

THINKING ON MY OWN

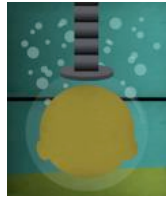
Video: The Deep, Deep World

Setting
(fantasy)

Sergio has been fascinated by space ever since he was a little boy looking up at the moon from his bedroom window. He studies hard and hopes to become an astronaut someday. His goal is to be selected for the first manned mission to Mars. Besides reading scientific facts about outer space travel, Sergio also enjoys reading science fantasy. His keen imagination spins in his head as he thinks about what it would be like to travel to Mars someday or even beyond the Milky Way! When his book club chose to read *Planet Home*, Sergio's creative thoughts took him on an adventure right along with the space colony. Still, he had to ask himself, "Could it be too perfect?"

Now it's **Your Turn!** Read *Planet Home*. Create your own *Think Aloud*.

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



Before You Read:

Think about what you may already know about planets. 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 was 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 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.

Planet Home

The search for a new world had taken one billion years. The mother ship had flown through millions of galaxies.



Before them was a sky-blue planet. Could it sustain the life of the colony? The mother ship hovered. Its massive doors opened silently as robotic probes spun forth. The robotic probes explored, beaming images back to the mother ship.

The images were astounding. It was as if the entire planet had been submerged in stillness. There were perfectly circular craters filled with icy water. Mutant plants stretched motionless toward two red suns. Every tip of the mountain range rose to exactly the same height as the other. Miles of silver sand stretched out smooth and even, like every grain had been arranged by hand. The robotic probes gathered an air sample. It filled the mother ship. The colony drew in one sweet breath after another. They were home.





Compare your Think Aloud with Sergio's Think Aloud:

Sergio'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 read the first sentence, I realize that this quest has taken a billion years! I know that there weren't any people one billion years ago, so I'm thinking this couldn't be a story set in the past. As I keep reading, I'm thinking that I'm reading about a trip in space when I read, "The mother ship had flown through millions of galaxies." I'm thinking this story must take place a billion years into the future!

As I begin reading the second paragraph, I learn where this new world is when I read "sky-blue planet." I remember that when authors describe imagined or futuristic setting they often include enough reality to make us think it could really exist. I know that planets exist. I also know that when I read "the mother ship," "massive doors," "robotic probes," and "images" I understand these things exist, too.

As I read the next paragraph, I'm thinking that the author is mixing realistic details I know with imagined details to create a futuristic setting. I'm thinking "craters filled with icy water," could be real, but it would be amazing to find craters that are "perfectly circular!" Then I learn about more invented details when I read "Mutant plants" and "two red suns." Although both Earth and the sky-blue planet have mountains and sand, I'm thinking the sky-blue planet must be very different from Earth when I read "Every tip of the mountain range rose to exactly the same height as the other" and "Miles of silver sand stretched out smooth and even, like every grain had been arranged by hand." When I think about those descriptions along with the "perfectly circular craters," I understand that land features must be very precise on the sky-blue planet. I'm thinking that even the air quality must be different when I read "The colony drew in one sweet breath after another." There must not be any pollution there!

Sometimes authors create settings that cause the characters to face ethical dilemmas that challenge them as individuals. Sometimes the challenge is given to the reader to think about. When I read, "They were home" I'm thinking that the colony on the mother ship was content, but I wonder if I would be willing to travel to this planet, even if it is more perfect than Earth? I'm glad I don't have to make that decision! I like Earth, even with the traffic jams!

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The images were astounding. It was as if the entire planet had been submerged in stillness. There were **perfectly circular craters filled with icy water**. **Mutant plants** stretched motionless toward **two red suns**. **Every tip of the mountain range rose to exactly the same height as the other**. **Miles of silver sand stretched out smooth and even, like every grain had been arranged by hand**. The robotic probes gathered an air sample. It filled the mother ship. **The colony drew in one sweet breath after another. They were home.**

Questions to Think About:

- How does Sergio use the imagined details of a futuristic setting to determine the time period the story takes place?
- How does Sergio use real and imagined locations provided by the author to determine where the story takes place and what it is like there?
- Why might imagined settings create an ethical dilemma for the characters? For you?
- Why might this process help you to understand setting?
- When might this process be useful?