

SETTING THE STAGE: WHEN DESTINATION MATTERS

Jill Hedgecock: Destination Writing & Research Tips

Bill Stong: Writing & Finding Expert Help

Mount Diablo Branch of the California Writers Club

May 9, 2020

DESTINATION WRITING AND RESEARCH TIPS

- How to **GET THE DETAILS RIGHT** when you can't visit the place where your scene/poem/novel takes place
- Where to find **RESOURCES**, especially for places that no longer exist
- Using **SETTING** to inform plot and develop characters

GETTING THE DETAILS RIGHT

- Using the Five Senses
 - Visuals: Images
 - What about intangibles? (smells, tastes, sounds, touch)

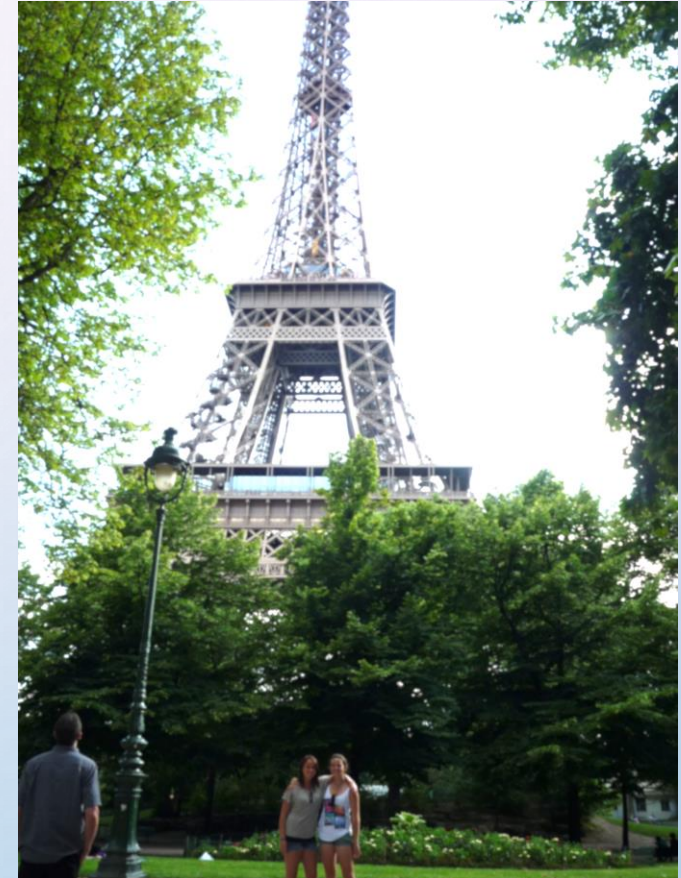
Visuals: Images

Size

Champagne



You are caged in



Google Search: Eiffel Tower images, Top of the Eiffel Tower vs. Inside the

Eiffel Tower
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Visuals: Images

Notice the differences in men and women, how the baby is carried, head coverings, ankles covered



Visuals: Images



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The Intangibles

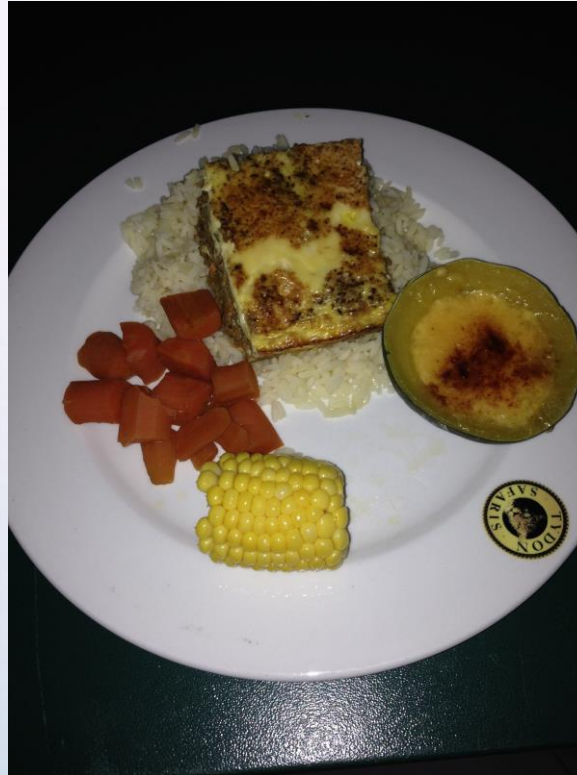
Visual

Touch

Hearing

Smell

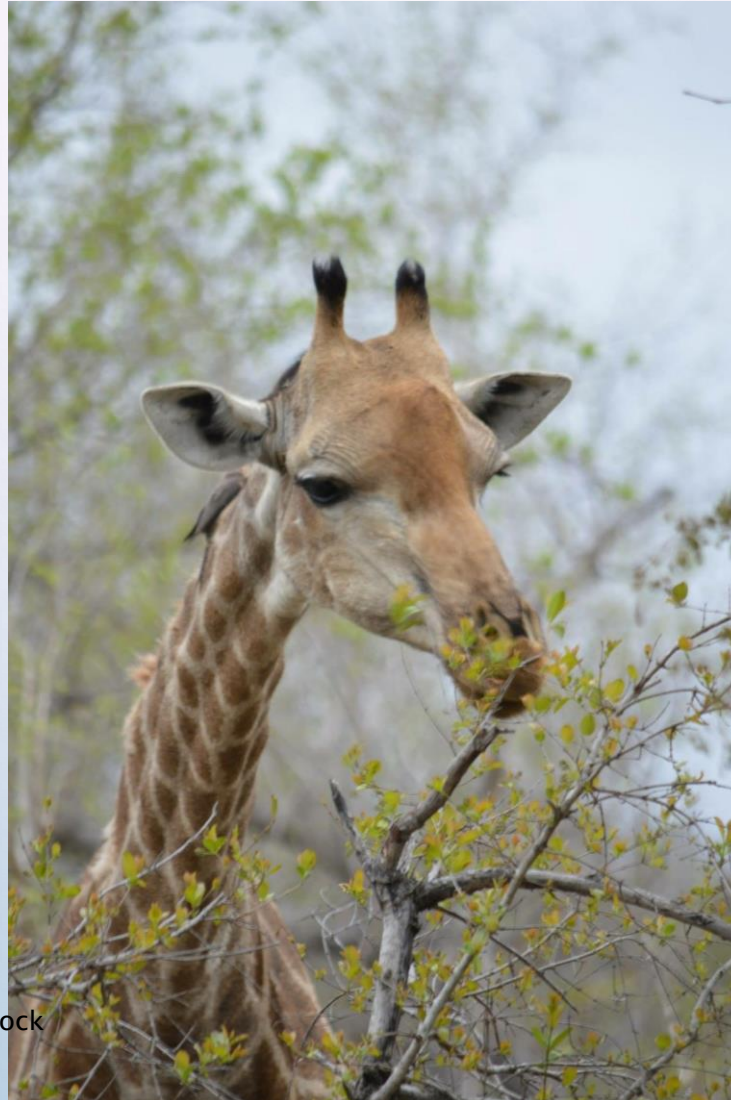
Taste



Smells

Giraffes smell
like tobacco

I didn't get close
enough to know.
This detail came
from the internet



Sounds

Use Logic: Inca Trail, Peru

- Audible breathing
 - Cursing?
 - Clump of boots
 - Clack of hiking poles on rocks
 - Clatter of small rocks cascading down
 - Bird songs/insects
- CWC May 2020 Mt Diablo Branch, 2020 © Jill Hedgecock
- (YouTube videos)



Taste

- Melting pot – ethnic restaurants, kitchen adventures
- Aftertaste of power bars
- Salty sweat
- Taste of a kiss



Touch/Texture

- Experts
- Retail stores – hiking pole handles
- Draw on previous experience

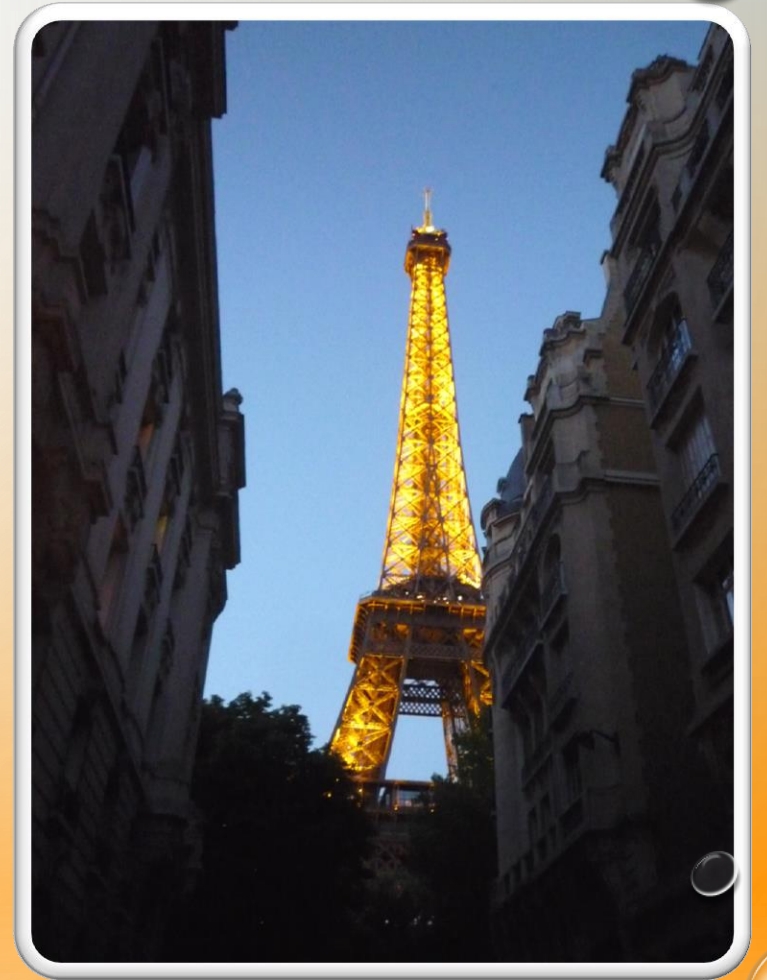


RESOURCES

- Google images
- Instagram/Pinterest
- Tripadvisor chats
- Muse boards
- Best travel bloggers
- www.roadsandkingdoms.com (234)
- www.travelsofadam.com

(45 unexpected things to do in Paris)

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Human Sources of Information

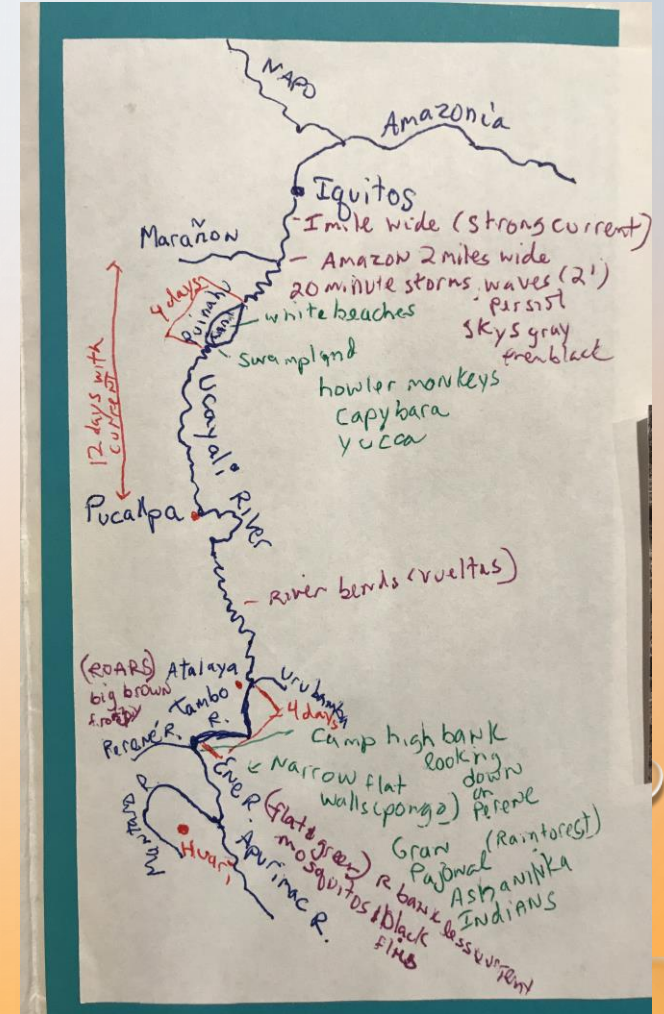
- Friends/Grocery store! **WHO DO YOU KNOW?**
- Tour guides
- Author network (critique group, CWC)
- Social media: Facebook friends

Muse Boards



When Your Place Doesn't Exist (or you can't get there)

- Examples: Historical landscapes (911, prehistoric times, Lahaina)
- Libraries
- Historical societies
- Museums/museum guides/curators



SETTING AS CHARACTER

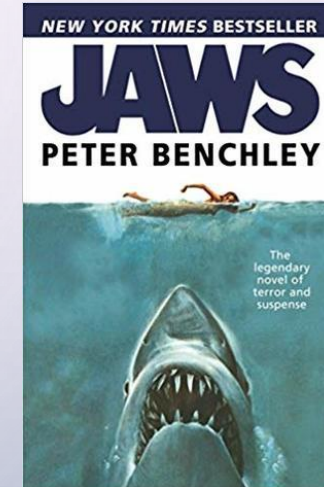
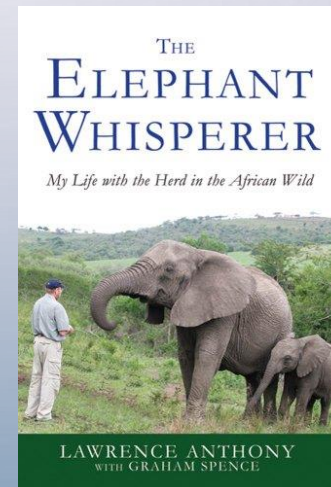
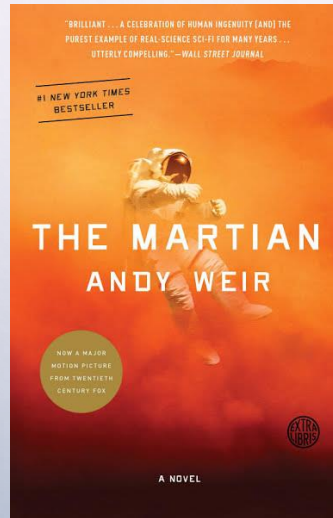
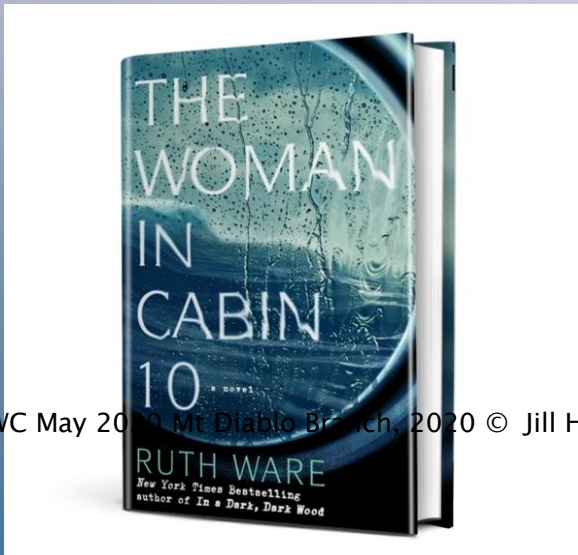
...when the events and characters are entwined with the setting and the key elements of the novel can't take place anywhere else.

Examples of Setting as Character

Fargo

Breaking Bad

Apollo 13



My Book Settings

Peru



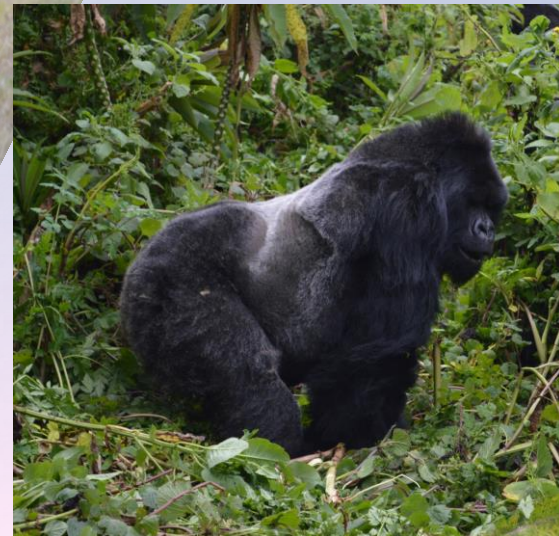
Africa



Anytown USA



“Walnut Acres”

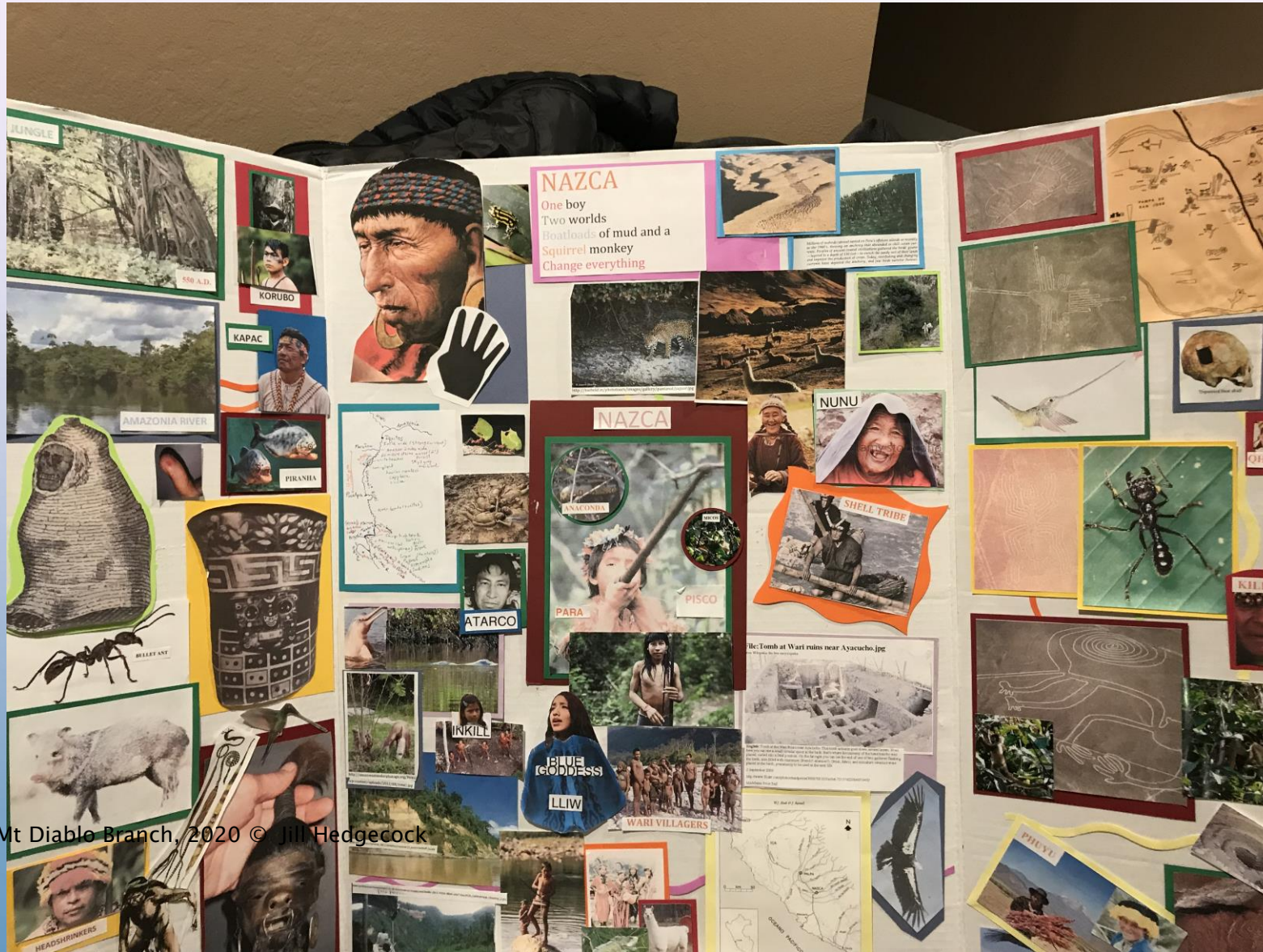


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Hawaii

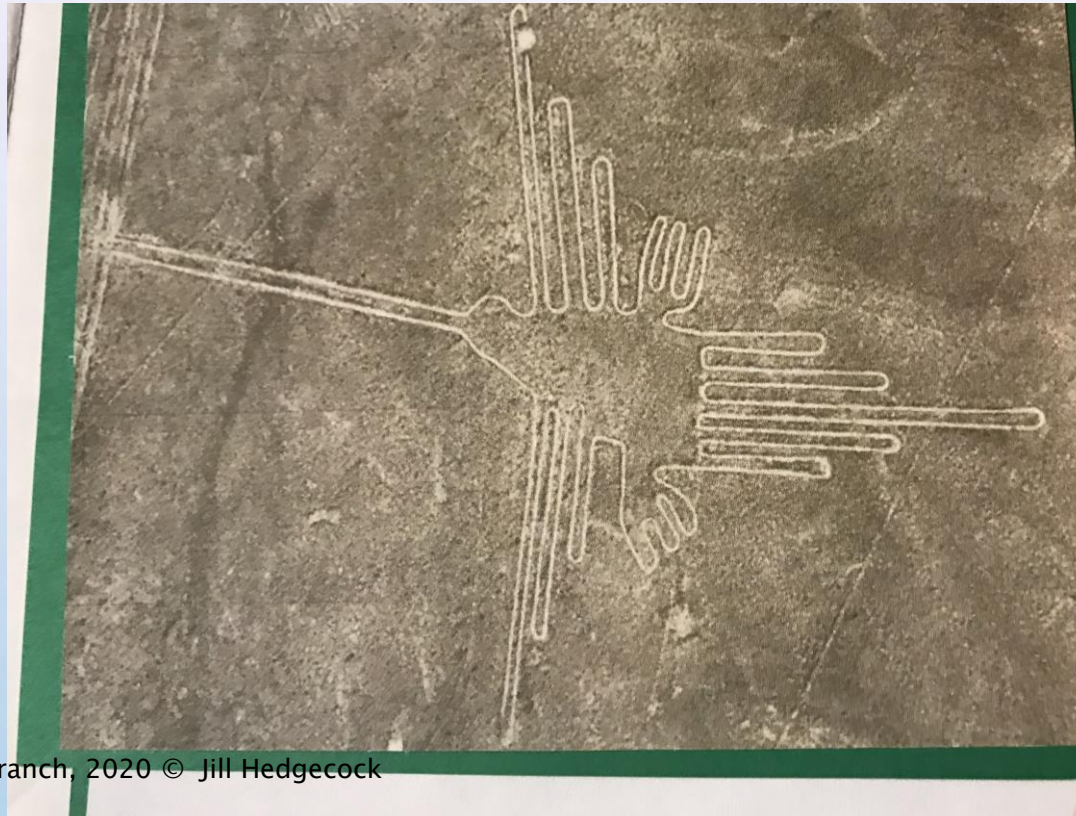


Example: Peru



Using Setting to Inform Plot

What Comes First: The Beginning or the End?



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Setting As Character

Use the emotion of setting to reveal your character (a spectacular African sunset versus lions hunting warthogs)



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YOUR TURN

What visual images do you want to research to improve your use of sensory detail in your current or a future writing project? What resources can you use?

Jot down ideas of how to write the emotion of a setting through a character's eyes.

How can you make your setting define the plot or a character in your current or a future project?