

L.O. Identify elements of a writer's toolkit in a text that help to **describe the setting.**

Revise the model text - everyone up-to-date



Look at a writer's toolkit for setting description



Identify toolkit features in the model text - Keep off the Tracks!



Look for the same features in a second text - The Caravan

A reminder of our **model text** (or is it the first time you've seen it?!)

The text on the next page, 'Keep off the Tracks!', is an example of a warning story - a story with a message, or moral. It follows a simple structure, that will be very familiar to most of us: MC receives a warning - MC ignores it - MC gets into difficulty as a direct result - MC saved - MC realises the warning should have been heeded.

We will be using the text as a way to improve our setting description skills.

## Keep off the tracks!

“Don’t go playing near that railway track!” Jake’s dad warned, “You know it’s dangerous. That’s why it’s illegal!”

Jake and Nazeem nodded in agreement, but then grinned secretly at each other as they turned to go. Whilst they raced through the park on their bikes, Nazeem shot off, shouting, “Last one to the tracks buys the ice creams!”

Jake set off in pursuit, puffing and panting. They both zipped under the barrier onto the railway track just before it came down. Nazeem punched the air triumphantly like Usain Bolt. Victory! Up



ahead, brambles choked the stony tracks, an old shopping trolley lay discarded and empty crisp packets were pinned to the thorny hedge. The tracks gleamed, reflecting the harsh, midday sun.

There was nobody to be seen so Jake dropped his bike and went to explore, ignoring the bright red warning signs. Without a care in the world, he balanced like a tightrope-walker along the cold, rusty rail.

Suddenly, he felt vibrations shudder through his body. The train was coming! At that moment, his foot slipped and jammed painfully in the sleepers. "Ow!" he howled, desperately tugging at his foot. It was stuck fast. There was no escape.

Nazeem span around and, with his heart pounding, ran to rescue his friend. He pulled with all his might but to no avail. The colour drained from Nazeem's face; this was serious! Panicking, he scrambled down the track and screamed for help. As he heard the train rumbling closer, he spotted Jake's dad screeching to a halt in his red car. Desperately, Nazeem blurted out the problem.

"Where is he?" Mr Newton shouted frantically. With fear in his eyes, he ran as fast as he could to his son's rescue. With all his might, he tugged on Jake's leg, dislodging his trainer. Jake was free! A second later, an Intercity 125 sped past in a blur with its horn blaring.

After their narrow escape, Jake's dad ranted at the shaken boys. They bowed their heads in shame.

That day, they learned a valuable lesson: playing on railway lines is insane. And, of course, there were no ice creams ...



Our focus for this unit will be on **creating the setting**, so before we look at the underlying structure of our warning story, let's take a look at the writer's toolkit for setting description. Many of these will already be familiar to us, but that's OK, as the more we practise our writing skills, the more natural they become.

- Use **figurative language**:
  - **Personification** - give the setting human/animal qualities  
*branches clawed at his face*
  - **Metaphor** - directly compares something by stating it is another thing *the lake was a mirror*
  - **Simile** - something is compared to another using 'like' or 'as'  
*his eyes were as big as saucers*

- Pick out **unusual details** to bring the setting/characters alive:  
*A single bead of sweat slowly trickled down his face.*

*Its mouth was open, and Stanley could see its white tongue moving in and out between its black teeth.*



- Use **detailed sentences of three** to describe what can be seen, heard or touched
  - *Mist filtered down through the trees, the cold air swirled about his feet and in the distance, a crow cawed.*

- Show the setting **through the eyes** of the characters - what do they see or do?
  - *Suddenly, from behind her, Red heard a low growl.*

- Use **pathetic fallacy** - the technique of reflecting the mood of the scene or character in the weather or surroundings
  - *They walked all morning without stopping for food or water: crossing boggy valleys choked with chattering aspen; climbing hills darkened by ever-wakeful pines. As Torak passed beneath, the trees sighed mournfully, as if already lamenting his death.*

- Use the setting to **influence the characters** - how does it make them feel?
  - *His hand gripped the banister, until his knuckles turned white.*

## Writer's toolkit for creating a setting



- Use **figurative language** - personification, metaphor and simile
- Pick out **unusual details** to bring the setting/characters alive
- Use **detailed sentences of three** to describe what can be seen, heard or touched
- Show the setting **through the eyes** of the characters - what do they see or do?
- Use **pathetic fallacy** - the technique of reflecting the mood of the scene or character in the weather or surroundings
- Use the setting to **influence the characters** - how does it make them feel?

Work with a partner to find examples of each of the writer's tools in the 'Keep off the Tracks!' text. Each time you find and underline one, put a tick in the box next to the tool description.

L.O. Identify features from the 'Settings' writer's toolkit

Find and highlight examples of how the author has used the different tools from the toolkit	Keep off the Tracks!	The Caravan
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### Keep off the tracks!

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Jake set off in pursuit, puffing and panting. They both zipped under the barrier onto the railway track just before it came down. Nazeem punched the air triumphantly like Usain Bolt. Victory! Up ahead, brambles choked the stony tracks, an old shopping trolley lay discarded and empty crisp packets were pinned to the thorny hedge. The tracks gleamed, reflecting the harsh, midday sun.



There was nobody to be seen so Jake dropped his bike and went to explore, ignoring the bright red warning signs. Without a care in the world, he balanced like a tightrope-walker along the cold, rusty rail.

Suddenly, he felt vibrations shudder through his body. The train was coming! At that moment, his foot slipped and jammed painfully in the sleepers. "Ow!" he howled, desperately tugging at his foot. It was stuck fast. There was no escape.

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## Keep off the tracks!

Let's share our ideas...

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Let's look at another warning story, 'The Caravan', which follows the same format. Now that you have familiarised yourself with the writer's tools for creating a setting, try to notice them as the text is read out.

## The Caravan

“Now Mitch, don’t go playing up by the pylon,” my mum had warned me often enough. “It’s dangerous. You’ll get yourself electrocuted.” Did I listen? Of course I didn’t. Most days after school that was exactly where I went. Daft really, but she actually thought that I was doing my homework with Connor. Mum worries too much. I’ve still not forgotten how she used to tell me not to play under Hanger Bridge by the railway in case the troll snatched me. Of course, I was younger then.

The pylon she was talking about stood at the end of Muggie Moss Road. Red and brown rust fluttered from its lean body and it made odd creaking sounds when the wind blew. It was there we found the caravan. It had been empty for years. If you go past, you’ll just see a small patch of overgrown land under the pylon, a mess of brambles and nettles that smothered the van.

It was damp inside and the windows were smeared with green grime. Moss clung to its wheels. It was a place of dead spiders and dust but it was our special place. Most days after school we went straight there. Just to muck about.



That afternoon, a storm raged. It had been brewing all morning. The trees were like crazed zombies thrashing wildly. Rain lashed down, drumming on the metal roof. Inside the caravan it felt safe, almost cosy really. We shoved newspaper into any cracks to keep out the wind. I'd found a bit of old carpet and Connor had brought along some cushions that his Mum had thrown out. He'd also found a candle and in the semi-gloom its flame flickered with a cheerful glow. Outside dusk shadowed the bushes. Soon the streetlights would come on, casting orange pools of light.

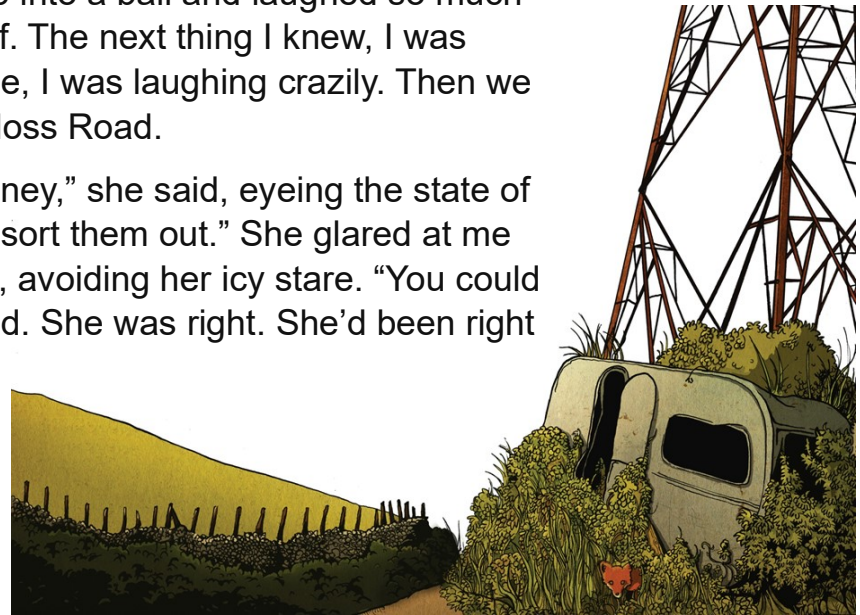
We were arguing over whether the last goal in the Man United game was the best yet when we heard it: a clap of thunder so close that it sounded like an explosion. Connor wiped the condensation from the window and we peered out. At that very moment, there was another tremendous crack, and lightning struck the pylon. Sparks flew, the pylon shuddered and, as if in slow motion, it crashed down towards the caravan roof.

Instinctively, we both ducked down fast. There was an enormous crash and the caravan roof crumpled. The air prickled with electricity and rain lashed through the opening in the roof. For a moment, I was certain that I was about to be fried alive. In the half-light, I could see Connor's face. His eyes were wide with fright and he gulped like a fish. "Come on," he hissed. We slithered like snakes across the floor with the rusted pylon creaking dangerously above us.

Luckily, the door had flown open when the pylon had struck. We slipped out onto the muddy ground and lay there with the thunder grumbling above us and the rain beating down. Then Connor started to laugh. He curled up into a ball and laughed so much that I thought he was crying. I couldn't help myself. The next thing I knew, I was laughing too. Inside, I just felt relief. On the outside, I was laughing crazily. Then we ran, through the brambles and out onto Muggie Moss Road.

Of course, Mum was furious. "I'm not made of money," she said, eyeing the state of my school clothes. "Still, maybe a good wash will sort them out." She glared at me suspiciously. "So, a tree nearly hit you?" I nodded, avoiding her icy stare. "You could have been killed," she said. Shamefaced, I nodded. She was right. She'd been right from the start.

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Now repeat the activity for 'The Caravan' text.  
Each time you find and underline a toolkit example,  
put a tick in the box next to the tool description.

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