**Setting**

Authors set their characters in a “world” with a particular location in place, time and culture. Setting is comprised of the physical details, the temporal details and the cultural details of that world.

**Physical Setting**: The physical aspects of setting include all of the places where the action takes place. It includes the geography, the climate, and the physical objects. Physical setting may change from scene to scene.

**Temporal Setting**: **(Time)** The temporal aspects of setting consist of three things: time in history, time of year, and time of day. Time greatly impacts character motivation and action.

**Cultural Setting**: The cultural setting includes patterns of behavior and beliefs that dominate the society in which the characters live. Family relationships, moral values, political systems, class structures, gender roles and race relations are all part of the cultural environment.

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| Questions for Analyzing Setting |
| 1. What characterizes the physical setting of the literary work? If there are several physical settings, how are they different? 2. To what senses does the author appeal in order to establish the physical setting? What general impression does the physical setting make on the readers’ senses? 3. When does the narrative take place – what historical period, what season, what time of day? How does the time period affect the characters and the action? How does it relate to the characters’ attitudes? 4. How much time passes during the narrative? How does this affect the plot, the characters, and the themes? 5. In what ways does the author slow down or speed up our impression of passage of time? 6. What characterizes the society depicted in the literary work? What cultural codes are reflected by the details of the setting and by the characters’ actions and beliefs? How does society influence the characters? What conflicts does the society create? How are these conflicts resolved? 7. What aspects of setting does the author focus on? Do the aspects of setting have symbolic meaning? |