

Descriptive Setting Writing Assignment

Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard begins, “That summer the heat had enveloped the whole of Shahkot in a murky yellow haze” (1). With this opening line, readers are immediately introduced to the setting of the story, the connection between the weather and the town where the story takes place, and the atmosphere that this connection creates.

Write a descriptive setting of a specific place where you implement a similar focus on the relationship between weather and sense of place. Use one of the three strategies below to help get started. Your final piece should be between 600-800 words in length.

Painting a Picture in Words: Create the opening setting to short story or novel, using the strategies that Anne Lamott suggests in “Short Assignments.” Use all of your language tools to create an effective tone and atmosphere.

Use Words to Describe a Picture: Choose a photograph, and then create a short passage that captures the atmosphere of the setting. You could imagine yourself inside the scene shown by the picture and describe what you see around you. Or, you might try to describe it through the eyes of another person.

A Familiar Place: Describe the setting of a place that you know well—a place that has perhaps a special meaning or power for you. Think of the ways that place has changed across the years or through the centuries, and might go on changing for years to come.