

# WHERE THE CHARACTERS ARE THIS SETTING NEEDS ... - A PRE-IMPROVISATION EXERCISE

## GRADES K-6

TH:Cr1.1.b  
TH:Cr2.b  
TH:Pr4.1.a  
TH:Pr6.1.a  
TH:Re9.a

Lesson by  
Penny  
Caywood

**DURATION:** 10 minutes

### 21st CENTURY SKILLS:

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Critical thinking | <input type="checkbox"/> Information literacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Creativity        | <input type="checkbox"/> Media literacy       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaboration     | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology literacy  | <input type="checkbox"/> Productivity          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communication     | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexibility          | <input type="checkbox"/> Social skills         |

### BACKGROUND

In This Setting Needs students build the environment with their bodies based on a teacher's prompt. By physicalizing objects/people/animals in an environment, students explore the many characteristics and aspects of a location, setting, environment, or event. This information can become very helpful before improvising. It's like creating a physical brainstorming session.

### DIRECTIONS

1. Invite students to sit together on the floor or in chairs as an audience, facing an empty space.
2. Introduce the strategy: Today we will create an environment or a setting using only our bodies. If needed, help students to construct a shared definition of the word "setting" or "environment" as a place or location where an event takes place.
3. Next, invite students to build a familiar setting. Start with something they know well, like the school playground or a classroom. They should take a moment and think of the different things and people that you would find on a playground. When they have an idea, they can raise their hand, come into the stage space and create the shape of something you do or might find on playground with their bodies.
4. Offer a few examples to the group. This setting needs a swing. Then become a swing set or become a person on a swing. Or, this setting needs a game of tag, as you become a child about to tag another person. Once instructions are clear, begin the activity.
5. Encourage students to make specific physical choices. They also will need to hold these poses for a few minutes.
6. Build each setting until 5-10 students are on stage. Once the image is built, ask questions to the audience:
  - a. What do you see in this setting?
  - b. If you had to give this setting a title, what would you title it?
7. Repeat the activity, this time inviting the group to create an image of a location, setting, environment, or event tied to the day's improvisation.

### MATERIALS:

- a bit of open space is preferred - (front of classroom, library kiva, auditorium).

### REFLECTION:

- How did we use our bodies to show the setting?
- What relationships did we see?
- What clues do the actors give you to help you understand who they are/what they are doing/how they feel about it?



This lesson is an adaptation of a strategy from Drama Based Instruction. The original creator is unknown.

