I could casually join my family.

**Level 2 Model**

One foggy day as I was heading for home, I noticed a large lighthouse. It was gray, dull, and extremely ugly.

I could tell from small splats of paint that it was once red. I noticed an entryway and went inside. A table was broken and I guessed this lighthouse was from the early 1900s.

All of a sudden a wooden rafter fell in front of me in the main hall. When the dust cleared I noticed I was looking at a SKELETON!

Once outside I noticed a broken window. I saw it was an old glass window. I went up the ivy which was growing on the south side of the lighthouse and peeked in. “Eww!” Decaying bugs fell in my hair and I got tangled in a cobweb. A grinning skull stared at me from the fireplace. The bed was dusty. “I can’t believe the lighthouse is near where I live!” I said aloud. I was in Canada visiting my friend near the Pacific Ocean.

## Rubric for Imaginative Writing: Creating a Setting

<b>Assessment Scoring Guide:</b>	4 — Strong
	3 — Competent
	2 — Developing
	1 — Emerging
	0 — Not Yet

Category	Writing Characteristic	Self Score	Peer Score	Teacher Score
Focus and Construction of Knowledge	The writer develops a creative, original setting.			
	The writer's purpose is apparent in the mood and tone of the piece.			
	The writer demonstrates a clear understanding of his or her audience.			
Organization and Elaboration	Description is organized in a planned way—in spatial order or in order of importance.			
	The writer incorporates an appropriate amount of detail.			
	The setting is described from the perspective of a narrator, using either the first- or third-person point of view.			
Voice and Word Choice	Enough rich detail, some of it sensory, effectively describes the setting and allows readers to create a picture in their minds.			
	The writing evokes an emotional response from the reader.			
	The description is appropriate for the intended audience.			
Construction of Language	Prepositional phrases are placed near the words they modify.			
	The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions.			
	Prepositional phrases create more precise and descriptive passages (or sentences).			