

Year of Impossible Goodbyes

By Sook Nyui Choi

The Importance of Setting in Historical Fiction

**Ohio Standards
Connection**

Reading Process: Concepts of Print, Comprehension Strategies and Self-Monitoring Strategies

Benchmark A

Determine a purpose for reading and use a range of reading comprehension strategies to better understand text.

Indicator 5

Select, create and use graphic organizers to interpret textual information

Reading Applications: Literary Text

Benchmark B

Analyze the importance of setting.

Indicator 2

Analyze the features of setting and their importance in a text.

Lesson Summary:

The students identify parts of the setting that occur in different types of text and explain the setting's importance to the text.

Commentary:

This lesson provides a full treatment of setting. Beyond a simple discussion of place, this lesson considers all aspects of setting: place, time and atmosphere. The lesson also includes a **jigsaw** reading strategy to involve the class in cooperative learning group work.

Estimated Duration: *Four hours in class, plus additional time outside of class to complete projects*

Pre-Assessment:

- Distribute the *Setting Pre-Test*, Attachment A, along with the *Setting Paragraph*, Attachment B.

Scoring Guidelines:

- From the pre-test, make observations about the general knowledge of students related to setting.
- While looking through the responses, determine what aspects of setting require more emphasis.

Post-Assessment:

Students will complete the Setting Circle, Attachment F, as it relates to an example of Korean poetry.

Scoring Guidelines:

See Grading Criteria on each of the project choice attachments.

Instructional Procedures:

Students should have completed reading the novel *Year of Impossible Goodbyes* by Sook Nyul Choi before completing this lesson on setting.

Part One

1. Complete the pre-assessment *Setting Pre-Test*, Attachment A.
2. Review the results with the class using the *Literary Element Setting Sheet*, Attachment C.
3. Distribute copies of the first chapter of the novel, *Year of Impossible Goodbyes*. Be sure the first page includes the map of Korea in 1945. Reread the first two or three pages aloud with the class to remind them of the setting.

Part Two

Instructional Tip: Assign the *Setting Questions*, Attachment D, for homework.

4. Put students into groups of four.
5. Students discuss the six homework questions.
6. Assign a number (corresponding to the question numbers) to each student.
7. When the small groups finish discussing, have students move into new groups according to the number each received using the jigsaw technique.

Instructional Tip:

In a jigsaw, students become experts on one facet of a topic studied by the class. Each student teaches others the aspect. In this case, students grouped by question numbers share the different aspects brought to light by each of the groups.

8. Students again discuss the homework question with this new group.
9. Facilitate a whole group discussion to debrief students about the questions and any differences that emerged from the small group deliberations.
10. Complete a *Group Evaluation Sheet*, Attachment E, to evaluate each group's performance.
11. Introduce *Setting Circle*, Attachment F.
12. Require that students read this poem by the Korean poet, Yun Seondo, and complete the *Setting Circle, Attachment F*, for homework.

(Yun Seondo (1587-1671) also wrote a famous collection of forty sijo of the changing seasons through the eyes of a fisherman.)

You ask how many friends I have? Water and stone, bamboo and pine.
The moon rising over the eastern hill is a joyful comrade.
Besides these five companions, what other pleasure should I ask?

13. Assess Setting Circles using the Scoring Guide, Attachment G.

Differentiated Instructional Support:

Instruction is differentiated according to learner needs, to help all learners either meet the intent of the specified indicator(s) or, if the indicator is already met, to advance beyond the specified indicator(s).

- To help all learners meet the intended skills required for the pre-assessment, provide setting paragraphs at different reading levels.
- To help all learners meet the intended skills required for completing the Setting Circle, students could work in pairs.

Materials and Resources:

For the teacher: copies of *Year of Impossible Goodbyes*, copies of poem by Yun Seondo, copies of all attachments;

For the students: copies of all attachments, copies of novel and poem.

Attachment A
Setting Pre-Test

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Define each term as it refers to the setting in the text.

Place:

- Give an example:

Time:

- Give an example:

Atmosphere:

- Give an example:

Use the short paragraph provided to identify the three parts of the setting.

Place:

Time:

Atmosphere: Attachment B
Setting Paragraph

In the steaming, equatorial heat of mid-July, the travelers paddled dugout canoes to their camp that was barely distinguishable from the luxurious foliage of the rain forest. Having no defined banks, the river water

flowed freely throughout the entire camp and wandered wildly to surround towering trees that apparently thrived with their bottoms submerged in murky Amazon waters. Hence, the huts stood on stilts, connected only by slippery, narrow boardwalks that both challenged and thrilled the gringo travelers. Exotic animals of Ecuador announced their presence with screeches, hoots and grunts, but the dense jungle kept their identities secret. Most delightful were the extraordinary, neon-blue butterflies that flaunted their huge wings in the sun before disappearing into the tangled blackness. Occasionally, brilliant parrots flashed overhead causing the visitors to gasp in wonder. That night they lay under mosquito nets in their huts with dark water sloshing somewhere beneath the floorboards, and they strained to catch wild nocturnal sounds. Here was a magic hideaway yet untouched by the 21st century.

Used by permission of author, Carol E. Fynn

Attachment C
Literary Element: Setting

Name _____ Date _____

Setting is the time, place and atmosphere in which a story's events occur.

Time?

- **When does the story occur?**
 - **Date 7:00, Wednesday night**
 - **Year (1950)**
 - **Century (21st Century)**
 - **Past, Present, Future**

Place?

- **Sometimes the author plainly reveals the place, and sometimes you have to “read between the lines” to uncover the setting.**
- **Look for the description.**
 - **For example: It was a hot and steamy night out on the bayou.**
 - **The word bayou should give you a clue that perhaps the setting is in the southern United States around New Orleans.**

Atmosphere?

- **This refers to the general feeling about the setting of the story.**
- **The writer creates atmosphere using imagery and descriptive language.**
 - **For example, the atmosphere can be described as “an exciting scene,” “a story filled with sadness” or “spooky.”**

Attachment D
Setting Questions

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Answer each question as it pertains to the text.

1. Describe the setting in this story.
2. How do you think the setting impacts the plot of this story?
3. What words or phrases of the setting could you change without altering the story?
4. Which parts of the setting would alter the story if they were changed?
5. What place do you think is the central part of the setting?

Why do you think this place is important to the setting?

How does this place affect the characters and events in the story?

6. Why do you feel the setting of this story is important to the text? Support your answer with examples from the story.

Attachment F Setting Circle

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Have students draw a circle on this sheet and divide it into four quadrants.

Complete the Setting Circle by identifying information from the novel for each section. The sections are labeled :

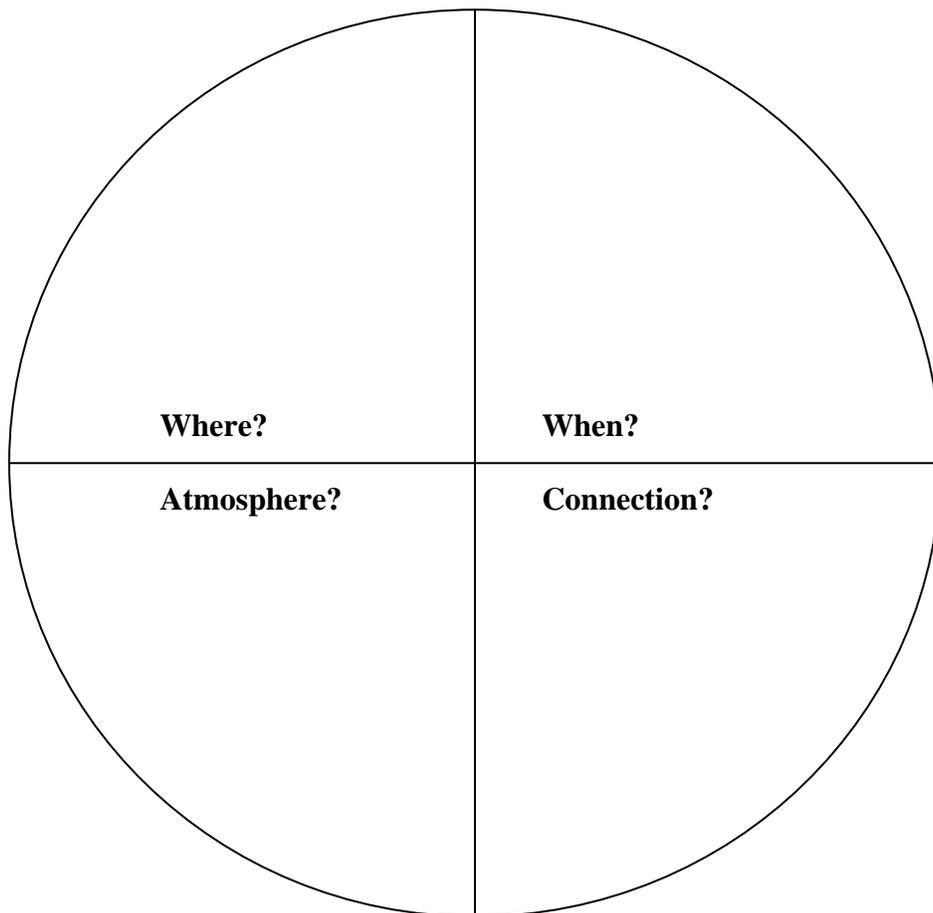
When?

Where?

Atmosphere?

Illustration/Connection.

Be sure to provide proof in each section by returning to the poem and copying the specific words that relate to each quadrant heading. Make the connection from the setting to another text, with yourself or with the world.



Attachment G
Setting Circle: Scoring Guide

Name _____

Date _____

Time (when) 5 points _____

Place (where) 5 points _____

Atmosphere 5 points _____

Setting Connection 5 points _____

Sketch of Setting 5 points _____

Colorful 5 points _____

Neat 5 points _____

_____ /35

