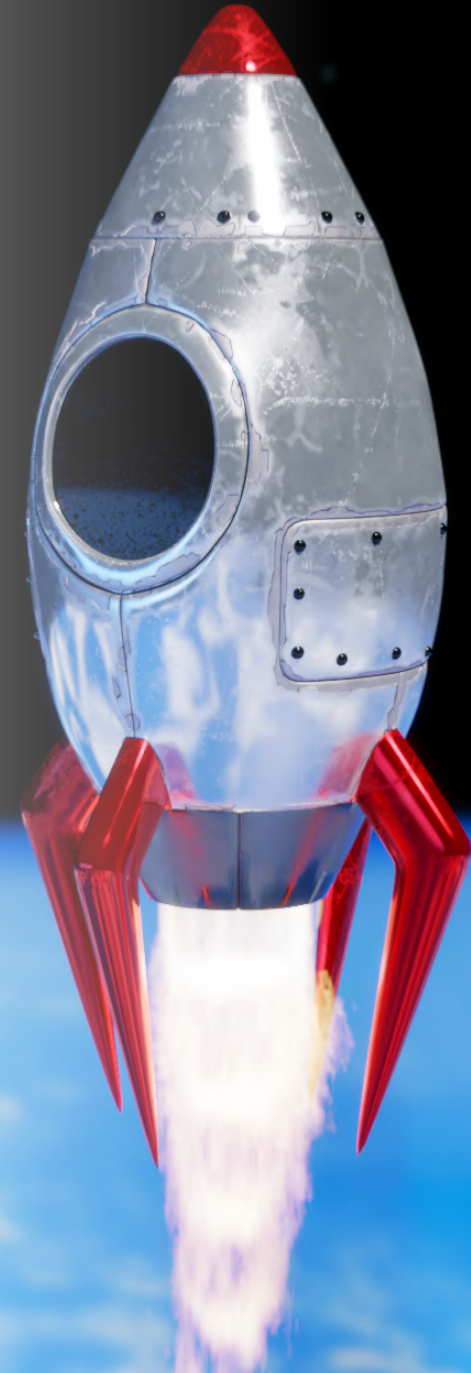


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Topic Five

Time and Place



Why is place important?

The play has to happen in a set place (or places) and within a certain amount of time.

When writing a play for the stage, you can go anywhere for as long as you like because you can ask the audience to use their imagination.

Where your play happens, shapes what might happen, but not always.

For example:

If your play happens on the moon, what might happen there?
What could the play be about?

- An astronaut stuck in space
- The man in the moon running out of cheese
- An evil monster that is trying to stop night happening by stealing the moon
- The first family that have gone to live on the moon because there's no room left on the earth



Can you think of any examples?

There are certain stories that would suit the moon location better than others, and certain conditions that might shape your play.

What if everyone was living on the moon and they have run out of spacesuits, what would happen? What would the problems be? How might they be solved?

However, if the play was set in Pontypridd, then running out of spacesuits is not such a big problem.



TOP TIP: *The bigger the place, the bigger the play will be. Some of the best plays are very simple.*

Possible places your play could be set...

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| In your own head | In a secret cupboard in your bedroom |
| In your kitchen | In the upstairs of your house |
| In your town | In the whole of your house |
| On your street | Across the whole world |
| In the attics across all the houses in your street | |
| On the walkways outside flats including the lift area | |

You might find that you want to write a big, exciting story where characters have to complete very difficult tasks in order to save the world or all of the planets from evil.

You might want to write a simpler story that could happen in a place that you know really well.

Kinds of Places

Everyday Places: These are places that you know well from your own life; Home, school, car, park, shops, grandparents' home, library, café or a friend's house.

Holidays and Special Occasion Places: By the seaside, on a day trip, on a school trip (including the bus to take you there), on a family holiday, on carnival day, at a family party, at an important sports match, at the cinema or at a Halloween party.

Faraway Places: The Arctic, the Australian bush, at the bottom of the ocean, the Moon, at the top of Everest, on the mast of a ship, underneath the ground or at the centre of the Earth.

Magical Places: A fairy tale world, the past, the future, inside the body, another world without humans in it, a world inside a book, flying with the birds or swimming with fishes or your own world transformed.

You don't have to choose only one of these places for your play, you could start off in one location and then suddenly take your characters to a very different place before returning home again.



TOP TIP: *Some places might be exciting or different, but don't forget boring places can be exciting too.*

Can you think of any other places that might be good to write a play about?

Choose one place and think about the following things:

- What are the rules of this place? What can and can't you do? If this is a strange or magical world, make sure that all the rules make sense- even if they are magical.
- What kind of catalyst might happen in this place? Friends might fall out, there might be a journey or quest or a conflict.
- How can the place shape the problems and obstacles that the character faces? Is it very cold, or hot, or windy or rainy? Is it a world where there is no food or only sweet things to eat? Is it a world without night or day?

The more detail that you think about, the more this can feed into your story.

Why is time important?

The amount of time that passes in a play can change the kind of play you are writing.

For example, if you want to tell the whole story of a person who is 100 years old, then you would only be able to tell small parts of the story, otherwise the play would be too long.

If your play is set over one afternoon, there might have to be a lot of fast moving action and change in order to find out the story. Although, if it happens too quickly it might not be believable.

Possible timescales:

- Over one full day
- Over a weekend
- Over a week
- Over a month
- Over the Summer school holidays
- Over a year
- Over 2 years
- Over 10 years
- Over 50 years



TOP TIP: Try to match the timeframe with the kind of story that you want to tell.

If you wanted to write about the time that Dewi and his friends accidentally killed Leon's hamster, then a 50 year timeframe wouldn't work very well. It would probably work better if it was set over one day.

If you wanted to tell someone's life story, then it would have to be set over a longer amount of time and it might also jump back and fore in time.

Time, like place, can be magical, so you can transport people to different times using dramatic techniques and imagination.

Possible timeframe choices:

- All the drama happens in the present time in front of our eyes.
- The drama jumps backwards and forwards between the present and the past.
- The drama jumps from the present to the future.
- All the drama happens in a different time, e.g. during the war or Victorian times.
- The drama happens in a magical time (so even if it feels like many weeks or months, when you return home, no time has passed).
- Time goes backwards, so we begin at the end and the scenes go backwards in time.

Choose one of your characters and some of your favourite facts about them. Choose the best time frame to set your story.

Then try a completely different time frame and see how that changes your play.

Combinations of Time and Place

Try to now put your choice of place with your choice of timeframe but remember to think how and why they work together.

TOP TIP: If your play compares two different times in history, you might choose the same location, but have two scenes set in different times in history, e.g. 1920 and 2020.

Or your play might be set all over the world but during the same time period and during the same one afternoon.



To sum up:

Don't think that you have to choose a different place to a place that you know very well.

If you decide on a place, which is a different world, make sure that the rules are clear.

Use your imagination. The most boring things in the world; a school bag or a hedge or can turn into something really exciting and take us to another place.

Remember, you can go anywhere at any time!

If you move backwards and forwards through time, think how you can do this dramatically.

