

Setting

Question 1 .

The boat was like a bucking bronco as it reared and thumped against the roaring waves. The captain kept shouting through the rumble of the water, "Men, don't let go! We'll have her reared in soon." However, it seemed there would be no end to the trashing by the waves. The waves rose to a frightening height as the crew members held on tight. Their faces went grey with fear and their knuckles white as the air tossed their hats off and tore through their hair. Each time the wave rose, it splashed the men with a gush of frothy water. Faces wet with fear and anxiety, the men rowed as fast as they could. The captain assured his men about finding a house of refuge soon, but the trepidation in his voice failed him. The men were beginning to lose hope.

What does the setting do to the men on the boat?

- ☐ A. It makes them look for help.
- ☐ B. It makes them very scared.
- ☐ C. It makes them want to jump off the boat.
- ☐ D. It makes them think of their families.

Question 2 .

Fans

by J. Robbins

"Where are we supposed to sit?" yelled Dashiell over the pounding sounds of the band Spoiled Angry Monkey Pants. His best friend Valancy, who had her fingers stuck in her ears to salvage her hearing, didn't respond. The concert hall was filled to overflowing with enthusiastic fans. All of the lights had been dimmed to provide ambiance, and Dashiell was getting a headache from squinting to see through the darkness. The people around him alternated dancing and singing with shoving and arguing, and he was growing more anxious by the second. He tried to push through the mass of people and protect Valancy at the same time.

"I can't see anything, Dash," Valancy hollered at the top of her lungs. "Do you know where we're going?" Dashiell smiled down at her with a confidence he didn't truly feel.

"Sure thing, ace," he screamed. "I'll get these goons out of our way." Unfortunately, the band finished playing their song just as Dashiell spoke. His boast echoed across the darkened room, and he felt hundreds of hostile eyes pointed in his direction. Valancy, her face bright red with embarrassment, quickly pulled him into a tiny alcove.

"I'm sure our band will come on soon," said Valancy hopefully as she shoved garbage off two seats in the alcove. The ground was littered with abandoned gum and discarded candy wrappers, and her feet stuck to the floor as she tried to sit in a chair.

"Yeah, Evil Robot Theory never disappoints their fans, and that's why they're the best band in the whole—EWW!" Dashiell shouted as he sat down in a pool of spilled soda. Valancy finally pulled her foot free from a wad of gum and nearly fell face-first into a pile of concession stand nachos someone had thrown on the floor.

"I have the new Evil Robot Theory CD in my car," she told her friend. "Why don't we just get out of here?" Dashiell nodded gratefully, and they began the long, arduous trip out of the concert hall. On the main stage, Spoiled Angry Monkey Pants began to play their hit song, "Inexplicable Apathetic Rant, Part Two," which inspired their fans to a new level of frenzied dancing and shouting.

What does the setting of this passage reveal about the characters?

- ☐ A. They don't enjoy listening to music as much as they enjoy playing it themselves.
- ☐ B. They like to broaden their musical tastes by seeing new bands play live.
- ☐ C. They value comfort and quiet more than seeing a favorite band play live.
- ☐ D. They are always eager to meet people who are different from themselves.

Question 3 .

White Nights

by J. Robbins

"Are we close to the art gallery?" asked Veruca as she tried to peer through the crowd of people around her. Her friends could barely hear her over the outdoor band playing on the street corner. The annual White Nights Festival had drawn hundreds of people to the usually quiet city, and the streets were overflowing with tourists wearing outlandish costumes.

"I think I see it," Mycroft said as he dodged around a man dressed as Count Dracula. "We'd better hurry or the gallery will be closed. The festival will only last for four hours."

"We'll never make it through this crowd," groaned Dahli. "Maybe we'd better split up and meet at the gallery."

"Great idea!" Zane said. The four friends separated and tried to make their way across the street. Veruca was shocked when a woman grabbed her hand and started yelling at her.

"Don't you ever wander away from me again, Teodor!" shouted the stranger. Veruca removed her elf mask and tried to pull her hand away from the woman's tight grasp.

"I'm sorry, ma'am, but I'm not Teodor," Veruca said. The woman gasped in surprise and apologized.

"Will you help me find my son?" the woman asked tearfully. Veruca smiled and nodded. *What better way to spend my evening than helping rescue a lost child?* she thought.

Meanwhile, Zane and Dahli found themselves in the middle of a conga line of dancers. They were jostled and shaken from every side as the line of dancers wound its way through the crowd. After trying in vain to get free, Dahli looked over at Zane and shrugged. The two friends began to dance happily to the music.

Mycroft had lost sight of the art gallery and was wondering aimlessly through the crowd. He was looking for his friends when a troupe of street performers surrounded him.

"Would you like to help us perform our act?" asked the group's leader. He handed Mycroft a flaming baton and showed him how to twirl it above his head. Several children and tourists gathered around Mycroft and watched in awe as he twirled the baton and tossed it in the air. He felt a wide grin spread across his face as the crowd cheered.

The festivities continued long into the night. Fireworks streaked across the sky and dazzled the eyes of the onlookers. Dahli and Zane, weary from hours of dancing, finally found the art gallery, and they were relieved to see Mycroft and Veruca waiting for them.

"The art gallery has closed for the evening," Mycroft said. "I'm actually glad it's closed because now I can tell you about my amazing evening. I joined a troupe of street performers, and I'm going to be their new baton twirler at festivals all over the city."

"You won't believe what happened to me tonight!" exclaimed Veruca. "I rescued a lost child and got a commendation from a police officer for my help."

"Zane and I had the best time of our lives!" Dahli said. "We learned to dance the conga." The four friends laughed and talked eagerly as the bright lights swirled and dazzled through the air.

How does the setting influence the plot of the passage?

- ☐ A. The closed art gallery disappoints several characters and ruins their time at the festival.
- ☐ B. The crowded festival causes several characters to separate and have unique experiences.
- ☐ C. The festive setting causes the characters to set aside their differences and work together.
- ☐ D. The dangerous setting threatens several characters' safety and creates tension in the story.

Question 4 .

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What does the setting do to the story?

- ☐ A. It warns against going out in bad weather.
- ☐ B. It tells what to do in a raging storm.
- ☐ C. It heightens the tension of the plot.
- ☐ D. It tells about the life of crew members.

Question 5 .

It was a perfect summer morning when we moved into our new home. Bryan was outside giving instructions to the movers on unloading the truck. I, meanwhile, began exploring the house. I wanted to savor the empty rooms filled with sunshine before they were cluttered with furniture. The one place in the house that I had yet to visit was the basement, as Bryan had taken care of it. He raved about the basement so much that I had to go down there myself.

I opened the door and hit the light switch. The bulb flickered for a few seconds and then went out. The sunlight from the window in the far end of the basement was my only source of light. Dark spaces spooked the daylights out of me, and the basement was no exception. Dusty, dark, and moldy, the basement made me claustrophobic. I walked back to the door and opened it, but it was jammed shut. I tried to pry it open with a rod, but the door would not budge. I walked up to the window and yelled for Bryan, but he couldn't hear me. I was beginning to panic. Suddenly, I heard the door squeak. I ran towards it hoping someone heard me and came to my rescue. However, to my surprise the door was still shut tight. As I looked closer, there was another door hidden behind a pillar. I was tempted to go in but hesitated, as it was completely dark.

Where is the story mostly taking place?

- ☐ A. a basement
- ☐ B. a garage
- ☐ C. a closet
- ☐ D. an attic

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When does the story take place?

- ☐ A. summer
- ☐ B. fall
- ☐ C. spring
- ☐ D. winter

Question 7 .

from Coral Island
by R. M. Ballantyne

It was a bright, beautiful, warm day when our ship spread her canvass to the breeze, and sailed for the regions of the south. Oh, how my heart bounded with delight as I listened to the merry chorus of the sailors, while they hauled at the ropes and got in the anchor! The captain shouted—the men ran to obey—the noble ship bent over to the breeze, and the shore gradually faded from my view, while I stood looking on with a kind of feeling that the whole was a delightful dream.

The first thing that struck me as being different from anything I had yet seen during my short career on the sea, was the hoisting of the anchor on deck.

"There, lass," cried a broad-shouldered jack-tar, giving the fluke of the anchor a hearty slap with his hand after the housing was completed—"there, lass, take a good nap now, for we shan't ask you to kiss the mud again for many a long day to come!"

And so it was. That anchor did not "kiss the mud" for many long days afterwards; and when at last it did, it was for the last time!

There were a number of boys in the ship, but two of them were my special favorites. Jack Martin was a tall, strapping, broad-shouldered youth of eighteen, with a handsome, good-humored, firm face. He had had a good education, was clever and hearty and lion-like in his actions, but mild and quiet in disposition. Jack was a general favorite, and had a peculiar fondness for me. My other companion was Peterkin Gay. He was little, quick, funny, decidedly mischievous, and about fourteen years old. But Peterkin's mischief was almost always harmless, else he could not have been so much beloved as he was.

I shall say little about the first part of our voyage. We had the usual amount of rough weather and calm; also we saw many strange fish rolling in the sea, and I was greatly delighted one day by seeing a shoal of flying fish dart out of the water and skim through the air about a foot above the surface. They were pursued by dolphins, which feed on them, and one flying-fish in its terror flew over the ship, struck on the rigging, and fell upon the deck. Its wings were just fins elongated, and we found that they could never fly far at a time, and never mounted into the air like birds, but skimmed along the surface of the sea.

When we approached Cape Horn, at the southern extremity of America, the weather became very cold and stormy, and the sailors began to tell stories about the furious gales and the dangers of that terrible cape.

Nevertheless, we passed the dreaded cape without much rough weather, and, in the course of a few weeks afterwards, were sailing gently, before a warm tropical breeze, over the Pacific Ocean.

At last we came among the Coral Islands of the Pacific, and I shall never forget the delight with which I gazed,—when we chanced to pass one,—at the pure, white, dazzling shores, and the verdant palm-trees, which looked bright and beautiful in the sunshine.

Directions: Select all the correct answers.

What **two** elements of plot does the setting highlight?

- ☐ The setting highlights the external conflict faced by the characters.
- ☐ The setting highlights the internal conflicts faced by the characters.
- ☐ The setting highlights the relationship dynamic between the characters.
- ☐ The setting highlights the narrator's reluctance about exploration.
- ☐ The setting highlights the contrasts in the theme of the passage.

Question 8 .

Horror Gala

by J. Robbins

"That was the best movie I've ever seen," said Pavel, causing his friends Damien and Nikko to groan and roll their eyes.

"You said the same thing after all six movies we've watched today," Nikko replied.

"For a film history major, you sure don't have very high expectations," agreed Damien.

"Well, this time I'm sure it was the best," retorted Pavel. "Even Professor Bram would have to agree that any movie with werewolves, vampires, ghosts, and pirates is a masterpiece. The only thing missing was Frankenstein's monster!"

The three friends ducked into a darkened doorway to avoid the crowd of moviegoers. The 40th Annual Horror Movie Gala had drawn a record number of people to the Nolan Movie Theater. Pavel, Damien, and Nikko had taken time off work and arrived at the movie theater before dawn to fit in as much movie-watching time as possible.

"Let's fuel up on snacks before the next movie starts," suggested Damien. Nikko nodded enthusiastically, but Pavel's attention was drawn to the door behind him. He turned the knob, and the door creaked open.

"What are you doing?" Nikko asked. "The sign says 'Keep out.' "

"Signs always say that," replied Pavel. "That shouldn't stop us from taking advantage of an unlocked door. At the very least we can get out of this crowd." Damien looked at the door nervously. The dim lighting created a spooky atmosphere.

"I don't think this is a good idea," he told his friends. "We make fun of people in movies who wander into creepy places and then act all surprised when they get eaten by werewolves!"

"There are no werewolves in here," Pavel laughed. "But just in case, make sure the door doesn't lock behind you." They crept forward into the darkness. Thick carpeting beneath their feet gave way to cold concrete. The sound of cheerful moviegoers vanished and was replaced with the eerie echoes of their footsteps.

"This may have been a huge mistake," whispered Pavel. "Let's turn back." As he spoke, a bright light flashed all around him, and he stumbled backward into Damien.

"What are you doing here?" demanded a gruff voice. As Pavel's eyes adjusted to the light, he saw an elderly man glaring at him from behind an antique writing desk.

"We didn't mean to disturb you, sir," Nikko answered. "My friends and I will just head back the way we came."

"Good," replied the stranger. "It's a devil of a shame that a man can't be left in peace in his own movie theater." Pavel's eyes widened as he realized that the stranger was C. Topher Nolan, the original owner of the Nolan Movie Theater and founder of the Horror Gala. The three friends raced back through the passage and past the concession stand. They stood outside in the blinding afternoon sun and tried to catch their breath.

"Can you believe we got to see Mr. Nolan in person?" Pavel asked his friends excitedly.

"Pavel, that can't have been C. Topher Nolan," replied Damien, his eyes wide. "He passed away in 1963." Pavel's smile faded as he looked at his ashen-faced friends.

"Then who did we just—" he started to ask.

"Let's just chalk it up to our overactive imaginations," interrupted Nikko. "We probably just watched too many horror movies today."

"Right," Damien agreed uneasily. "There's no other explanation." The three friends squinted at each other in the bright sun and tried to convince themselves that the only supernatural events in the Nolan Movie Theater were those happening on the screen.

Where do the last five paragraphs of this passage take place?

- ☐ A. outside a movie theater
- ☐ B. in C. Topher Nolan's office
- ☐ C. in a darkened doorway
- ☐ D. at a concession stand

Question 9 .

Homeland
by J. Robbins

I stared out the window of the taxicab as the driver skillfully threaded through the traffic. My best friends Katerina and Ivan had volunteered to come with me, and I was grateful to have them by my side. I knew that traveling to Russia to see my father's grave would be hard—I just didn't realize that it would be an emotional avalanche. "It's not too late to go back to the hotel," Ivan whispered to me.

"We can always wait until you've had a chance to adjust to the city," agreed Katerina. I silently blessed my friends for their kindness. They knew that beneath my thin veneer of bravery, I was a mess. The rain outside turned into a thick, blinding snow and obscured my view. I didn't mind. The city that I had dreamed of seeing all my life was changed forever now. My father had described every inch of his beloved homeland in his letters to me, and his words on the page meant more to me than the buildings now covered in snow.

"Let's keep going," I said resolutely. "I want to do what we came here to do. After that, I can go home and start a new chapter in my life." The taxi slowed as it neared the cemetery. I left my friends inside the warmth of the car and walked slowly toward the gravesite I had seen only in photographs. In my hand, I clutched the worn copy of Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* that my father had sent me right before his death. Tears fell mingled with snowflakes as I stood before his grave. I silently bid my father goodbye, placed the book on his grave marker, and turned to leave.

The snow had covered my footprints, and the clean white ground in front of me seemed to go on forever. My boots broke through the top layer of snow, and the clean white ground allowed me to move forward and leave the past behind. The faces of my friends, suddenly becoming clear as the snow stopped, seemed to draw me forward into a brighter future.

How does the setting influence the narrator in this passage?

- ☐ A. The unfamiliar city reminds the narrator of what he/she has lost.
- ☐ B. The city is the location for the three main characters to meet.
- ☐ C. The busy activity in the city makes the narrator feel more comfortable.
- ☐ D. The city is the location for the narrator to meet his/her father.

Question 10 .

Kevin Thompson expected sun and relaxation after two grueling years of residency when he was posted as a visiting physician to Juiz de Fora in Brazil. As an intern, he was constantly on call and spent long hours at the Chicago Memorial Hospital assisting in surgery. The rigorous program at the medical school in Chicago had drained every living fiber out of him.

The laid-back life, the tropical climate, the friendliness of the village people, and the isolation that Juiz de Fora offered was a perfect match for his current needs. The unending rain and the humidity bothered him, but he was prepared to suck it up. It poured endlessly, and he was constantly changing his sweaty shirt. The rain hammered the roofs and splashed on the ground in a torrent. His desire to soak in the sun was rarely ever met.

Based on the setting, what can the reader tell about Kevin's life until he moved to Brazil?

- ☐ A. The residency gave Kevin enough time to rest.
- ☐ B. Kevin enjoyed working in stressful environments.
- ☐ C. The medical school in Chicago kept Kevin very busy.
- ☐ D. Kevin was constantly sick during his residency.

Answers

1. B
2. C
3. B
4. C
5. A
6. A
7. --
8. A
9. A
10. C

Explanations

1. In the given passage, the men are being tossed about in their boat by raging waves. This makes them very scared despite the captain's assurances. It says, "The waves rose to a frightening height as the crew members held on tight. Their faces went grey with fear and their knuckles white as the air tossed their hats off and tore through their hair."
2. The setting of this passage is a dark, dirty, crowded concert hall. The main characters act in a way that shows the setting makes them uncomfortable. At the end of the passage, they leave the concert hall to listen to music in their car rather than hear their favorite band play. The setting reveals that Dashiell and Valancy value comfort and quiet more than seeing their favorite band play in a live concert.
3. At the beginning of this passage, the four main characters are attempting to move through a crowd to find an art gallery. They decide to separate because of the crowd, and they each have unique experiences during the festival.
4. In some stories, setting helps in understanding the mood. The reader can tell that the mood is an ominous one from the first sentence. It says, "The boat was like a bucking bronco as it reared and thumped against the roaring waves."
5. The reader can get this clue from the second paragraph. Most of the story takes place in the basement.
6. The reader can tell that the story takes place in summer from the first sentence. It says, "It was a perfect summer morning when we moved into our new home."
7. The narrator describes how the ship's crew faces some hurdles on their journey because of rough weather. The weather creates the external conflict faced by the characters. Additionally, the setting of the sea voyage highlights the importance of teamwork. The narrator describes his fellow mates in kind words. That shows how the crew members relate with one another. Therefore, the correct answers are "The setting highlights the external conflict of the characters" and "The setting highlights the relationship dynamic between the characters."
8. The majority of this story takes place inside a movie theater. However, at the end of the fourteenth paragraph of this passage, the author states, "The three friends raced back through the passage and past the concession stand. They stood outside in the blinding afternoon sun and tried to catch their breath." The last five paragraphs of this passage take place outside a movie theater.
9. In the second paragraph of the passage, the narrator states, "The city that I had dreamed of seeing all my life was changed forever now. My father had described every inch of his beloved homeland in his letters to me. . . ." The unfamiliar city reminds the narrator of the loss of his/her father.
10. The reader can tell that medical school kept Kevin very busy from the first paragraph. It says, "As an intern, he was constantly on call and spent long hours at the Chicago Memorial Hospital assisting in surgery." The next sentence in the paragraph tells how he was drained out of energy. This helps the reader understand how busy Kevin really was.