

Boost Free Lessons - Year 7 English

Lesson 5: Setting, Plot and Conflict

Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Worked Example 1

Identify the setting and the conflict in the passage below.

Snow had blocked the only road out of the valley. Inside the cabin, Priya counted the tins on the shelf: four left, and six days until the thaw.

1. **Setting** is where and when the story happens. Here it is a snowbound cabin in a valley.
2. **Conflict** is the problem the character faces, and it drives the whole plot.
3. Priya has four tins of food but needs six days' worth, so there is not enough.
4. This is a character against nature conflict, because the snow and the cold created the problem.

Setting: a snowbound cabin in a valley. Conflict: Priya does not have enough food to last until the thaw.

Worked Example 2

What kind of conflict is shown below?

Jai knew the answer. He also knew that saying it would prove his best friend wrong in front of the whole class.

1. There is no storm and no enemy here, so the conflict is not external.
2. Jai is torn between two things he wants: to be right, and to protect his friend.
3. A struggle inside a character's own mind is an **internal** conflict.
4. Internal conflict is what makes characters feel real, because readers recognise the same struggle.

Internal conflict. Jai must choose between being honest and protecting his friendship.

Remember: **Setting** is where and when. **Plot** is what happens. **Conflict** is the problem driving it. Conflict is **external** when it comes from outside the character, and **internal** when the struggle is inside their own mind.



Question 1: Name whether each conflict is **internal** or **external**.

1. A ship's crew battles a hurricane.

2. A girl argues with her older brother about a broken phone.

3. A boy must decide whether to admit he cheated.

4. A hiker is lost in a desert with no water.

5. A student wants to join the team but is afraid of failing.

6. Two rival captains compete for the same trophy.

7. A farmer's crops are destroyed by drought.

8. A character struggles to forgive herself for a mistake.



Question 2: Read the passage below, then answer the questions.

The lighthouse lamp had failed at midnight. Nathan climbed the spiral stairs two at a time, the storm hammering the glass above him. Out in the dark, a ship's horn sounded, closer than it should have been.

1. Where and when is this story set? Give two details from the passage.

2. What is the main conflict?

3. Is the conflict internal or external? Explain your answer.

4. Which detail of the setting makes the conflict worse?

5. What do you predict will happen next, and why?

6. How would the conflict change if the story were set in a busy city?



Question 3: Answer the following questions.

1. Write two sentences that establish a setting without naming the place directly.

2. Describe a conflict between a character and nature in one sentence.

3. Describe an internal conflict for a character starting high school.

4. Explain why a story with no conflict is usually boring to read.

5. How can a setting create a conflict all by itself?





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Answers and Model Responses: Setting, Plot and Conflict**Question 1**

1. External (character against nature)
2. External (character against character)
3. Internal
4. External (character against nature)
5. Internal
6. External (character against character)
7. External (character against nature)
8. Internal

Question 2

1. A lighthouse on a rocky island, at night during a storm. Details: the lamp, the storm, the darkness.
2. The lighthouse lamp has failed, and a ship is approaching the rocks.
3. External. The problem comes from outside Nathan, from the broken lamp and the weather.
4. The storm, because it makes the rocks more dangerous and the repair harder.
5. Model response: Nathan will try to repair or replace the light, because a ship is in danger and he is the only one there.
6. Model response: There would be other people to help and other lights nearby, so the danger and the isolation would disappear.

Question 3

1. Model response: Salt crusted the window frames and every surface was gritty with sand. Far off, a foghorn sounded twice.
2. Model response: The floodwater rose past the second step while Ana waited on the roof.
3. Model response: Sam wanted to sit with his old friends, but he also wanted to be the person he had promised himself he would become.
4. Without a problem there is nothing to resolve, so nothing changes and there is no reason to keep reading.
5. A hostile or isolating setting, such as a desert or a snowbound valley, creates obstacles that a character must overcome.

