

Compare and Contrast Settings

Introduction

A **setting** is where and when a story takes place. A setting can also affect the **mood**, or tone, of a story. Many stories often feature more than one setting at different moments throughout the story. Such different settings can sometimes change the mood of a story, either greatly or slightly.

The Perfect Picture

Carly held her breath as the broad-tailed hummingbird fluttered near the cluster of wildflowers. She stared into her camera, waiting. A fly landed on Carly's arm. She flicked it away with a finger. The bird flew near a flower. The flower wasn't red enough, though. Carly waited. The bird flew to another flower. This one was too small. Finally, the bird hesitated over the largest, reddest flower. Carly began to snap pictures. She was certain that these would be some of the best pictures she had ever taken. Carly raced home and uploaded the pictures onto her computer. She couldn't wait to see the results. But when the pictures came up on the screen, she was disappointed. Carly studied them and then opened her photo journal. She wrote: "Hummingbird pictures: The bird's wings are a blur, not enough detail on flower, bird isn't close enough to the flower in any shot. Why aren't these the way I thought they would be?"

Introduction

Once the **setting** and descriptive details of a location are revealed in a story, they often set a particular **mood** for a story, so it is important to pay attention to these details.

1. What are the settings in this story? What descriptive details describe these settings?

- At first, Carly is at a local park with hummingbirds and wildflowers. The sun is shining and there is a cool breeze. Later, she is in her messy bedroom.

Sometimes settings change within a story. When a setting changes, the mood often changes too. For example, a story that starts out with a student in school detention but then switches to an afterschool birthday party probably has a change in mood. Determining the similarities and differences between settings can help you determine a change in mood, if there is one.

2. Compare and contrast the settings in this story. How are the settings alike? How are they different?

- Both settings involve Carly and her photography. The first setting is outdoors at a park. The second setting is indoors.

By considering a story's setting, including the location and the text details describing that location, a reader should be able to determine the mood in a story.

3. What is the mood at the beginning of the story? Does this mood change as the setting changes? If so, how?

- The mood at the beginning of the story is cheerful. Carly is at a sunny park surrounded by nature, and she is taking pictures, which is an activity she clearly enjoys. The mood changes with the setting. When Carly gets home, she learns that her pictures did not turn out well, and she feels disappointed.