

Climate Change and Setting Lesson Plan

Required Materials

Physical:

- Printed off copies of:
 - [The Ministry for the Future by Kim Stanley Robinson \(excerpt\)](#)
- Annotation tools (pens/pencils/highlighters, etc)
- Whiteboard/chalkboard/large paper for students to collaborate on charts/lists

Digital:

- Oregon State University Literary Terms Series Video: Setting in Climate Fiction Video

Stage 0 - Scaffolding

Students Already Know:

- Students should have a baseline understanding of the concept of plot setting: time, place, and environment of a narrative
- Students should have a baseline understanding of narrative arcs and cause-and-effect events
- Students should have basic annotation skills
- This lesson would fit well within a unit about plot structure, narrative devices, and/or character archetypes, or a unit about climate fiction/science fiction
- This lesson could be preceded by:
 - Narrative Arc
 - Cli-Fi
- This lesson could be followed up with:
 - Environmental Uncanny

Key Terms/Vocabulary:

Throughout the lesson, the teacher should highlight and clearly define these terms (and how they may change) in their own terms, or from the following definitions from OED:

- *Setting*: (n) The environment or surroundings in which a person or thing is 'set'; the literary framework of a narrative or other composition
- *Agency*: (n) Ability or capacity to act or exert power; active working or operation; action, activity
 - "Geologic Agency" (ask students to *infer* what this means using the definition of agency)
- *Climate Change*: (n) An alteration in the regional or global climate; esp. the change in global climate patterns increasingly apparent from the mid to late 20th century onwards and linked largely with increased emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases caused by human activity
- *Temporality/Temporal*: (n) Lasting or existing only for a time; passing, temporary

Stage 1 – Desired Results

Content Standard(s):

These standards are pulled from Common Core Grade 9-10, feel free to find equivalent standards for your state/territory or grade

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.6: Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature. 	
<p>Understanding (s)/goals</p> <p>Students will understand that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> climate change has changed how setting operates in fiction agency refers to the ability to affect the plot/narrative arc of a story setting has agency as climate change has an increasing impact on our perception of the future 	<p>Essential Question(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does setting operate within “cli-fi” literature? What is “agency?” How can the setting of a story exert agency in the narrative?
<p>Student objectives (outcomes):</p> <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify what the setting is in a climate fiction story and how it differs from prior understanding of narrative setting Analyze moments when the setting directly impacts the plot/narrative arc Apply knowledge of climate cause and effect to their real world actions/decisions 	
<p>Stage 2 – Assessment Evidence</p>	
<p>Performance Task(s):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will collaborate on multiple charts in class to demonstrate understanding of prior conceptions of narrative setting, narrative setting influenced by climate change, and a cause-and-effect chart about how setting operates in the transition between past and future. Students will apply their conception of agency and setting to their real world experiences 	<p>Other Evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher will routinely check for understanding with call and response answers for the communal chart making Teacher will informally check progress on individual group work on timelines/charts/annotating
<p>Stage 3 – Learning Plan</p>	
<p>Learning Activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher will begin the lesson asking students to review what they know about setting in a narrative, writing on a board what students list <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Some of these answers may include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Time period Place/Area/Region Environment Cultural/Social/Political Atmosphere/Context As a class, students will watch Oregon State University’s Literary Terms Series: Setting in Climate Fiction video 	

3. The teacher will then ask what setting does in climate fiction that is *different* from their previous list, writing down students' answers in an adjacent list
 - a. Some of these answers may include:
 - i. Agency
 1. teacher should define this for the class, either from their own definition or the OED's definition: "Ability or capacity to act or exert power; active working or operation; action, activity."
 - ii. Environmental supply/resources, such as:
 1. food; animal or crops, water
 2. building materials; lumber, metals, bricks
 3. energy sources; solar, wind, water, oil
 - iii. Human Health; how the following might affect human health
 1. temperature
 2. air quality
 3. water quality
 - iv. natural disasters/climate catastrophes, such as:
 1. heat waves
 2. floods
 3. storms; hurricanes, tornadoes, lightning storms
 4. drought
 5. tsunamis
 6. wildfires
4. Keeping these lists in mind, students will then independently read the excerpt from Kim Stanley Robinson's *Ministry for the Future*, annotating where they see elements from their lists appear
 - a. Teacher should model this in the first paragraph, then allow students to do the rest of the story independently
5. Students, in groups or independently, then should correlate these instances of cli-fi setting to direct effects on the story, making a cause-and-effect chart
 - a. Teacher should model an example:
 - i. EX: Air is too hot, citizens go to the lake to cool down

- b. Teacher should highlight the importance here of *transitions* of setting, where the past concept of setting was singular, or isolated, and the concept of setting in regards to climate change forces us to read for the past *and* future.
6. Students should then work as a class to make a timeline/chart of the cause and effect moments they've identified
- a. To set this up, the teacher should use a whiteboard/chalkboard/other whole-class accessible format to section "cause" and "effect" columns.
 - b. Students should then insert their cause-and-effect charts from their independent or group work in chronological order
 - c. Teacher should highlight the way some of their "effects" end up becoming "causes" later in the timeline
7. To end the lesson, the teacher should ask students to identify moments the environment has a direct affect on their actions, ie:
- a. EX: The cost of gas is rising due to limited resources, therefore I ride my bike to school
 - b. EX: The air quality is bad because of a wildfire, therefore I wear a mask when outside

Differentiation

- For interdisciplinary collaboration:
 - Teacher could collaborate with the current unit in the students' history class and ask them to perform Steps 5 and 7 from learning plan in regards to the historical event they are studying
 - "Identify the setting of [x event] in relation to our new conception of setting, agency, and climate change"
- For higher-level learners:
 - Teacher could ask students to perform Steps 5 and 7 from a previous in-class reading OR from a climate change poem, such as "Tell Them" by Kathy Jetñil-Kijiner to analyze how setting works in non-prose literature
- For ELL students:
 - Teacher could provide translation materials of any written handouts, OR allow students to use translation technologies
 - Teacher could collaborate with ESOL teacher/aid if available
- For students with learning accommodations:
 - Teacher should allow any screen-readers and use transcripts when needed