



Day 4: Exploration—Homecoming

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Setting has an active role to play in your story! It can be the reason for character or plot conflicts and ultimately why characters decide to take action.

Homecoming

Spend time considering the history of the location where your story takes place. Whether this is 1920s Chicago or the Planet Zoog that you invented, it should be as rich as the personal history of your main character. Consider things like:

- What is the weather like?
- What are the most prominent buildings or natural formations?
- What types of homes are most common?
- What sort of flora and fauna are present?
- What is everyday life like?
- Are there particular smells or sounds associated with this place?
- What is the culture of the residents?
- How has this place changed over time?

You may not include all of this information in your story but having a basis for how the location affects the experiences of your characters will help uncover the potential for how the setting itself can create conflict.

Exploration

Consider an interesting experience that took place in the past month. Maybe you had a thought-provoking conversation while in line at the ATM or you tasted the best ice cream of your life (if so, please tell me where it is!). Write a short paragraph about it, maybe four or five sentences, tapping into as many senses as possible. (Remember our sensory images from Day 1!) Don't forget to include how you were feeling.

Now rewrite the scene in a new location. Pick any location—it doesn't matter how improbable it is. What if you'd been eating that ice cream at a gelateria in Rome? Or on Planet Zoog? Or at a research station in Antarctica? How would the change in location change your experience? Make some notes about this imagined experience. What emotions do you have? How would your sensory images change? Does any conflict arise?

Deeper Dive

Sometimes changing the location of a scene can reveal an important point of conflict, key emotions, and a beat of action.

Pick a scene in your story that takes place in a static location: the kitchen, a diner, the car, etc. Reimagine this scene in a new location. What if you move the character(s) from the kitchen to the county fair? From the diner to the public library?

In your notebook, rewrite a few paragraphs from this scene in the new location. Take into consideration how the new location changes the way the characters interact with each other and their environment. What new emotions arise? How does it increase the tension or conflict?

The purpose of this exploration is to consider how a place can change the atmosphere of the scene by changing the characters' potential actions and emotional responses. While it may not be something you will ultimately include in your story, you may learn a lot about how place affects your character!

Forum

I'd love to learn how you did with this exploration, and if you have any ice cream recommendations! Please head over to the [Forum](#) link in the classroom. Let me know if you have any questions. See you there!