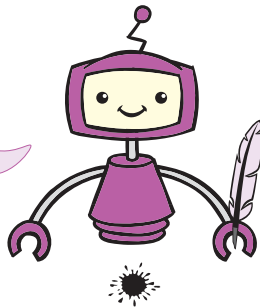


Worldbuilding

Have you read a fantasy or science fiction story in which the setting was a combination of the familiar and the unfamiliar? In this work sheet, you'll exercise your creative thinking skills to design your very own world. Let's find out more about worldbuilding ...



LINKS TO:

Stage 3, Module 12
Learning Object 4: *Take a vote*

PRIOR LEARNING:

Stage 2

Module 12 Work Sheet 1: *The daring adventures of fantastic Zak*

Work Sheet 2: *Diary days*

Work Sheet 3: *This is your life!*

Stage 3

Module 4 Work Sheet 5: *The greatest park of all*

1 A brave new world

Creating a new world in which to set a story is common in speculative fiction — that is, in the fantasy or science fiction genres. Speculative fiction writers refer to the process of creating imaginary worlds as 'worldbuilding'.

In science fiction, creating a world (or a universe) often involves creating a plausible planet from the ground up (or from the solar system outwards). In fantasy, worldbuilding is less scientifically designed, but the world still has to be consistent and plausible.

There are two kinds of worldbuilding. You can start from scratch, and invent your own world, or you can create an alternative version of Earth.

Alternative Earth stories

Alternative Earth stories (often called 'alternate earth' or 'alt-earth' stories) are set in a world that is mostly like the world you are living in right now, with just one or two changes. These small differences have significant flow-on effects, the scale of which can vary, depending on the type of story.

You are probably familiar with some alt-earth fantasy stories, such as the Harry Potter series by J.K. Rowling (some people have magical powers), the Twilight series by Stephenie Meyer (in which there are

vampires and werewolves), or the His Dark Materials series by Philip Pullman (in which people have external souls).

Even when you create a fantasy world, you want your reader to be able to believe that such a world is possible, even if it isn't probable. One of the ways to do this, is to ensure that everything in your world is interrelated in a logical way.

Another strategy is to **remember the ordinary**. Combining the familiar and the unfamiliar is often what makes a fantasy story successful.

Creating a world

In this work sheet you will be asked to create your own alternative Earth, and then to develop a piece of creative writing set in that world.

When you begin planning your world, you need to consider the impact of your alterations on the following areas:

- climate and geography
- people and customs
- trade and commerce
- architecture and the arts
- science and technology
- government and politics
- food production and consumption
- history
- religion
- ethics and values
- law and order

Exercises

Exercise 1

Prescription

In this work sheet, you will be developing and then writing your own short piece of fantasy or science fiction set in an alternative Earth. Your narrative will be in Indonesian, but you can do your planning in English.

The scenario for your story is Earth in the 21st century, experiencing an ice age (also known as a glacial age) similar to that which gripped the Earth 20,000 years ago.

The first step is to think of some of the ways that such a change might impact on the world you know.

In the boxes below, write ideas about how a new ice age will affect contemporary life in Indonesia. Choose a topic for each box, then write down your ideas about how that area of life would be affected.

The first box has been completed for you.

Climate and geography

- The average temperature during the day is -6° .
- There is significant deforestation.
- 70 per cent of the land is covered with a layer of ice that is 500–1000 mm deep.
- The pockets of land that are not ice-covered are low-lying areas, often near oceans or in protected valleys.
- Most rivers are frozen, and sheets of ice extend out over the oceans for about 100 km.

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Exercise 2

Planning


Now that you have some ideas about what your world will be like, you are ready to begin planning your story.

First, you need to create a viewpoint character: someone who is living in your alternative Earth.

Write some brief notes about your character's age, gender, name, living situation, and so on, in the first section of the planning table.

Next, you need to sketch out a brief plan for your story.

In each paragraph, write some notes about how you will introduce the reader to a different aspect of life in your world. You will need to come up with four key experiences or memories for your character. This will give you an opportunity to reveal some details about your alternative world.

 For example:

Ikku is brought before the tribal council on a charge of stealing food. If he is found guilty, he will be banished from the tribe and sent out into the icy wasteland, where he is unlikely to survive on his own. (This experience would make it possible to touch on aspects of climate, geography, legal system, food and hunting, social organisation, and architecture).

Viewpoint character

Paragraph 1

(continued on following page)

(continued from previous page)

Paragraph 2

Paragraph 3

Paragraph 4

(continued on following page)

Paragraph 5

Exercise 3

Writing

How awesome! You have created an imaginative world, and a great plan for your story. Now it is time to turn all that creative preparation into a dynamic and engaging piece of writing.

In Indonesian, use your plan to write a brief narrative that reveals some aspects of the world you have created. Your piece of writing can be either a complete micro-story, or the opening section of a longer work, such as a novel. This is an extended piece of writing.

Don't be afraid to add new ideas, or to go back to your original ideas. You do not need to include every detail from your plan in your final draft. Often, in creative writing, what you leave out is as important as what you put in!

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