

“I have never learned  
a # % @ ! \$ thing from  
a PowerPoint.”

Donald Maass

Write on the Red Cedar 2015

# The Spectrum of Setting

	MACRO	MIDI	MICRO
PHYSICAL			
TEMPORAL			
SOCIAL			

# Contemporary

	MACRO	MIDI	MICRO
PHYSICAL	Lansing, Michigan	Downtown Capitol Building	Governor's Office
TEMPORAL	Modern Day	October	10 minutes before session closes on the day of a crucial vote on a controversial issue
SOCIAL	Nationwide Concern over Gun Violence	State equally divided between rural and urban concerns	Capitol lawn is crawling with protestors and advocates on both sides of this contentious issue

# Historical

	MACRO	MIDI	MICRO
PHYSICAL	Europe	London	Watchmaker's Shop
TEMPORAL	WWII	Blitzkrieg (Sept 7, 1940 – May 10, 1941)	Midnight Sept 7, 1940
SOCIAL	German aggression in the region has been growing for decades	Suspicion of Germans living in London has been on the rise	Your protagonist is a German watchmaker with a long history in the city

# Futuristic/Apocalyptic/Fantasy

	MACRO	MIDI	MICRO
PHYSICAL	Epsilon Eridani (extrasolar planetary system closest to our solar system)	In orbit in one of its two asteroid belts	The control room of a spacecraft
TEMPORAL	The year 2515	The month of X234J (what the Ancients used to call March)	The day before your protagonist's 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday
SOCIAL	Human society is a complicated and rigid class-based society	Only the lowest classes live on actual planets in order to work the land as lifelong slaves	Your upperclass protag has fallen in love with a planet-dweller

# Bring it to life!

- What do you **see**?
- What do you **hear**?
- What do you **smell**?
- What do you **feel**?
- What do you **taste**?
- What **season** is it?
- What's the **weather** like?
- How do people here **talk**?

# Bring it to life!

- Your setting is not just a stage or window dressing.
- If you could easily plop your story down *anywhere* and have it not change much, you have more work to do on setting.
- *More* description is not necessarily the answer when your setting is flat or almost invisible.

# Setting a scene requires...

- Specificity...but not too much
- Regionally and era-appropriate use of terms and imagery
- Artful holding back of information
- Unique ways of describing the common which allow the reader to see them fresh (this may include non-physical description of physical objects with which we are already familiar)



# How?

- Visit if possible
- Research if visit is not possible
- Record *everything*—you don't know whether you might want to use it later—through notes, photos, sound recordings, video, etc.
- And keep a *record* of your sources!!!
- Use a bulletin board, a scrapbook, Pinterest, OneNote, Scrivener, or whatever works