

Writing Activity: Setting

Revision is an important step in the writing process. While getting down a first draft takes a lot of creative energy, going back to your writing in order to make edits and figure out how to make your writing stronger is equally important in any writing process.

Creatively, sometimes our best ideas aren't the first ideas we come up with, and it's something you have to work on in steps to make better, like any other skill. Other times, our original ideas might need to be changed entirely after learning something new.

Either way, going back and revising your writing is a great habit to make your story stronger.

Writing Prompt

Rewrite your origin story to make it stronger by including sensory details to describe your villain's setting.

Sensory details are descriptions using details based on the five senses. Our senses (sight, touch, taste, sound, smell) are our primary source of knowledge about the world. Writing that uses specific, sensory details is more likely to bring readers into that world so they can experience what's happening and feel like they are there in the story.

Consider the difference between these sentences with and without sensory details:

The plane flew over.

The buzzing sounds of the plane flew over our heads on that quiet, sunny day.

Using the five senses:

Sight:

What can you see when you look around? Are there colors you notice? Objects that look like giant versions of something small? Creatures running around?

Touch:

What did it feel like? Was the temperature cold like ice? Are there lots of rocks or any special textures?

Taste:

What does it taste like? Sour like gummy worms? Salty like popcorn?

Sound:

What sounds do you hear? Is there background noise? An alarm that goes off?

Smell:

What does it smell like there? Like a morning after it rained? Or like a gym bag?

Still stuck on sensory details?

Here's a quick Brainstorm Activity for practice.

The most effective way to incorporate sensory detail is to use all five senses in harmony to help make the scene come to life. Rewrite the following paragraph by adding details using sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste together to make the description more vivid:

Example:

The team was nervous before their game. They had been practicing all year. It is important that they win the championship. The auditorium was filled with people and it was loud. They played and ended up winning. The team celebrated.

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Example:

Grandma Lola reached over and grabbed his arm. He was nervous because the staircase was so steep, but she leaned against him and they began to climb.

Grandma Lola lurched over and grabbed the pale skin of his forearm with her leathery hand. The folds in her skin looked like the bumpy map of the world that his dad has hanging in the kitchen. He looked ahead toward the winding staircase and nervously bit his lip. His mouth filled with the bitter taste of boiled vegetables as she leaned in closer, breathing her hot breath on the back of his neck. As they slowly climbed the long, steep staircase, the only sound was his grandmother's breathing and the creak of the wooden stairs.

Origin Story Revisions

Revision: Add 5 sensory details about the setting to your origin story to make it stronger. Use your I Am character brainstorm for ideas.

What does the world look like? Does it take place on another planet or when you walk outside, do things look like a cartoon world?

What do you hear when you walk around? Are there creatures in the world that make a special noise? Is there an alarm that wakes your character up?

If you explored the world for a day, what kinds of things could you interact with and touch?

Does it smell like cinnamon in your world or is it dark and wet and smell like rain? Do foods taste like something else?