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## **REQUIRED BOOKS FOR THIS COURSE**

You need unabridged copies of the following books:

*Stories & Poems for Extremely Intelligent Children* by Harold Bloom

*Treasure Island* by Robert L. Stevenson

*A Day of Pleasure* by Isaac B. Singer

*A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens

*The Hobbit* by J. R. R. Tolkien

*My Family and Other Animals* by Gerald Durrell

*To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

## Welcome to Lightning Literature

Welcome to the Eighth Grade Lightning Literature Program!

This year you will be reading four novels, two nonfiction books, three short stories, and several poems for this class. I have tried to choose stories and poems that are interesting, yet very different from each other. I'm sure you will like some of them more than others (I do), but I hope you will find much to enjoy and maybe meet authors that you want to read again.

Each chapter has an **INTRODUCTION** you should read before you start on the book, short story, or poems. As you read the assignment, you may encounter words you don't know. Some of these are defined in this book, in the **VOCABULARY** section. There are also **COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS** you should answer. How often you answer them (every day, once a week, etc.) you can decide with your parent or teacher.

After you're done with the reading, read the **LITERARY LESSON** and the **MINI-LESSON**, then do all the **WORKBOOK** pages that go with that chapter. All the workbook pages are required except the games (crosswords and word searches) and extra challenge pages (found at the end of each section). These you can do if you wish, or you can skip them. After you've done the workbook pages, read the **WRITING EXERCISES**. I recommend you complete at least one writing exercise per chapter. If you've done a lot of writing before or you like to write, you may want to do two papers for some chapters.

Above all, try to enjoy yourself! Reading should be fun, and writing should be satisfying. As you may already have discovered, reading will take you to new places, expose you to new ideas, and introduce you to wonderful people. Writing can be hard, but it's wonderful to have written something you're proud of and want to show to others. I hope this year's English class will help you with both.



# Chapter

# Two

## ***Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson**

*Teacher Guide*—Pages 25 to 39

*Workbook*—Pages 19 to 40

This lesson is a look at some of the many ways authors use setting.

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## Chapter 2: *Treasure Island*

***To travel hopefully is a better thing  
than to arrive.***  
—**Robert Louis Stevenson**



### Introduction

It will probably come as no surprise to you that the author of *Treasure Island* traveled a great deal. He would even eventually settle on an island, although that would be long after writing this island adventure.

Rather than for adventure, Robert Louis Stevenson traveled to improve his health. He was born in 1850 in Edinburgh, Scotland. It soon became clear that he had trouble in his lungs, possibly tuberculosis, a disease that was all too common in the nineteenth century, and usually eventually fatal. So Stevenson began to travel to find some climate more kind to his health than Scotland's damp cold.

Traveling wasn't the only thing Stevenson did. First, he became a lawyer; but even as he was practicing law, he knew he wanted to be a writer. He combined two of his loves by writing travelogues about his journeys through Europe and America. He also wrote plays, short stories, and poems, including a famous collection, *A Child's Garden of Verses*.

*Treasure Island*, published in 1883, was Stevenson's first novel. First it was published in parts in a children's magazine. When it appeared as a book, it was hugely successful. Many famous writers praised it and were inspired by it. It is because of this book that we so often picture pirates as having peg legs or a parrot, or we think that a big X should mark the treasure on a map.

Stevenson continued to travel with his family, eventually living on a series of South Sea Islands, and finally settling on Samoa. He also continued to write, but even living in a paradise and pursuing his dream was not enough to keep him alive. Robert Louis Stevenson died in 1894 at the young age of 44.

## While You Read

Relax and enjoy the book, but pay a little extra attention to each time that Stevenson describes the ship and the island. Are the descriptions different at different places? How do the different descriptions make you feel? The lesson for this book is on setting. What is the first way you know that setting is especially important to this book?

## Vocabulary List

Note that you will encounter words and phrases in the dialogue that are not always defined here. These are sailors' slang of the time period, and most you should be able to understand from the context. Also, most of the technical terms for parts of a ship are not defined here.

### CHAPTER 1

- **bearings** location
- **tarry** like tar
- **capstan** part of a ship
- **handspike** a metal bar
- **connoisseur** an expert
- **cove** an inlet
- **diabolical** fiendish
- **hawker** someone who sells something
- **assizes** English county courts

### CHAPTER 2

- **tallowy** greasy
- **fawn(ing)** flatter (to gain favor)
- **lancet** a type of surgical knife

### CHAPTER 3

- **lee** the side of something away from the wind
- **horrors** bad hallucinations (common when someone addicted to alcohol goes without it for a long time)
- **lubber** an inexperienced or poor sailor
- **peach** reveal a secret



**CHAPTER 4**

- **lugger** boat
- **quadrant** an instrument for measuring altitude
- **canikin** a small can
- **brace** a pair

**CHAPTER 5**

- **broom** a type of plant
- **glim** a candle
- **malinge(r)** to avoid a duty
- **dingle** a small valley

**CHAPTER 6**

- **poll** top of the head
- **sounding(s)** a measurement of the depth of water

**CHAPTER 7**

- **trump** a good person
- **calumny** a false, malicious accusation
- **score** twenty
- **odious** hateful
- **indomitable** invincible
- **frigate** a warship
- **tarpaulin(s)** a sailor
- **rove (ing)** to travel

**CHAPTER 8**

- **keelhaul(ing)** a form of punishment once used in some navies in which the offender would be dragged (or hauled) under the keel (bottom) of the ship with a rope

**CHAPTER 9**

- **galley** kitchen

**CHAPTER 10**

- **lanyard** a cord

**CHAPTER 11**

No vocabulary

**CHAPTER 12**

- **prodigious** enormous

**CHAPTER 13**

- **scupper(s)** a drain in a ship that allows water on deck to flow out

**CHAPTER 14**

- **fen** marsh
- **aperture** opening
- **languor** dullness, inactivity
- **sward** grass
- **snipe** a type of bird

**CHAPTER 15**

- **incongruous** inappropriate, incompatible
- **accoutrement** dress, clothing
- **catechism** a summary of the principles of Christianity
- **Union Jack** the British flag

**CHAPTER 16**

- **paling** fence
- **scull(ed)** to row

**CHAPTER 17**

No vocabulary

**CHAPTER 18**

- **colours** a flag
- **consort** a companion ship
- **cricket** a game somewhat like baseball

**CHAPTER 19**

- **Jolly Roger** a pirate flag with a skull and crossbones

**CHAPTER 20**

- **Davy Jones** short for “Davy Jones’ locker,” a slang term for the bottom of the ocean (i.e., death)
- **imprecation(s)** a curse

**CHAPTER 21**

- **doldrums** a place of calm winds at sea
- **palisade** fence of stakes

**CHAPTER 22**

- **coracle** a small boat made of animal hides

**CHAPTER 23**

- **callous** unfeeling
- **yaw(ed)** to swerve off course
- **phosphorescent** glowing

**CHAPTER 24**

No vocabulary

**CHAPTER 25**

- **gill** five fluid ounces

**CHAPTER 26**

- **dirk** a dagger
- **subaltern** a subordinate
- **mizzen shrouds** ropes connecting the mast to the ship's side

**CHAPTER 27**

- **comeliness** beauty
- **jib(s)** a small sail
- **halyard(s)** a rope for raising and lowering a sail
- **niggard(ly)** stingy

**CHAPTER 28**

- **haze(d)** harass or humiliate

**CHAPTER 29**

- **gibbet** gallows

**CHAPTER 30**

- **admixture** an additional ingredient
- **arrant** thorough, shameless
- **pestiferous** contaminated
- **preponderance** superiority of power

**CHAPTER 31**

- **ambiguity** uncertainty

**CHAPTER 32**

- **skylark(ing)** playing, fooling around
- **volubly** aloud

**CHAPTER 33**

- **obsequious** subservient

**CHAPTER 34**

No vocabulary

**Comprehension Questions****CHAPTER 1**

1. Jim thinks the seaman chose their inn for what two reasons?
2. What is the description of the man that the seaman pays Jim to keep an eye open for?

**CHAPTER 2**

1. What is Bill's (the captain's) initial reaction on seeing Black Dog?
2. What does the doctor tell Bill he must do or Bill will die?

**CHAPTER 3**

1. What distracts Jim from the captain's troubles?
2. Why is this chapter titled "The Black Spot"?

**CHAPTER 4**

1. Why do the people of the next hamlet refuse to return to the inn with Jim and his mother?
2. When Jim is examining the contents of the captain's chest, he comes across "five or six curious West Indian shells." He then says, "It has often set me thinking since that he should have carried about these shells with him in his wandering, guilty, and hunted life." Why do you suppose these shells being carried around by the captain often sets Jim to thinking?
3. What two things do Jim and his mother take from the chest?

**CHAPTER 5**

1. When the pirates are outside the inn after discovering Bill's body and his missing things, what are their two main concerns? Which of these is Pew (the blind man) more concerned about?
2. How is Pew killed?

**CHAPTER 6**

1. What do the crosses stand for in the book wrapped in the oilskin?
2. Why does Livesey tell the squire not to breathe a word of the map to anyone?

**CHAPTER 7**

1. What is the first thing that upsets Jim at the thought of his trip to sea?
2. You may recall that foreshadowing is when an author gives a clue early on in a story as to something that is to happen later. There are two examples of foreshadowing in this chapter. Name one. (You may look back at the book to answer this.)

**CHAPTER 8**

1. Why does Jim think Long John Silver is not the man the captain warned him about when he first meets him?
2. What man, whom Jim has seen before, is in Silver's tavern?

**CHAPTER 9**

1. The captain has several complaints. Name at least two of them.
2. When the captain says the secret has been "told to the parrot" what does he mean?
3. The captain has some demands. Name at least one of them.

**CHAPTER 10**

1. What are the two problems with Mr. Arrow?
2. By what nickname do the men call Long John Silver?

**CHAPTER 11**

1. At the end of Chapter 10, Jim says that after hearing only a dozen words spoken by Long John Silver, he knew they were all in danger. What does Silver say in those first dozen words that frightened Jim? (You may look back at the book to answer this.)
2. What does Silver mean when he talks about a “gentleman of fortune”?
3. What does Silver plan to do to all the honest men after he gets the treasure?

**CHAPTER 12**

1. What does Captain Smollett hand to Long John Silver that first excites, then disappoints, him?
2. Besides themselves, who are the only people the squire, the captain, the doctor, and Jim are certain they can trust?

**CHAPTER 13**

1. What is Jim’s first impression of the island?
2. What does the captain do to delay the threat of mutiny?

**CHAPTER 14**

1. What alerts Jim that some people are approaching during his exploration?
2. What horrible thing does Jim see while he is hiding among the trees?

**CHAPTER 15**

1. Why was Ben Gunn marooned?
2. How did Ben Gunn know there was treasure on the island?

**CHAPTER 16**

1. What one essential thing does the stockade have which the cabin lacks, which is partly the reason the men move their defense to the stockade?
2. Why is the doctor able to bring two boatloads of supplies to the stockade, even after they have been discovered by the mutinous crew?

**CHAPTER 17**

1. What do the doctor and his companions forget on the ship that puts them in grave danger?
2. What do the doctor and his companions lose when their boat is swamped near shore?

**CHAPTER 18**

1. What does the captain do that raises his own spirits?
2. Why is it a problem to wait until August for help from another ship?

**CHAPTER 19**

1. How does Ben Gunn convince Jim that it is his friends, not the pirates, in the stockade?
2. Jim lists several distressing things about their living arrangements. Name at least one.
3. What two nonhuman allies does Jim say they had?

**CHAPTER 20**

1. Who does Silver think has killed one of his men? Who has actually done it?
2. Do you think the captain made the right choice in refusing Silver's offer? Why or why not?

**CHAPTER 21**

There are no questions for this chapter.

**CHAPTER 22**

1. Why does Jim decide to leave the stockade?
2. After finding Ben Gunn's boat, what does Jim decide to do?

**CHAPTER 23**

1. Jim finds the boat unmanageable, but what gets him to the *Hispaniola*?
2. Why don't Israel Hands and the other pirate notice at first when Jim cuts the *Hispaniola* loose from her anchor?

**CHAPTER 24**

1. What animal, which he had never seen before, does Jim describe as “huge slimy monsters” and “soft snails”?
2. Why does Jim decide not to sit up and paddle his boat?
3. What surprising sight does Jim come across? What does he decide to do?

**CHAPTER 25**

1. Who does Jim find alive on the *Hispaniola*?
2. What agreement does Jim make with this person?

**CHAPTER 26**

1. Why does Israel say he wants Jim to go down to the cabin? Why does he really want him to go down there?
2. Why is Jim sure that Israel won't attack him right away?
3. When Israel is chasing Jim around the ship, what sudden occurrence shifts the fight in Jim's favor?
4. What causes Jim to accidentally fire his pistols and kill Israel?

**CHAPTER 27**

1. Which best describes Jim's feelings when he leaves the *Hispaniola*?
  - a. Pride at what he's accomplished
  - b. Worry for the men in the stockade
  - c. Fear of the pirates preventing him from returning to the other men
  - d. Sadness and remorse at the death of Israel Hands
2. What makes Jim finally realize who is actually asleep in the stockade?

**CHAPTER 28**

1. What offer does Long John Silver make Jim and what is Jim's response?
2. In spite of this response, Silver refuses to allow his men to kill Jim. Why?
3. What does Silver tell Jim that astonishes Jim?



**CHAPTER 29**

1. What are the four charges the men make against Silver and, briefly, how does he answer each of them?
2. What changes the men's minds about Silver?

**CHAPTER 30**

1. What does Silver do the next day which further infuriates his men?
2. What does the doctor call the best deed Jim ever did or will do?

**CHAPTER 31**

1. There are many things that Jim is unsure of or does not understand when he sets out with Silver and his men to look for the treasure. Name at least one of them.
2. What is the first thing the men find while looking for the treasure? How does it relate to the treasure map?
3. Why do the men think Flint's spirit might be nearby?

**CHAPTER 32**

1. What terrifies the pirates when they stop to rest and why?
2. What makes them no longer afraid?
3. What do the men find when they arrive at the spot where the treasure was buried?

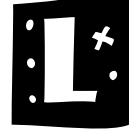
**CHAPTER 33**

1. Why did the doctor give the treasure map to Long John Silver?

**CHAPTER 34**

1. What do they do with the three pirates who have run off?
2. What does Long John Silver do while they are docked in a South American port?

## Literary Lesson: Setting



The setting of a story is when and where the story takes place. Either or both of these can change over the course of the story. Authors choose settings that will support their plots and purposes, illuminate the characters, and create a story's tone or feeling. When reading any story, you need to be aware (as best you can from what information the author gives you) of where and when it is taking place, or you may miss important information or misunderstand the story. I asked at the beginning of this chapter what your first clue was that setting was important to this story. Your first clue should have been that the title of this book is also its primary setting.

### WHEN

A story may take place in the past (both your past and the author's), the present (the author's present day—which may be the past to you—or your present day), the future (the author's future—which may be the past or present to you—or your future), or some time in some alternate place which doesn't really correspond to your time at all.

This might seem a bit confusing, so let's look at some examples. In the first page of *Treasure Island*, Stevenson's narrator Jim writes, "I take up my pen in the year of grace 17--, and go back to the time when my father kept the 'Admiral Benbow' inn, and the brown old seaman, with the sabre cut, first took up lodging under our roof." Now, we know that Stevenson wasn't born until 1850, but this story is taking place sometime in the 1700s (or possibly even the 1600s, as we don't know how far back the narrator is going in time to his boyhood). At any rate, this book is set in the past, both Stevenson's past and ours, though it is much further back in time for us.

Often authors write books that are set in their present time (or in their very recent past), but by the time we read them they are quite a distant past for us. Charles Dickens, who you will read in a later lesson, set many of his novels in his own time and place. This was over a hundred years ago though; so for us, these novels set in Dickens' present are set in our past.

Sometimes books are set in the future. Usually, books set in the future are science fiction novels. H. G. Wells wrote a book called *The Time Traveler*, most of which takes place far in the future. Sometimes stories are set in the future but the stories last over time, then their

future becomes our present or even our past. If you're a *Star Trek* fan (like I am), you might notice that some of the original series stories refer to events on earth which would have been in the future when the show was written in the 1960s (happening in, for example, the 1990s). But now that we're in the 21st century, we know those events never occurred.

Another thing you sometimes find in science fiction or fantasy stories is a place so separate from ours that time takes on a new meaning there. When you read *The Hobbit* later this year you'll see an example of this. Because *The Hobbit* takes place in Middle Earth, we understand that, although it is related to earth in some way, it is also so separate that even though the story takes place in the past, it doesn't take place in our past in the same way that *Treasure Island* does. It takes place in a fantasy past.

Why is it important to know when a story is set? First, this will give you some shorthand knowledge about the story's trappings. When you read a story, you picture it in your mind. Since you know *Treasure Island* is set in the seventeenth or eighteenth century, for example, and you know there were no cars back then, you won't be picturing automobiles in your head when you picture the roads outside the inn. You will have some idea of the way the characters are dressed, even if you can't give specific details. You might not know the exact design of trousers and dresses back then; you will know they won't be wearing nylon or Gortex, but clothes made of cotton, wool, silk, and leather.

### **SETTING AND AUTHOR'S PURPOSE**

Another reason to know when a story is set is to gain insight into the author's purpose. Science fiction writers sometimes set stories in the future because they want to give a warning about what people are doing in the present. "Stop building up nuclear arms or we will have a nuclear holocaust." "Stop polluting or Earth will become a wasteland." Dickens set stories in his present day to call attention to injustices in his society. Many current writers do the same thing.

Why would a writer set a story in the past? Sometimes it's to warn about a society's present behavior. For example, if a writer thinks today's society is too immoral, they might write a story set in a past society that they also thought immoral (for example, the Roman Empire). They could use that past society as an example to say "Don't let this same thing happen to us."

But that is not the only reason to set a story in the past, nor is it Stevenson's reason. Stevenson wanted to write an adventure story. And, to most people of any time, the past seems more adventurous than the present. There were fewer rules and regulations, more undiscovered places, greater freedom. So, Stevenson set his story about 100 to 150 years in his past. This increases the feeling of adventure and freedom, but also makes the pirates more threatening with the increased sense of lawlessness. Although Stevenson does make some moral points here—especially about the dangers of greed and treachery—his primary purpose is to entertain with a rollicking good yarn.

## WHERE

The second aspect of setting is where the story takes place. Again, knowing where the action in a story is going on will give you some shorthand. If you know the country and/or town, you have some idea of how the people look, how they speak, and how they dress. You have some idea of what the landscape looks like. Imagine that you're about to be told a story set on a ranch in Texas. Without any other information, what do you picture in your mind? You might picture a corral, horses, cattle, people in jeans and boots, and a dry, dusty day. Now you're going to be told a story that takes place in a small village in India. This time you might picture small huts, men in turbans, women in saris, and people with darker skin than those in the first story.

Most stories take place in a variety of locations, and there are locations within locations. For example, a story might all take place within the country of England, but parts may be set in London and other parts in the countryside. Then within that there may be different homes and shops that are important to the story. It is the job of the author to give you enough details so you can satisfactorily picture any setting.

Jim spends much time describing the docks and the ship, including the ship's layout and where various people are housed. The ship is a new and exciting place to him, and he communicates this in part through his attention to its details. He doesn't just describe how the docks and ship look, but he also describes smells, sounds, and actions:

. . . Though I had lived by the shore all my life, I seemed never to have been near the sea till then. The smell of tar and salt was something new. I saw the most wonderful figure-heads,

that had all been far over the ocean. I saw, besides, many old sailors, with rings in their ears, and whiskers curled in ringlets, and tarry pigtales, and their swaggering, clumsy seawalk; (63)

. . . I might have been twice as weary, yet I would not have left the deck; all was so new and interesting to me—the brief commands, the shrill note of the whistle, the men bustling to their places in the glimmer of the ship’s lanterns. (81)

### SETTING AND MOOD

Even the description of the ship, however, is nothing compared to the description of the setting at the heart of this story, Treasure Island itself. Jim’s first sight of it has a touch of the theatrical granted by the fog which acts like a rising curtain and the moon like a spotlight revealing the stage of a drama:

. . . A belt of fog had lifted almost simultaneously with the appearance of the moon. Away to the southwest of us we saw two low hills, about a couple of miles apart, and rising behind one of them a third and higher hill, whose peak was still buried in the fog. All three seemed sharp and conical in figure. (98)

This matches well Jim’s tense mood, created by the conversation he overheard while in the apple barrel. It also prefigures the human drama that is about to play out on the island. This place is the reason for all the previous conflict in the book and the conflict that is about to begin.

The next day Jim is in no better mood, and this is reflected both in his view of the island and his new feelings about the ship:

The *Hispaniola* was rolling scuppers under the ocean swell. The booms were tearing at the blocks, the rudder was banging to and fro, and the whole ship creaking, groaning, and jumping like a manufactory. I had to cling tight to the backstay, and the world turned giddily before my eyes; for though I was a good enough sailor when there was way on, this standing still and being rolled about like a bottle was a thing I never learned to stand without a qualm or so, above all in the morning, on an empty stomach. (109–110)

Jim's world has been rocked by the discovery he made aboard ship. He had trusted Long John Silver, had liked him, and now his very life is threatened by him. Jim's internal disorientation is expressed externally by the rocking, pitching boat. His gloom is apparent in his morning's view of the island:

Perhaps it was this—perhaps it was the look of the island with its grey, melancholy woods, and wild stone spires, and the surf that we could both see and hear foaming and thundering on the steep beach . . . and from that first look onward, I hated the very thought of Treasure Island. (110)

These descriptions both help us to understand Jim's character better and help us share in his mood.

### **SETTING AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT**

But it's not just Jim's character that is expressed through the setting. Stevenson also underscores Silver's evil nature using it:

It was still quite early, and the coldest morning that I think I ever was abroad in; a chill that pierced into the marrow. The sky was bright and cloudless overhead, and the tops of the trees shone rosily in the sun. But where Silver stood with his lieutenant all was still in shadow, and they waded knee deep in a low, white vapour, that had crawled during the night out of the morass. The chill and the vapour taken together told a poor tale of the island. It was plainly a damp, feverish, unhealthy spot. (163)

Now, it's certainly true that the literal reading of this is important. First, it would be accurate that a tropical island would have diseases, so Stevenson increases the believability of the story by including them. Also, the disease-ridden island contributes to his plot, because some of the pirates are struck down by the illness. But this description of the island, and linking Silver to it by putting him in the middle of the vapour, also works to underline the evil and danger that Silver brings with him.

The setting here, just as with Jim's rocking boat, is working figuratively as well as literally. This means that it is expressing something more than just what you first understand when you read it. It's apparent when you read about the boat that it is rocking and

making Jim sick. That is its literal meaning. Its figurative meaning is that Jim's world is also rocking and making him sick because he has been betrayed by people he trusted. In the same way, you understand right away that there are unhealthy, even deadly, diseases on the island and the vapour is a physical sign of these. That is the literal meaning of the description. But the figurative meaning, that you have to read more deeply to see, is that Silver with his deception and cruelty is also a deadly disease of sorts. So, sometimes a bit of description of setting can do many things at once. In this case it makes the story more realistic, provides help for the plot, and figuratively develops a character.

### SETTING AS CHARACTER

At times, setting can act as a sort of character, sometimes even interfering or lending a helping hand. You'll learn more about setting interfering in Chapter 8 on conflict. The first time in *Treasure Island* that a setting appears as a sort of character is when Jim says good-bye to his home:

I said goodbye to mother and the cove where I had lived since I was born, and the dear old 'Admiral Benbow'—since he was repainted, no longer quite so dear. . . . Next moment we had turned the corner, and my home was out of sight. (62)

By referring to the inn as *he* Jim personifies the place and we feel his closeness to it. Personifying a setting can make it seem more human—more like another character—and this can make a place seem more lovely (or more ominous and frightening).

There are a few times in *Treasure Island* when the setting helps Jim. When Jim first goes ashore he begins exploring, then the island gives him some help:

All at once there began to be a sort of bustle among the bulrushes; a wild duck flew up with a quack, another followed, and soon over the whole surface of the marsh a great cloud of birds hung screaming and circling in the air. I judged at once that some of my shipmates must be drawing near along the borders of the fen. (117)

As surely as another character might, the island warns Jim of approaching danger, thus allowing him to seek safety. Much later, the

*Hispaniola* gets Jim out of a tight corner. He is fighting Israel Hands on board after Jim's attempt to reclaim the *Hispaniola*. When Jim sees "no hope of any ultimate escape":

. . . suddenly the *Hispaniola* struck, staggered, ground for an instant in the sand, and then, swift as a blow, canted over to the port side, till the deck stood at an angle of forty-five degrees, and about a puncheon of water splashed into the scupper-holes, and lay, in a pool, between the deck and bulwark. (221)

This sudden motion of the ship throws both of them off balance and Jim's ability to regain his footing first ultimately saves his life. You can use your setting to get your characters out of danger or to help them avoid danger, but you must always do so in a realistic way, one that fits your story. It is perfectly believable that a flock of birds would take to flight when people approach or that a ship in this situation would lurch, and if you use a setting in such a way it must be similarly believable and logical.

Towards the end of the book, the island provides much more grisly help, in the form of a skeleton. Someone who could have been a character in a previous story, has now become part of the setting thanks to Flint's cruelty and time:

. . . At the foot of a pretty big pine, and involved in a green creeper, which had even partly lifted some of the smaller bones, a human skeleton lay, with a few shreds of clothing, on the ground . . . Indeed, on second glance, it seemed impossible to fancy that the body was in a natural position. But for some disarray (the work, perhaps, of the birds that had fed upon him, or of the slow-growing creeper that had gradually enveloped his remains) the man lay perfectly straight—his feet pointing in one direction, his hands, raised above his head like a diver's, pointing directly in the opposite. . . . The body pointed straight in the direction of the island, and the compass read duly ESE. and by E. (271–272)



**CONCLUSION**

Of course, sometimes setting is just setting. Stevenson spends much time describing *Treasure Island* in a neutral, objective tone; and this allows you to picture the story in your mind more clearly, to feel like you're right there with Jim through his adventures. But it can add a lot to a story to use your setting wisely at times for additional purposes, and it will improve your reading skills and appreciation of stories if you can recognize when authors are doing so as well.

- Setting means the time(s) and place(s) in which a story is set.
- Authors often choose settings to further their purposes, develop characters, and create moods.
- Settings can have literal and figurative meanings at the same time.
- Settings sometimes act like a character and can help or hinder characters.



## Mini-Lesson: Rewriting in Your Own Words

In the last mini-lesson we looked at how to take notes. You also saw a brief example of how to rewrite in your own words, but this is an important concept so I wanted to spend an entire mini-lesson on it. Let's say you want to write a paper on pirates. Here is your source material:

Pirates have been with us for at least 3,000 years. The most well-known pirates operated in the sixteenth and seventeenth century in the Caribbean. They attacked other ships, murdered if it suited them and took what they could. When they had booty they went to land and generally spent all their money in taverns and on women.

Pirates often elected their leaders democratically, something not generally done even in government in those days. They also often freed slaves that they found on other ships, taking them on as part of their crew. They saw slaves as outcasts from society, like themselves, so enjoyed helping them and adding to their body of men at the same time.

There are many famous symbols of pirates, some factual and some fictitious. Pirates did fly flags, eventually called *Jolly Rogers*. Some were a skull and crossbones (this is what is meant today by "Jolly Roger"), but some had other black and white designs, and some were even red. Pirates probably did not keep parrots, the image made famous by Long John Silver in *Treasure Island*. Long John Silver also had a peg leg; and though not common, this would have been sported by a pirate or two. Occasionally wounds demanded that a limb be amputated to prevent gangrene (there being no antibiotics back then), and a wooden replacement for a leg was the best anyone could do. Another enduring image of pirates is that they made their captives walk the plank; but in fact they did not, actually treating their captives much more cruelly than that.

Pirates went by other names as well. *Privateers* were pirates sponsored by a country's government. They attacked ships (of another country) just as a pirate would, but brought the goods back to their king or queen. *Buccaneers* were pirates from the West Indies, while *corsairs* were pirates who did business in the Mediterranean.

First, what words from your original source can you keep? After all, it's not as though you have to find a synonym for each and every word—that would be impossible. Nor is it necessary. It's understood that you will have to keep some words central to the information you are trying to share. Here are some terms you almost certainly will want in your paper:

*Pirate, Caribbean, Jolly Roger, skull, crossbones, parrots, peg leg, gangrene, privateers, buccaneers, West Indies, corsairs, Mediterranean*

Of course, you'll also use many common, everyday words that also appear in your original source. Again, it's not using the words themselves that presents the problem, but how you order those words and structure your sentences. You cannot lift a complete sentence from your original source (unless you're intending it as a quote with proper citation), but you also cannot lift a particularly original phrase. What do I mean by original phrase? Well, sometimes it's difficult to word a piece of information differently because the original wording is so straight-forward and common-place. Consider the sentence:

*Pirates often elected their leaders democratically, something not generally done even in government in those days.*

If you want to communicate that pirates often elected their leaders democratically, there are not many other ways to say that first phrase; and it would be fine to take it and put it in a sentence of your own. For example, "Pirates were ahead of their times in some ways, for example, they elected their leaders democratically."

However, consider this sentence from the same source:

*Pirates were a strange mixture of the cruel and barbarous while being adventurous and hard-working, so it is no wonder that so many romantic tales have been written about them.*

This sentence has more flavor, more personality, than anything written in the first passage, and it would not be good

to lift even a phrase from it for this reason. This passage has more of the stamp of the author rather than just communicating basic information. These words aren't just terms but creative choices on the author's part to describe pirates. This sentence also expresses an opinion and conclusion. You need to form your own opinions and conclusions and communicate them in your own words.

Getting back to our original source material above, how might you start a paper based on this, but in your own words? Here is just one way:

*Call them privateers, corsairs, or buccaneers—the truth is they were all pirates, they were all fearsome, and they were all cruel. Pirates were not the parrot and wooden leg-wearing characters of fiction. They killed and robbed, then spent their ill-gotten gains uselessly on a variety of vices. In spite of their many terrible practices, pirates did also have some positive attributes, such as practicing a sort of democracy and freeing slaves on ships they attacked.*

This is just the introductory paragraph, and you would go on from there, hopefully merging information from at least one or two other sources as well into your paper. But it should give you the idea of how to convey some of the same information while using different words. This is crucial to writing research reports and other school papers, and you will get more practice at it this year.

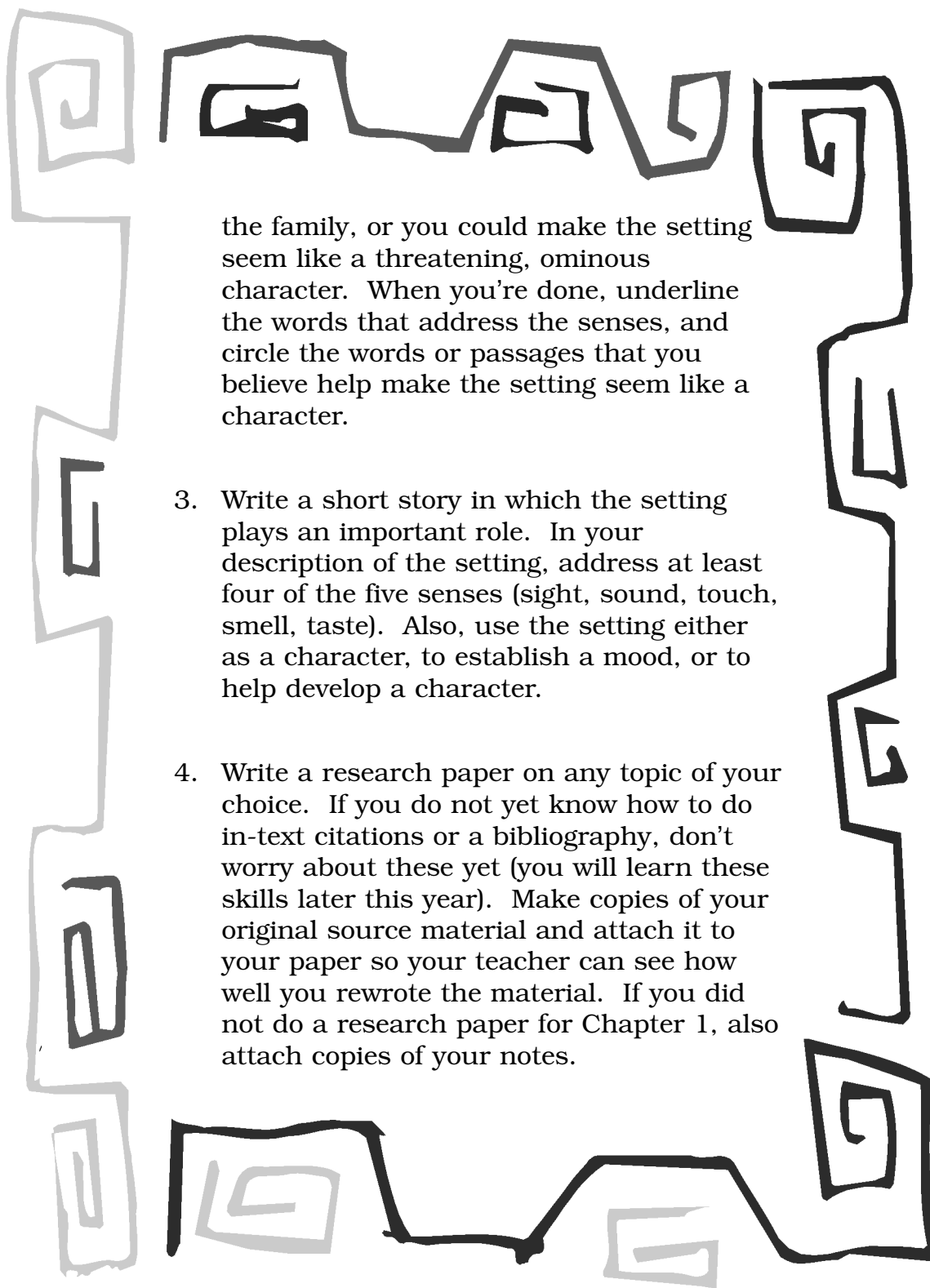
**Remember:**

- You can use terms that are specific to the information you are trying to communicate.
- You can use wording and information that is very common; but if in doubt, do your best to rewrite it or quote it and give a citation.
- You cannot lift a whole sentence from your source unless you quote and cite it.
- You cannot give someone else's opinions and conclusions as your own, even if you rewrite it in your own words (unless you came to the same conclusion before reading your source's conclusion).
- You cannot lift a phrase or sentence that is uncommon, that demonstrates the personality or style of the author, or that expresses an opinion or conclusion.



## Writing Exercises

1. Choose any setting where you can actually be (your room, another room in your home, your backyard, a park, etc.). While there, write a description of the setting that is at least three paragraphs long. The description must do two things. First, it must address at least four of the five senses (sight, sound, touch, smell, taste). Second, it must establish a certain mood (e.g., peaceful, scary, cozy). When you're done, underline the words that address the senses, and circle the words or passages that you believe help build your mood.
2. Choose any setting where you can actually be (your room, another room in your home, your backyard, a park, etc.). While there, write a description of the setting that is at least three paragraphs long. The description must do two things. First, it must address at least four of the five senses (sight, sound, touch, smell, taste). Second, it must bring the setting or parts of the setting to life as a character in some way. You could do this by making the setting seem like an old friend or part of



the family, or you could make the setting seem like a threatening, ominous character. When you're done, underline the words that address the senses, and circle the words or passages that you believe help make the setting seem like a character.

3. Write a short story in which the setting plays an important role. In your description of the setting, address at least four of the five senses (sight, sound, touch, smell, taste). Also, use the setting either as a character, to establish a mood, or to help develop a character.
4. Write a research paper on any topic of your choice. If you do not yet know how to do in-text citations or a bibliography, don't worry about these yet (you will learn these skills later this year). Make copies of your original source material and attach it to your paper so your teacher can see how well you rewrote the material. If you did not do a research paper for Chapter 1, also attach copies of your notes.