

SETTING

NCTE/IRA Standards:

Objective: To understand setting and create appropriate setting for a screenplay or other literary form.

Procedure: Display and distribute the student resource pages of the guided learning unit one at a time. The components include:

- A discussion of setting
- Examples of general, specific, and time settings
- Some keys to creating the right setting

Allow the students a few minutes to skim each component before reading the text aloud. Reading the text aloud increases the likelihood that all students will be able to understand and participate. Pause appropriately to explain concepts contained in the instructional text, especially concepts that may be unfamiliar. Solicit comments from the students and ask questions to promote their thinking or evaluate their understanding. Elaborate on the instructional text according to the needs of the class.

It will be helpful to spend extra time differentiating between the general setting of a movie and the specific setting for a scene. In addition to the examples provided in the unit, ask the students to provide their own examples from familiar movies. It will also be useful to discuss the time component of setting in the movies the students name.

If it is not confusing to the students, point out that a *set* is different from a *setting*. The set is the place where a camera is put to take the video of a scene. The set might be in a studio or on location.

Introductory Activity: As a group, ask students to name several familiar movies. Discuss the general setting (time and place) for each movie. Next, ask students to recall the setting of specific scenes in each movie.

Arrange the students in small groups of 2 to 4. Ask each group to identify a movie of their choosing and list the film's name, general setting, the time the movie takes place, and the setting of five specific scenes. After the students have completed the activity, repeat it, but this time assign each group a specific genre, like horror, action, comedy, fantasy, science fiction, or other genre.

Extended Activity: As a class or in small groups, ask the students develop the general setting, time, and at least five scene settings for a movie of their own creation. They can use one of the movies a member of the group created for the treatment activity or a new movie. Have the students arrange the scene settings in a logical order, but they do not have to develop a complete plot for the movie.

Note: Have the students retain their work because they will be useful in other modules.

Internet Search Suggestion: Have the students search for information about the settings of movies with which they are familiar.

Setting

The *setting* of a movie is the time and place that the action happens. Some movies have a single setting. Other movies might have more than one setting. The setting might even include both different places and different times.

The movie *Bandslam* mostly takes place in northern New Jersey in the present time. Within this general setting are a variety of specific settings for the scenes, including Will's house, the school, the garage, and even New York City.

Some movies have a very limited setting. One is the comedy *Airplane*. Almost the whole movie takes place on a plane.

Each of the *Star Wars* movies is set in the future in an imaginary galaxy. The action in the movies happens in many different places.

When writers create a script, they think of the setting in two ways. First, they decide of the general setting, something like New York City in the early 1900s. Then they think of the specific setting for each scene, like the lobby of a famous hotel or a kitchen in Harlem.

Choosing a general setting is one of the first things a screenwriter does. That is because the whole story is tied to the setting. The specific setting for each scene may be outlined before the writer begins or while the writer is creating the scenes. Either way works well, as long as the screenwriter makes sure that the setting matches the plot of the movie.

Keys to Creating the Right Setting

- Think of the general setting while you are creating the story idea.
- Choose a setting that matches your story.
- Think of the specific settings while you write each scene.
- Describe the specific settings briefly. The director will add the details.
- If you get stuck thinking about a specific setting, just write the rest of the scene. You can come back to the specific setting later.
- Use a setting that you know or a setting that you have created in your imagination.
- Think about the audience when you choose the setting. Be sure it makes sense to the audience.
- Avoid jumping from one setting to another too quickly. The audience will have a hard time following the story if you do.
- If a setting is a real place, read about the place so you know it well.
- Don't get too carried away with the setting. The more settings there are in a movie and the more complicated they are, the more expensive the movie is.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

MOVIE	GENERAL SETTING (LOCATION)	SPECIFIC SETTING	TIME
<i>Bandslam</i>	<i>Lodi, NJ</i>	1. <i>Will's house</i> 2. <i>Human Studies class</i> 3. <i>Charlotte's Garage</i> 4. <i>The Overlook</i> 5. <i>Bandslam</i>	<i>Present</i>
<i>Bridge to Terabithia</i>	<i>West Virginia</i>	1. <i>Jess' house</i> 2. <i>Leslie's house</i> 3. <i>School</i> 4. <i>The museum</i> 5. <i>Terabithia</i>	<i>Present</i>
<i>Twilight</i>	<i>Forks, WA</i>	1. <i>Bella's house</i> 2. <i>Forks High School</i> 3. <i>The Cullen's House</i> 4. <i>The marina</i> 5. <i>The diner</i>	<i>Present</i>
		2. 3. 4. 5.	
		1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	
		1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	
		1. 2. 3. 4. 5.	