

THINKING ON MY OWN

Video: The Beat of the Street

Setting
(realistic fiction)

Nasir often travels the subway when he goes into the city. He likes the sights and sounds of the rushing trains and the bustling people. On his latest visit, he picked up a brochure about the subway from a kiosk near the ticket booth. The brochure included a train schedule, a brief history of the city's subway system, and a short story about the subway. As he began reading the story, he realized the author was describing a familiar setting he knew well.

Now it's **Your Turn!** Read **The Subway**. Create your own *Think Aloud*.

Then compare your thinking with **Nasir's Think Aloud**.



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Before You Read:

Think about what you may already know about subways. Think about what you've learned about setting. Then, jot your ideas.

While You Read:

As you read this passage, ask yourself, "Am I making sense?" Look for words that can help you determine the time and place of the setting and what it is like there. You may want to highlight these words in orange. (You may use any color available to you!)

After You Read:

- Now it's time to try Thinking Aloud on your own. Ask yourself these questions, "When did the story take place?" "Where does the story take place?" "What is it like there?"
- Use the information you've read in this story to determine the setting. Explain how this helps you to understand the story better.

The Subway

Entering the subway station, the sounds of traffic above become muffled. Streams of people walk the cool, dimly lit stairs to the underground tunnel below. Everyone is in a hurry to home, to work, to school. Near a bench, a man strums a guitar with the case open. Some slow to listen, tossing a dollar into the case as a thank-you.

As the trains rush in, restless children are pulled closer. People pay attention. The doors open, and the train belches passengers, and swallows those coming aboard. An oily, mechanical smell hovers in the air.



Inside the train, people settle in for the ride, reading, listening to music, or resting their weary heads. The train speeds and rocks along, at times seeming to float above the tracks.





Compare your Think Aloud with Nasir's Think Aloud:

Nasir's Think Aloud: I know that I can learn a lot about the setting if I pay close attention to the author's description of the time and place that the story occurs. As I begin reading the first paragraph, I realize where the story takes place when I read the words, "subway station." As I continue reading, I feel like I am part of the story when I read the description the author provides. I remember that the authors often use sensory words to make their settings more clear. I travel the subway often when I go into the city, so I recognize the sights and sounds the author describes. I know the subway is a busy place with a lot of people. When I read "streams of people" it reminds me of how the people are all moving in the same direction as they enter the subway, much like a stream of water flows in one direction. I understand that no natural light can be seen in a subway when I read "dimly lit" and "underground tunnel." I'm thinking that some people have places to go when I read, "Everyone is in a hurry to home, to work, to school," while others take time to listen to the musicians that entertain the crowd when I read, "a man strums a guitar with the case open" and "Some slow to listen."

I continue reading the next paragraph, I'm reminded of how quickly the trains come and go. The author's use of action verbs and the active voice create an anxious mood when I read the phrases "rush in," "pulled closer," "pay attention," "belches passengers," "swallows those coming aboard." When I read "oily, mechanical smell" I'm thinking about how the subway smells.

As I read the last paragraph, I understand what people do when they ride the subway train when I read, "reading," "listening to music," and "resting." I'm thinking it must be a smooth ride when I read that the train seems to "float above the tracks." As I finish reading this story, I'm thinking it must take place in the present. I'm thinking this because the story could really happen now and I feel like I'm part of the story due to the author's accurate description of a place I know.

The Subway

Entering the **subway station**, the sounds of traffic above become muffled. **Streams of people** walk the cool, **dimly lit** stairs to the **underground tunnel** below. **Everyone is in a hurry to home, to work, to school.** Near a bench, **a man strums a guitar** with the case open. **Some slow to listen**, tossing a dollar into the case as a thank-you.

As the trains **rush in**, restless children are **pulled closer**. People **pay attention**. The doors open, and the train **belches passengers**, and **swallows those coming aboard**. An **oily, mechanical smell** hovers in the air.



Inside the train, people settle in for the ride, **reading, listening to music**, or **resting** their weary heads. The train speeds and rocks along, at times seeming to **float above the tracks**.

Questions to Think About:

- How does Nasir use verb tense and the author's description to determine the time period the story takes place?
- How does Nasir use the location provided by the author, sensory words, and mood to determine where the story takes place and what it is like there?
- Why might this process help you to understand setting?
- When might this process be useful?