

Writer's name:

Establishing a Setting with Mood or Tone

Inspired by the opening paragraphs of Stephen Kramer's Caves

Student Instructions: Today you will be writing a two-paragraph setting description. Using author Stephen Kramer as your model, you will first describe what isn't in the setting in a descriptive paragraph. Then, you will describe what is. Before writing, choose the mood you want to establish.

Setting: Movie Theater

Mood: Anxiousness (for a new scary movie)

Pre-write #1: Thinking about your chosen mood, list five to ten things that **WOULD NOT** be in this place:

- People yawning
- People text messaging on cel phones
- People leaving to get popcorn
- Late-comers
- Empty chairs
- Loud talking
- Small kids

Pre-write #2: Thinking about your chosen mood, list five to ten things that **WOULD DEFINITELY** be in this place:

- Nervous excitement & laughter
- Watch checkers
- Ushers (checking tickets)
- Shushing of loud talkers
- Nail-biters
- Quiet conversations

You might want to re-read the introduction to Caves once more before drafting in the boxes below.

Paragraph #1: Introduce us to where your setting is. Then, using your list of what ISN'T there, describe your setting by sharing what your reader would not find in this setting.

The movie theater is dim. Five minutes to the start of what they say is the scariest film ever made. There are no spaces between seats because this showing was sold out hours ago. No one dares leave for popcorn this close to start time. No one is yawning or typing cel phone text messages. Conversations are almost undecipherable, but people are definitely asking about how scary could one film really be. No one has brought their kids to this movie.

An usher appears, checking the legitimacy of tickets from those who look young enough to have snuck in. His flashlight illuminates the nervous excitement. Several patrons check their watches. *Shouldn't this have started by now?* their eyes ask. Someone shushes someone else talking too loud. Another nervous laugh comes through. The lights are dimming. This will be the scariest movie ever.

Paragraph #2: Shed a little light on your setting now. Use your list of what IS there, and help your reader see your setting. Keep your mood in mind as you write this second paragraph.

If you like your two-paragraph setting description, why not create a story that could follow it? Bring in a character and have something happen.