

RE-VIEW

Video: The Beat of the Street

Setting
(realistic fiction)

Ava is learning all about various aspects of setting before beginning to write her play. Kimberly showed her the Writer's Workshop website. It provides a variety of settings to help writers get started. Participants of the workshop post regularly. It's a great place to share ideas and collaborate with others. Ava decided to read *The Beat of the Street* for ideas.

Now it's **Your Turn!** Read ***The Beat of the Street***. Create your own *Think Aloud*.

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



Before You Read:

Think about what you may already know about New York City and Times Square. Think about what you've learned about setting. Remember that authors include sensory words to help readers visualize place and an active voice to establish a setting's mood.

While You Read:

Notice words that can help you determine the time and place of the setting and what it is like. You may want to highlight these words in orange. (You may use any color available to you!)

After You Read:

- Think about how you would describe the setting in this piece of realistic fiction.
- Think about the video you just watched. Kimberly shared how understanding the setting helped her make sense of the passage *A Trip to Times Square*.
- Create your own *Think Aloud*. Share how you made sense of this passage, too.

A Trip to Times Square

It is a hot July evening in New York City's Times Square. Electronic billboards called "spectaculars" cast a shifting, neon glow over people spilling out into the sidewalks. Overhead, massive buildings compete with each other to hold up a still wide-awake twilight sky.



Sounds thicken the sticky air in this giant city theme park. Languages from every pocket of the world rise up from the steady push of tourists. On the gritty streets, honking horns pierce the solid rumble of trains, coming in and going out. Street musicians tap their toes, drumming and strumming their songs on the corners.

At every turn, Times Square invites its visitors to join in. Eat at our restaurants, it calls out. Applaud in our theaters. Dance to our music. Shop in our stores. And whatever you do, remember to visit this one pulsing snapshot of New York City.



Compare your Think Aloud with Kimberly's Think Aloud:

Kimberly's Think Aloud: I was reading on the Writer's Workshop website that the setting of a story describes the place and time that the story occurs. As I read the first sentence, I notice the words, "July evening." I understand the month and the time of day this story is taking place. I also know the place is New York City's Time Square. I don't see any other reference to time, but I do notice a clue that the author provides that helps me understand this passage is set in the present. I know that when verbs such as "is," "cast," "spilling," and "compete" are written in the present tense, they signal that the action is occurring now. I remember that authors often use sensory words to make their settings more clear. Sometimes they describe what a setting looks like so it can be visualized in readers' minds. When I read "electronic billboards" and "neon glow," I thought about the bright LED billboards I've seen in my city. The words "massive buildings" reminded me of some of the tall skyscrapers I've seen in large cities. The author's use of the words "twilight sky" helped me understand that the time must be in the early evening just as it becomes dusk. The additional detail helped me refine my thinking.

I remember that sometimes authors describe what a setting sounds like so readers can hear what's happening. At the beginning of the second paragraph, when I read, "Sounds thicken the sticky air in this giant city theme park," I'm thinking that the author is comparing the sounds of the city to those I'd hear at a theme park. As I continue reading, I understand what these sounds are: foreign languages, honking horns, rumbling trains, tapping feet, drumming and strumming of songs. These descriptions, along with the words "sounds thicken the sticky air," help me to understand that all these sounds can be heard at the same time in Times Square! I know that authors also describe what a setting feels like. As I read, I try to compare the words the author uses to things I have experienced and felt in order to better understand the author's message. When I read the word "Sticky" I'm thinking of how I feel when there's a lot of humidity in the air. I feel the sand and debris underneath my feet when I read "gritty streets." I experience the vibrations of the trains when I read the word "rumble."

When I read the last paragraph, I notice that the author establishes an exciting mood by using the active form of action verbs. Words like "invites," "eat," "calls," "applaud," "dance," and "shop" make me want to do something! When I read the word "pulsing" I get the feeling that New York's Time Square is a busy and fast-paced place to be!

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Sounds thicken the sticky air in this giant city theme park. **Languages from every pocket of the world** rise up from the steady push of tourists. On the **gritty streets**, **honking horns** pierce the solid **rumble of trains**, coming in and going out. Street musicians **tap their toes**, **drumming and strumming their songs** on the corners.

At every turn, Times Square **invites** its visitors to join in. **Eat** at our restaurants, it calls out. **Applaud** in our theaters. **Dance** to our music. **Shop** in our stores. And whatever you do, remember to visit this one **pulsing** snapshot of New York City.

Questions to Think About:

- How does Kimberly use verb tense, month, and time of day to determine the time period the story takes place?
- How does Kimberly 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?