

# Settings toolkit © Pie Corbett 2024



Talk for Writing

Always ask, "What mood am I trying to create?" – then you can select words that fit.

To create a setting that the reader can imagine, which sounds real and has an atmosphere, you might want to:

Nursery/Reception	Y1/2: as in N/R+	Y3/4: as in Y1/2+	Y5/6: as in Y3/4+
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Talk about what places look like using adjectives (describing words): <i>dark, gloomy, sunny, bright</i></li> <li>Orally describe what a setting looks like, what you can hear, what it feels like, what it smells like (senses)</li> <li>Orally describe where something is using simple prepositions: <i>On the shelf, next to the plate, etc.</i></li> <li>Help the reader to see what you are describing by using a simile: <i>The grass is like a soft carpet.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choose a name for the setting using a proper noun: <i>London, Banjo Beach</i></li> <li>Include time of day and the weather: <i>It was a <u>hot night...</u>; <u>Just before midnight</u>, ...</i></li> <li>Help your reader picture the setting by choosing adjectives carefully: <i>the <u>ancient</u> bridge</i> or by using 'like' and 'as' similes: <i>The trees looked <u>like</u> candy floss clouds.</i></li> <li>Pile up the description using two or three adjectives to describe (commas in a list): <i>The forest was <u>cold, dark and silent</u>. The sea was <u>calm, warm and welcoming</u>.</i></li> <li>Help the reader to feel what the setting is like through the senses: <i>Jack walked past the busy school. <u>The noisy bell was ringing.</u></i></li> <li>Show where things are in the setting using prepositions: <i><u>near</u> the cave; <u>on top of</u> the table; <u>behind</u> the door</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choose a name that suggests something about the setting using a proper noun: <i>Hangman's Wood</i></li> <li>Select the time of day and weather to create a desired effect: <i><u>thunder rumbled through the darkness</u></i></li> <li>Help your reader picture the setting using carefully chosen verbs and adverbs: <i>Snow <u>fell gently and covered</u> the <u>quiet</u> cottage in the wood.</i> or using a detailed sentence of 3 to describe (commas in a list): <i><u>Old carpets, dusty sheets and broken chairs</u> littered the floor.</i></li> <li>Bring the setting to life through personification: <i>The warm night air <u>caressed</u> her face.</i></li> <li>Show the setting through the character's eyes: <i>Jo looked round the room.</i></li> <li>Show how a character reacts to the setting through an emotive verb: <i>Jo <u>shivered</u>. Jack let out a gentle sigh.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce something unusual to hook the reader and lead the story forwards: <i><u>There was a crumpled letter on the doormat.</u></i></li> <li>Use a change of setting, weather or time to create a new atmosphere: <i><u>A glimmer of sunlight parted the stormy sky</u></i></li> <li>Use action within a sentence of 3 to bring the setting alive (emotive verbs and commas in a list): <i><u>Rusty pipes groaned, fragile cobwebs trembled and a slither of light punctured</u> the darkness.</i></li> <li>Build tension by hinting at what might happen: <i><u>Death's Dell lay silent, suffocated by mist.</u></i></li> <li>Create a strong sense of atmosphere using personification, simile or metaphor: <i><u>The sofa beckoned with welcoming arms like a mother waiting for a hug.</u></i></li> <li>Use contrast to engage and intrigue the reader: <i><u>Buildings that once had stood proud were now merely rubble.</u></i></li> <li>Mirror a character's feelings through the setting or the weather (pathetic fallacy): <i><u>The rain poured; Gary sniffed.</u></i></li> </ul>