

## Lesson Plan: Analyzing Setting and Plot

**RL.9-10.1** - Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**RL.9-10.2** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

**RL.9-10.3** Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

### Procedures

- Read “Marigolds”
- Hand out chart. It’s self-explanatory
- Complete charts. Discuss in small groups and/or discuss as class.

### Assessment

Use the chart as a formative assessment.

## Setting and Plot: Short Story Activity Chart

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

The **setting** of a literary work is the time and place of the action.

**Directions:** Think about the setting in “Marigolds” and complete the chart to explore the relationship between setting and story events. In the left column, list the setting details. In the right column, describe how these details influence the characters and/or the plot.

Setting Details	Impact on Plot and Characters
“When I think of the hometown of my youth, all that I seem to remember is dust—the brown, crumbly dust of late summer—arid, sterile dust that gets into the eyes and makes them water.”	Although it’s likely there was more to the narrator’s hometown than dust, it’s what the narrator remembers. The “dust” of her hometown has affected her outlook on life and affected her actions as the story progresses.

## Setting and Plot: Short Story Activity Chart (Possible Answers)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Directions:** Think about the setting in “Marigolds” and complete the chart to explore the relationship between setting and story events. In the left column, list the setting details. In the right column, describe how these details influence the characters and/or the plot.

Setting Details	Impact on Plot and Characters
“When I think of the hometown of my youth, all that I seem to remember is dust—the brown, crumbly dust of late summer—arid, sterile dust that gets into the eyes and makes them water.”	Although it’s likely there was more to the narrator’s hometown than dust, it’s what the narrator remembers. The “dust” of her hometown has affected her outlook on life and affected her actions as the story progresses.
“I suppose that futile waiting was the sorrowful background music of our impoverished little community when I was young. The Depression that gripped the nation was no new thing to us, for the black workers of rural Maryland had always been depressed.”	Although times were normally difficult for the narrator, the Great Depression makes things worse. It’s the hopelessness and despair of the time period that leads to anger and irrational behavior. The setting also leads to the narrator’s father’s lack of employment.
“As I think of those days I feel most poignantly the tag end of summer, the bright, dry times when we began to have a sense of shortening days and the imminence of the cold.”	The end of summer symbolizes the change and maturation that’s about to take place with the narrator. The day-after-day heat wears on one physically and emotionally—perhaps a hidden cause of the narrator’s angst and anger.
“The truth was that we were becoming tired of the formlessness of our summer days. The idleness whose prospect had seemed so beautiful during the busy days of spring now had degenerated to an almost desperate effort to fill up the empty midday hours.”	Another reference to the end of summer and its association with idleness and desperation. The transformation from the start of summer to the end of summer hints of disillusionment, a prevalent feeling in the community and family.
“There it stood and as far as I know is standing yet—a gray, rotting thing with no porch, no shutters, no steps, set on a cramped lot with no grass, not even any weeds—a monument to decay.”	The story’s conflict and theme revolves around what takes place at Miss Lottie’s house. The setting of dilapidation and rot contrasts the beauty of the marigolds that Lizbeth eventually destroys.