



Syllabus

Instructor: Jackie Cangro

What is this class about?

Building immersive setting allows the reader to feel she is stepping out of her world and into the world of your story. That is true whether you're writing fantasy, mystery, historical fiction or anything in between. Setting and place are a collection of details—the right details in the right amount—that will captivate readers. These details are anything in the characters' surroundings (present or past): the kitchen, the houseboat, the oak tree, the winter storm. It also includes the general time and location: 1968, San Francisco, first day of summer.

Over the next five days, we will uncover the ways to use place and setting to make your story sing. We'll discuss why you should make the setting a natural extension of the character and how to choose the right descriptive details. Each day for five days, you'll find two items in the online classroom folder: a short lesson with plenty of examples and an exploration.* You'll gain practical skills to help improve the setting in your stories.

*This is my favorite part! The explorations are designed to help you explore (get it?) the tips covered in that day's lesson. I've cultivated these methods over many years to encourage writers to connect to their WIP on a personal, deeper level.

How Does This Class Work?

This class is asynchronous, meaning that you don't have to be online at a specific time. Login and access the materials at your own convenience. Each module will be available at midnight Eastern time on that day. You can return to previous lessons, but you won't be able to jump ahead. All of the materials will be available for two days after the final module if you need to catch up.

We have a general forum with different threads in the online classroom so you can ask questions, share your work (if you want), and get to know your classmates. I'll be active in the forum offering feedback and encouragement, and I hope to see you there.

For a larger writing community, please join [our private Facebook group](#). Request to join and I'll add you right away. Here you can interact and share with students from this class and my previous classes. What writer doesn't need more writer friends?

Set aside about one hour per day for the lessons, explorations, and forums. Your time will probably break down like this:

- 20 minutes to read the lesson
- 15 minutes for the exploration
- 15 minutes for the deep dive
- 10 minutes to share on the forum

Schedule

- Day 1: Grounding the reader in the world of your story
 - Lesson: How to develop vivid sensory details to captivate readers
 - Exploration: Familiar things
- Day 2: Revealing character emotions through setting
 - Lesson: Understanding the difference between macro and micro setting
 - Exploration: The I-spy game
- Day 3: Creating setting that acts as another character
 - Lesson: Applying characterization techniques to setting
 - Exploration: Your favorite street
- Day 4: Setting moves the plot forward
 - Lesson: How to use setting to develop backstory and conflict
 - Exploration: Homecoming
- Day 5: Troubleshooting setting
 - Lesson: Dos and don'ts of creating immersive setting
 - Exploration: Your image journal

About Me

I am the editor of *The Subway Chronicles: Scenes from Life in New York*, published by Penguin/Plume. The book began as an online journal, accepting essays from writers of all skill levels. After negotiating a print version, I edited work from wonderful authors such as Lawrence Block, Jonathan Lethem and Calvin Trillin. One of my short stories was selected as a finalist in the *Saturday Evening Post's* Great American Stories 2014, and my other works of fiction have

appeared in *The MacGuffin*, *Valparaiso Fiction Review*, *The Cortland Review*, and *Pangolin Papers*.

I have an MFA in creative writing from Georgia State University and have worked at Simon & Schuster and Penguin Random House for a combined 18 years. I've taught in person literature courses at the College of New Rochelle and online classes through The Loft Literary Center. As a freelance editor, I've reviewed dozens of novel and short story manuscripts, providing writers with feedback to revise their novels.

Special note

All of the information contained in these lessons and explorations are just for you. It is okay to save and download them for your personal reference. I ask that you don't share or distribute them to people outside this class so I can continue to offer this course in this format at a reasonable price.

Questions?

Email me at contact@jacquelinecangro.com