

The Busy Writer's Book of Checklists

Checklist 8 – Setting Information Sheet

Item	Information		
<i>The following checklist is a useful basis. Add as many points as you feel necessary to make your setting authentic. Start by using Google Earth, Google Maps, and Google Images to 'visit' your locale and find out what it looks like. Then see what else you can find out about your chosen setting (geographical and/or professional) by searching for articles, business reports, AGM minutes, forum posts or whatever it takes. File your information, and then check it off when it's done. Check the 'find this' column for research not yet finalized.</i>	Done	Find This!	N/A
Name of city/town/place and population (it can be fictional)			
Broader geographic region: Which country/state?			
What are the general impressions on first sight? (Keep your characters in mind. A military scout might get a different first impression from a resident or tourist.)			
Climate / Flood risk / drought / other weather conditions			
First impressions of locals (again through the eyes of your character[s])			
Layout of city/town/place (sketch or print out a map)			
Style and age of buildings in main street (tip: if fictional, pick a similar town/city that really exists and use this as a template)			
Style and age of residences (might need to break this up into different socio-economic neighborhoods in some towns/cities - write down names and descriptions) - Affluent suburbs/streets - Average-income suburbs - Poor suburbs/streets			
Type of law enforcement			
Typical crimes/crime rate			
Daily/weekly newspapers; appropriate newspaper from largest nearby city			
Entertainment and Sporting Venues; Shopping Malls; Strip Malls; small-town stores			
Transportation available (or lack of it) - buses, trains, boats, taxis, airports, cars (types and age).			
Gathering places for different age groups: clubs, cafes, restaurants, library, cinema, social services			
Main form of entertainment for locals through the eyes of the main characters			
Sensory impressions (for various areas of the town and buildings: include local industries or farming community if applicable): smells/aromas; typical weather; quality and quantity of food/coffee/alcohol available; places of beauty/eyesores; sounds or noises associated with area; other.			
Local flora and fauna			
Other Relevant Information:			