

Settings Cheat Sheet





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HOW DO I WRITE ENGAGING SETTINGS?

Immersive settings help a reader feel like they're really part of the story and its world. This can be especially crucial when you're trying to immerse readers in a world you made up.

When you're writing settings, think of what **tone** you're trying to convey. Make sure the details you highlight (and the figurative language you use) supports this.

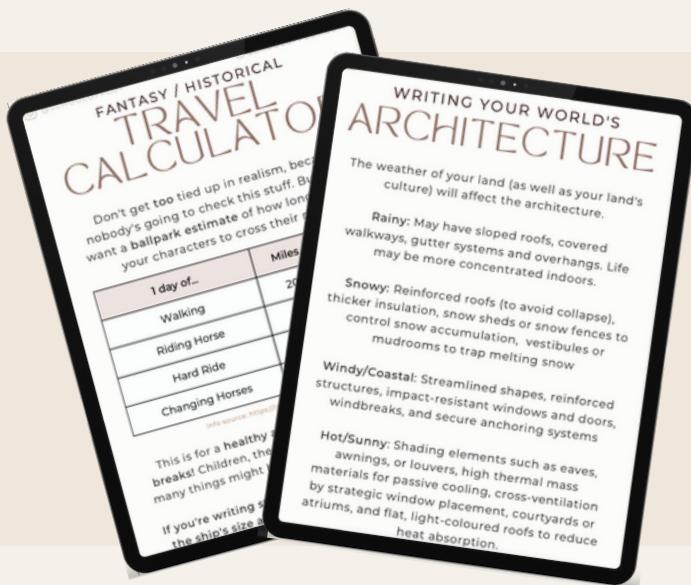
For example, if you want to highlight how spooky a library is, focus on the smell of dust and the way your character's footsteps echo through it. If you want to describe the same library in a cheerful, cosy way, focus on the warm candlelight or the rustle of pages.

Schoolofplot.com has workbooks for **fantasy** and **sci-fi** writers to **build worlds from scratch**. This includes architecture, place names, politics, history, magic, plant life, and more.

WAIT, WHAT?

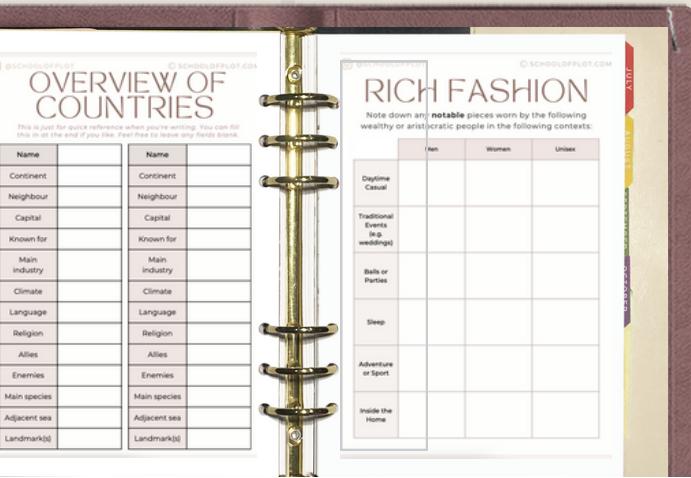


BUILD EPIC WORLDS THAT READERS GET LOST IN



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Create unique place names, magic systems, fashion, and more



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So you don't waste precious writing time on Google.



AVOID PLOTHOLES

Easy-access world building sheets for **quick reference** as you write.

BUILD NEW WORLDS FROM NOTHING

“I found this workbook from Instagram and was initially hesitant to spend money when there are other free resources out there. **I’m so happy that I took the plunge for my fantasy story.** It sparks so many new ideas for my plot and characters, too! It’s so helpful and **something I constantly refer to.**”

Rachel



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HOW DO I USE THIS CHEAT SHEET?

The main trick to writing engaging settings is to **engage the senses**. And not just sight! The easiest way to do this is by brainstorming using a senses table (incoming...)

Writing “the city was messy and hectic, with lots of people” is nowhere near as compelling as describing the jostling bodies, the overpowering smells of sweat and perfume, and the roaring metro.

First I’m going to show you **seven examples** that you can draw inspiration from, then you’re going to create your own settings cheat sheets for the settings in your novel.

You can either print it or use it with a free app (e.g. Foxit), a free website (e.g. Sedja.com) or an app like GoodNotes or Notability.

OK LET'S DO IT!



BOOKSHOP

Sights: Shelves lined with weathered books, antique wooden bookcases, leather-bound tomes with gold lettering, dust floating in the sunlight filtering through small windows, soft lamp glow

Smells: The earthy scent of old pages and leather bindings, a hint of mustiness that's oddly comforting, subtle smell of ink and aged paper

Sounds: The soft creak of wooden floors underfoot, rustling of pages as someone turns a book, the distant hum of city life outside, the soft chime of a bell when the door opens

Touch: The embrace of an armchair as you sink into it, the crispness of paper as you turn a page, the weight of a book in your hands

Tastes: Sips of freshly brewed coffee or tea from a nearby cafe, the occasional taste of dust

FOREST

Sights: Towering trees, bark covered in moss and lichen, dappled sunlight filtering through the canopy, meandering paths, fallen leaves, wildflowers peeking through the underbrush

Smells: The earthy smell of damp soil and decaying leaves, fresh pine, flowers, crisp air after a light rain shower

Sounds: Rustling of leaves, birdsong, hooting of owls, soft crunch of footsteps, snap of twigs

Touch: Rough tree bark, coolness of rock, softness of moss underfoot, warmth from sunlight

Tastes: Wild berries you can pick, earthy water from the spring, pine and sap in the air

CITY

Sights: Skyscrapers, glowing neon signs, reflection of streetlights and neon on the pavements, cyclists weaving through taxis, twinkling skyline against the sunset

Smells: Sizzling street food, exhaust fumes, fresh coffee, rain on the pavement, fresh vomit from the previous night, grease from takeouts, trash from open containers, sweat & perfume

Sounds: Honking horns, low hum of traffic, street performers, rushing commuters, roar of the metro, chatter from cafes, dogs arguing

Touch: The press of bodies in crowded spaces, cold glass of buildings, prickly bus/train seat, cold bench, pain from trodden toes

Tastes: Street food, coffee on the go

GENERIC EUROPEAN CASTLE

Sights: Ivy-covered stone walls, tall stained glass windows, colourful tapestries, stonework, parapets, wide moat, bustling courtiers

Smells: Burning hearth fires, sweet candlewax, polished wood, old paper in the castle's library, musty smells of ancient stone and leather

Sounds: Footsteps echoing through stone corridors, music and murmurs in bustling halls, swords clashing, lutes and choirs, creak of wooden doors

Touch: Heavy velvet curtains, cold glass windows, rough stone walls, hard floors, plush bedding and cushions

Tastes: Hearty feast, sweet wine, fresh fruit from the gardens, musty air

SPACESHIP

Sights: Sleek metal surfaces, glowing control panels, rows of blinking buttons, gaping viewports framing the stars, holographic displays, thin corridors speckled with doors

Smells: Sharp smell of cleaning products, metal, stale air, whiff of overheating electronics, musky smell of rations

Sounds: The low hum of the engines, whirr of machinery, beeps from control panels, chatter of the crew, fuzzy voices through intercom, clacking of keyboards, hum of ventilation

Touch: Cold buttons under fingers, vibration of the engines, weight of the spacesuits, pressure of compression garments, hard bunk mattress

Tastes: Rehydrated space food, hot beverages

COTTAGE

Sights: Blooming flowers, stone walls draped with ivy and roses, wooden windowpanes, herb garden, thatched roof, wildflowers

Smells: Honeysuckle, fresh baking, rosemary, lavender, crackling fire, lean linen on the washing line outside

Sounds: Flutter of curtains, rustle of leaves, crackle of burning logs, creak of the door/windows as they open, bubbling soup in a pot

Touch: Smooth wooden door, soft quilts, cool stone hearth, warm sunlight, scratchy plants on the path, crunch of dirt underfoot

Tastes: Homemade jam, baked goods, freshly picked berries from the garden, camomile tea, stew, crusty bread spread with honey

WITCH SHOP

Sights: Wooden shelves lined with artefacts, glowing crystals, herbs in jars, strung-up dried plants, flickering fire, animal bones, labelled curiosities behind glass, rattling birdcages

Smells: Dried herbs, incense, smoke from enchanted candles, sharp smell of potions, magical oils, dust

Sounds: Rustle of paper (from magical books), disembodied whispers, low hum of glowing crystal balls, soft jingle of chimes as people enter the shop, creak of wooden floorboards

Touch: The cool, smooth texture of polished crystals, soft velvet curtains, warmth from the fire/cauldron, weight of spellbooks

Tastes: Dust, herbal teas, potions

PLACE NAME

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START YOUR WORLDBUILDING JOURNEY

“This workbook includes **so many details I hadn’t even considered** for my fantasy world and I’m so glad I can have all of my information in one place.”

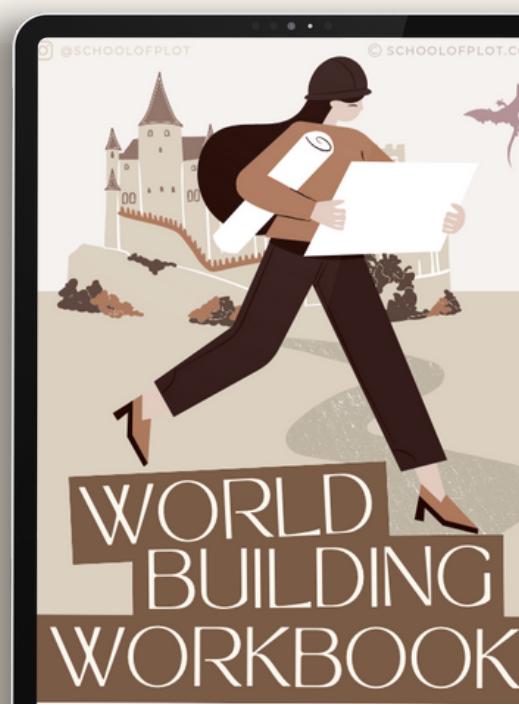
Alex M

“I’m only on the first page and already in love with this book. I never thought about **how the land was named and why**, that is such an interesting thought to start with!”

Shauna

“All of the School of Plot workbooks are phenomenal and are **worth their weight in gold** (plus the mutli-buy discount is an absolute steal!)”

Alex

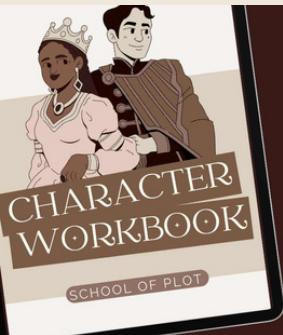




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