

Settings Toolkit – Progression Document

Purpose: to create a setting the reader can imagine, which sounds real and has an atmosphere.			
Reception	Year 1 and 2 As in Reception plus:	Year 3 and 4 As in Year 1 and 2 plus:	Year 5 and 6 As in Year 3 and 4 plus:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw maps showing different settings. • Create a simple story that starts and ends in the same place. • Create a simple story in which the main character goes from setting to setting on a journey. • Write a story with a local setting the children are familiar with. • Select from banks of photos or images of settings to aid writing. • Use adjectives (<i>dark, gloomy, sunny</i>) and simple similes to describe settings. <p>See also Description toolkit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose a name for the setting. • Include the tie of day and weather – <i>It was a hot night.</i> • Help your reader feel what the setting is like by carefully choosing adjectives. • Help your reader to picture the setting using ‘like’ or ‘as’ similes. • Pile up the description using sentences of 3 (list sentences) to describe – <i>The forest was cold, dark and silent. The sea was calm, warm and welcoming.</i> • Use prepositions to extend descriptions – <i>near the cave, on top of the table, behind the door.</i> • Try to see it in your mind and use your senses to describe. • Take your character home to end a story. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose a name that suggests something about the setting – <i>Hangman’s Wood.</i> • Select the time of day and weather to create a desired effect – <i>thunder rumbled in the darkness.</i> • Bring the setting to life using carefully chosen verbs and adverbs – <i>Snow fell gently and covered the cottage in the wood.</i> • Step into the setting and bring it to life using the sense e.g. a detailed sentence of 3 to describe what can be seen, heard or touched – <i>Old carpets, dusty sheets and broken chairs littered the floor.</i> • Bring the setting to life through personification – <i>The warm night air caressed her face.</i> • Show the setting through the character’s eyes – <i>Jo looked around the room.</i> • Show how the character reacts to the setting – <i>Jo shivered.</i> • Develop similes to make them more interesting and fitting – <i>He plodded along steadily and as slowly as a snail.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce something unusual to hook the reader and lead the story forwards – <i>There was a crumpled letter on the doormat.</i> • Use a change of setting, weather or time to create a new atmosphere – <i>a glimmer of sunlight parted the stormy sky/ Before long the sunshine was replaced by inky darkness which surrounded them.</i> • Use action within a sentence of 3 to bring the setting alive – <i>Rusty pipes groaned, fragile cobwebs trembled and a slither of light punctured the darkness.</i> • Build tension by hinting at what might happen – <i>Death’s Dell lay silent, suffocated by mist.</i> • Create a strong sense of atmosphere – using personification, simile and metaphor – <i>The sofa beckoned with welcoming arms, a mother waiting to hug.</i> • Use contrast to engage and intrigue the reader – <i>Buildings that once had stood proud were now merely rubble.</i> • Mirror a character’s feelings through the setting or the weather (pathetic fallacy) – <i>The rain poured; Gary sniffed.</i> • Develop ideas e.g. think of a simile and then add where and when – <i>It was as cold as ice floating in the Arctic Ocean on a moonlit winter’s night.</i>

Useful ideas for teaching settings – always co-construct the toolkit with the class.

Reception	Year 1 and 2 As in Reception plus:	Year 3 and 4 As in Year 1 and 2 plus:	Year 5 and 6 As in Year 3 and 4 plus:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect, display and use images of settings – <i>castle, forest lake</i>. • Collect settings where something might happen – <i>bridge, old house</i>. • Raid picture books and fairy tales. • Use images of places and describe these, imagining a story happening. Label with simple captions. • Provide maps with different settings drawn or blank spaces for children in settings. • Create a simple story in which a main character goes from settings to setting on a journey. • Provide story floor mats and settings to choose from during story play – <i>toy trees, a garage etc.</i> • Use guided drama to help children imagine being in different settings and use words to describe what they can see, feel and hear. • Bring a setting to life through drama with children becoming the scene – <i>a playground, a shop</i>. • Wherever possible, link to authentic experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect banks of settings, weather and time of the day words and phrases. • Collect bank of adjectives that describe colour, shape and size, feelings; collect a bank of verbs to describe movement. • Use artwork and real places for drawing and collecting descriptions. • Use short-burst writing/ spine poems to teach description. • Use drama to enter imagined worlds; move through different settings and describe. • Use drama/ images to list words or invent sentences – <i>what can you see, touch, smell and hear in the setting?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect language banks for settings, weather and time – sort by mood. • Raid novels for images, descriptive passages and write ‘in the style of’. • Compare descriptions and analyse the effect created. • Use drama to enter settings and mime how a character reacts. • Use film and real locations for short-burst writing to develop description. • Use ‘tell me’ to develop settings through an imagined character’s eyes. • Use ‘in a dark, dark house’ to build settings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use images to train observation, brainstorm language and ideas. Shape these into descriptive passages. • From novels, collect and compare different settings that create different moods; write similar descriptions of scenes. • Use drama to create and describe settings; show an image/ film clip and interview ‘eye witnesses’; use guided visualisation to imagine scenes <i>e.g. The Highwayman</i>. • Use physical theatre to build settings or retell tales; create still images and use ‘talking objects’ to describe. • Use sound effects, music and voices to create and dramatise settings. • Experiment with historical, real and imagined settings.