



Write Workshop

The Construction of Space

Adult

Introduction

Setting refers to the time and space of a scene. The details you share with a reader will say something about the character and the story. Think about your work as a digitized picture. As readers zoom in, the image becomes more pixelated. You need to include enough details (pixels) to avoid a blurry picture. You build those pixels bit by bit in the process of worldbuilding.

First Impressions

First impressions explore what the reader or hero make of the world early in the story. Consider these categories:

- **Scope:** Scope is the size or range of your setting. The scope of the world heavily impacts the scope of your story
- **Appearance:** What does your world look like? This can include things like buildings and furniture, but also the landscape and natural geography
- **Atmosphere:** This explores not only what your world feels like, but the overall impact on the characters. How does your world impact their senses or emotions?
- **Infrastructure:** Think about how your characters navigate within your world. This could mean things like traveling or meeting their basic human needs
- **Rules:** Rules set boundaries for your characters. This is where you can explore laws, social normal, and even natural or supernatural principles

Characters

Characters complete the place. Characters can help your setting reach its full potential, and your setting can help your characters reach their full potential. Different characters complete the place in different ways. Think about different character types:

- **Stock characters:** These characters provide background and highlight a specific feature of your world
- **Minor characters:** These characters can be used to embody your place or showcase a particular rule
- **Major characters:** These characters are used to embody themes or values in your story. They help establish the world dynamic
- **Main character(s):** Your world revolves around them. They become the agent of the reader in navigating the world you've created

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Culture

Worldbuilding is about describing your culture without include a full encyclopedia. Consider both visual representations (generally superficial) and deeper representations. These might include:

- Food
- Festivals
- Economy
- Social roles
- Flags
- Famous figures
- Work and leisure activities
- Family dynamics
- Fashion
- Political systems
- Values

History

Cultures develop in certain ways for certain reasons. This history helps build the story. As you construct historical events, think about how it affects your characters. What have they lost or gained? Historical events generally fall into three main categories:

- **Trauma:** Events such as wars, massacres, revolutions, or social unrest
- **Advancement:** Events like discoveries, technological advances, and social progression
- **Subtle Shifts:** Events like shifting power dynamics between or within groups and increased or decreased tension

Tips and Tricks

- Capitalize on the suspension of disbelief by placing the most unbelievable event at the beginning of your story
- Use multimodality to your advantage and construct your world from different angles
- Create diversity, just like the real world
- Plan, but never over-plan

Additional Resources

Explore additional resources on our [website](#) and blog [Plano Library Learns](#), including information about library [databases](#). Use your library card to [checkout](#) more books or download [eBooks](#) and continue learning and exploring

Books

Writing Your Novel from Start to Finish: A Guidebook for the Journey by Joseph Bates [Checkout](#)

Inside this resource, you'll find a combination of exercises, how-to instruction, and motivational passages to keep you moving forward. No matter your skill level or genre, *Writing Your Novel from Start to Finish* will help you set goals and attain tiny wins that keep you motivated along the way to your completed novel.

Elements of Fiction by Walter Mosley [Checkout](#)

In a series of conversational and intuitive chapters, Mosely breaks down the art of fiction to its most essential elements: character and character development, plot and story, voice and narrative, context and description. The result is a detailed depiction of the writing process, from the blank page to the first draft to rewriting, and rewriting again.

The Writer's Guide to Places by Don Prues and Jack Heffron [Checkout](#)

Fill your settings with the insider details readers love. Featuring all fifty states, ten Canadian provinces, and fifty-one North American cities, this book provides a writer's eye view of hundreds of fascinating locales, from bustling cities and science landscapes to tourist traps and small town squares.

eBooks

Creative Writing for Dummies by Maggie Hamand ([OverDrive/Libby](#)) [Checkout](#)

Whether you dream of being a novelist, a travel writer, a poet, a playwright or a columnist, *Creative Writing for Dummies* shows you how to unlock your creativity and choose the genre of writing that suits you best. Walking you through characterization, setting, dialogue and plot, as well as giving expert insights into both fiction and non-fiction, it's the ideal launching pad to the world of creative writing.

Fictional Favorites by Dona Herweck Rice ([Available through TexShare](#). *Requires Plano Public Library card*)

Explore the characters and settings that have captivated readers over time with this high-interest informational text.

The Ultimate Writer's Workbook by Serita Deborah Stevens ([Available through TexShare](#). *Requires Plano Public Library card*)

The more you hear something, the more you do it, the more natural it will become. Imagination, like our other muscles, must be exercised, stretched, and stimulated in all possible ways.

Articles

Setting: The Other Character from Weekly Reader Corporation [Literary Reference Center - EBSCO](#)

The article offers information on writing the setting of a story through the proper choice of words, making the characters interact with their worlds and learning about the names of flora and fauna in the setting that can be used in writing a story.

Power Your Story with a Sense of Place by Philip Martin [Literary Reference Center - EBSCO](#)

This article discusses several ways that writers can revise their work so that the settings are more important. Tips and examples are given related to different ways a writer can use place or setting in their work. Point of view, selective details, perspective and using all the senses are all things that aid in the development of a setting that readers will be interested in.

Draw the Connection Between Character & Setting: To Make the Most of Your Story's Sense of Place, Answer 11 Key Questions by Elaine Fowler Palencia [Literary Reference Center - EBSCO](#)

The article offers tips and advice to authors on establishing a setting in works of fiction. Topics discussed include the interactions between characters and setting, the contribution of setting to the tone of a story, the relationship of the protagonist to setting, and the role of restricted space.

Here & Now: 6 Steps for Creating Convincing, Compelling Settings That Will Bring Your Story to Life by Daniel Stolar [Literary Reference Center - EBSCO](#)

The article offers tips and advice to authors on establishing a setting in a literary narrative. Topics discussed include finding a key detail in order to evoke further details, appealing to many senses, and establishing the relationship between character and setting.

Online Tutorials

The Foundations of Fiction by Jessica Brody [Lynda.com](#)

Creative writing enthusiasts of all stripes could benefit from a review of the basics. Learn how to develop compelling characters, write sparkling dialogue, and decide on the right point of view for your tale. Plus, learn how to build memorable settings and turn any story skeletons into rich, compelling plots.

Writing Great Fiction: Storytelling Tips and Techniques [Kanopy - The Great Courses](#)

Writing great fiction isn't a gift reserved for a talented few – the craft of storytelling can be learned. Even if you don't dream of penning the next *Moby Dick*, you'll enjoy exploring the elements of fiction. A wealth of exercises will get you writing so that you can practice the many techniques you learn. From evoking a scene to charting a plot, this course is a master class in storytelling.

Writing: *The Craft of Story* by Lisa Cron [Lynda.com](https://www.lynda.com)

Whether you're writing a story from scratch, or revising your story for the umpteenth time, this course offers practical how-to advice, then illustrates it using before-and-after examples. Discover how to craft a first page, zero in on your story's point, create empathy, find a character's secret goals and inner issues, translate generics into specifics, write for suspense, create cause-and-effect connections, build momentum and tension, and deftly implement setups, payoffs, flashbacks, subplots, and foreshadowing.

Websites

[Fantasy Name Generators](#)

Includes over 1300 name generators, description generators, guides, and various tools. Choose from fantasy names, real names, place names, pop culture, and various descriptions to get started. Each generator includes a description of its context.

[MasterClass: How to Create a Vivid Setting for Your Story](#)

Setting is one of the most important elements of an immersive, engaging story. Including just the right details draws your readers into the world you've built, allowing them to temporarily inhabit the storyline. If they can see it, hear it, smell it – they're as good as there.

[SelfPublishing.com: Setting of a Story: How to Create a Story Setting That Attracts Readers](#)

The setting of a story is a powerful driver for hooking book readers into a story. Does your story setting help tell your story? Does it deepen your plot and enrich your characters? Does your setting engage the reader by setting the mood and increasing the emotional connection to your characters?

[The Ultimate List of 42 WorldBuilding Resources](#)

A list of resources to help you create a realistic, fascinating world. Resources explore exercises, questionnaires, culture and belief systems, weather, and more.

[The WorldBuilding School](#)

Posts, resources, and tips for building your world. This website includes a section for how to draw maps, fantasy map tutorials, and resource for creating your own maps.

[The Writer: Beyond the Backdrop: Mastering Setting in Fiction](#)

Fully developing the setting of your work can lead to richer characters and deeper plotlines. The particular time and place of the story can help the story to evolve and offer insight to the writer about the plot and characters.

[Writer's Digest: Discover the Basic Elements of Setting in a Story](#)

No matter if you are just getting started or want to break into fiction writing, setting is a crucial element to any story. In order to create an imaginary world for your story, you'll need to know the fundamental elements of setting first.