

This is How

An introduction to creative writing

Module 2

Workbook

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Module 2 – Setting

Setting can be a broad topic, often including minor characters. For these exercises, try to include as much as you can, but without it getting overwhelming (as it often can for some genres such as Fantasy). If you really want to dive deep into this process, look for the course *Writing Your Fantasy Novel* at www.SpenceWriting.com (planned for 2023). It will guide you through creation of an entire fantasy world, with realistic characteristics and depth.

Is your story's setting going to resemble the world you live in? Will it deviate in some special way? Is it something completely different altogether? When creating your setting, you get to “play God” – that is, you can make things however you want them to be.

For the following, I'll refer to the “setting” of your story as the specific places that you actually describe in your book – such as a ship, or a room. I'll refer to the world in which those places sit as the “world” – such as Middle Earth, or Narnia, or the real world.

Complete the exercises below to solidify the setting in your mind.



Write five words that describe the world that contains your setting.

If this world is very similar to the real world, are there any ways in which it differs?

Write down the title of a movie, series, or book that is set in a similar world.

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How does your story's world differ from that one?

Does your setting cover a wide part of that world, or a little, specific part of it?

How does/might the greater world affect the experiences of your characters in their smaller, more specific setting?

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Whether your setting is the real world, a little like it, or something very different, you need to know or create a lot of detail to make your story realistic. What kind of things will you need to create? (Check/Tick the applicable answers.)

- ◇ A building, vehicle, or community
- ◇ Weapons, fighting and/or investigative techniques
- ◇ Law enforcement structure, titles, and techniques
- ◇ Landscape, weather, and/or nature
- ◇ Culture, language, and/or religion
- ◇ Systems of magic
- ◇ Other _____
- ◇ Other _____
- ◇ Other _____
- ◇ Other _____

If you plan to keep a story encyclopedia, how will you organize it?

- ◇ Alphabetically by topic (i.e. character name, place name, subject)
- ◇ Chronologically as the story progresses
- ◇ By chapter
- ◇ More randomly, perhaps in a notebook

Does your world have fantasy languages? You don't need to create whole languages (though some authors do), but you should name them and have an idea of what each sounds like to a foreign ear.

If you are creating a fantasy or sci-fi world, now is the time to develop all of the maps you'll need, to create the cultural and historical fabrics of your world, and to get a clear, detailed concept of the nature and tone of your world. The video will help you get an idea of the scope required in world creation.



Before we conclude this section, there are two things to note. First, if you are writing a Fantasy or Sci-Fi book, the setting section will necessarily be larger than this book leaves room for. I highly recommend you take the more advanced course, entitled *Writing Your Fantasy Novel* at www.SpenceWriting.com (release date: 2023). It will

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guide you through writing a fantasy novel, from start to finish, including creation of an entire fantasy world, with realistic characteristics and depth, including history, language considerations, politics, religion, magic systems, and much, much more. Completing it will bring a depth and breadth of realism to your story that can come in no other way.

Second, as we move into the section on characters, don't forget to consider the ways in which your setting can (probably will) act as a kind of character. Depending on your story, you may even want to complete a character outline for the setting too. That awareness will help you bring an added vibrancy to your work.