

Alternate Settings

Companion Text: I Lost My Sock, by Lin Jakary & Ryan Olson

Subject Area & Grade Level: Language Arts, 3rd Grade

Objectives

After this lesson, students will be able to:

- Define the term “setting” as when and where a story takes place
- Demonstrate how details in the text or illustrations can support the setting by acting out a familiar story in an alternate setting

Pre-Writing Activity #1

Read the story to students all the way through without stopping. Then, ask students if they can tell what the setting of the story is, that is, when and where the story takes place. Students may suggest “the boy’s house,” and possibly also point out China, Rome, or the boy’s neighborhood. Lead students to see that the setting of the story is partly in the boys’ house, but mostly in the boy’s imagination, and that the story takes place all in one day, maybe even in as little as a few minutes as the boy muses where his sock could be. The places he imagines his sock might be are mostly located in his house, where he is while he is doing the thinking, but he does also imagine putting up a sign outside, and the far-off locales to where previous socks may have disappeared. All of these locations are considered the “setting” of the story. Therefore, the setting of a story does not have to be one place. It also does not have to be one time, but can move from past to present to future.

Pre-Writing Activity #2

Explain how settings need to be supported with details in the text and illustrations of a story. For example, on pages 28-29 of I Lost My Sock, the picture of a sock in a toga looking at a famous Roman building, as well as the use of the word “flight” in the accompanying text, enhance the idea that a sock is in Rome, and that Rome is far away, than if the boy had been shown just sitting in a chair with a thought-bubble coming out of his head that read, “I wonder if my striped sock went to Rome.” Enhancing the setting is done by being as detailed as possible with word choice and illustrations, and makes for more interesting reading. Flip through the book a second time and ask students to point out details in either the text or the pictures that give more information about the setting. Ask students to imagine how the story might have been different if the boy was camping, or staying in a hotel, when he noticed his sock was missing. Would that have changed the things he imagined happened to it?

Writing Activity

Break students up into groups of 4, and assign each group a familiar fairytale such as the Three Little Pigs or Little Red Riding Hood. Ask the groups to construct a simple script in which they re-tell the story in an alternate setting, being sure to add details that support the change. Then, as each group acts out their skit, have the class guess the new setting. Remind students that changing the setting could mean changing the place or the time in which the story happens.

