

Meet three writers who have attempted to create a mood for their readers. Borrowing setting description techniques from William Golding in his Lord of the Flies, these three high school writers have combined place and time details with character actions.

Look over the three pieces of writing with a friend. You'll be highlighting specific words, phrases, and sentences from each piece that attempt to make a reader feel a certain emotional state of being. In each piece of writing, only highlight the three "best" words, phrases, or sentences that attempt to create mood for the reader.

You'll be comparing your three best examples from each piece with another group.



True Love Turned to Sorrow and Grief

by Megan, 11th grader writer

Ethan and I were having a fantastic time on the mountain. The sun was shining, warm air was present, and the wonderful sounds and scenery overwhelmed us with tranquility as we road through the trees. We had just about hit every trail on our snowmobiles, when we came across a 'NO PASSING' zone. Ethan glanced over at me with a mischievous smile; I smiled back with excitement and jubilation. So of course, we took the opportunity to explore the mysterious trail.

As we wandered further and further into the unfamiliar world, clouds started to linger in, the air became bleak, and the trees seemed to be frightened, like they'd just seen a ghost. Everything seemed so depressing. Not even the little critters running around made a sound.

"Did you hear that?"

"Um. No, I didn't, Ethan. What was it?"

"A woman, like she was crying. Come this way!"

Ethan sped off and I followed closely behind. Swerving in and out of tree trunks and other obstacles, we finally stopped. In front of us, there stood a tall willow tree. Ethan climbed off his snowmobile and stared admiringly at the willow. I was confused by the satisfaction he got by looking at that old tree. Just then, a woman stepped from behind the tree. I was baffled when my eyes peered completely through her pale body. She was a ghost woman.

The woman began speaking, "Hello, Ethan. I've been looking for you, darling. At last I have found you once more! My true love."

I stood in front of Ethan and asked the mysterious woman arrogantly, "What is your name? What is your name, and what do you want with Ethan?"

"I lost you, Ethan, years ago. I only had my memories of you. But now, now I have you once again!"

"I remember your face, your gorgeous face. Elsa."

I looked over at Ethan in dismay and asked him if we could go home now. He said nothing, as if he could not hear me, or even see me. I reached for his hand, but my hand passed through his! He had turned to a ghost once he and Elsa locked eyes. I had lost him, Ethan, my love.

No matter how hard I tried to touch his handsome face, to bring him back to me, I couldn't. I screamed for him over and over until I couldn't scream any longer. I had lost *my* true love, and for the rest of my life, my heart would be filled with sorrow and grief. Ethan, my love.



If the Mountain Should Ever Sob

by Alan M., 11th grade writer

It was a cold, rainy day atop of the massive piece of land jutting upwards from the grasslands. Steam arose off the face of a young man named Aidan every time a drop of water hit it. He could not feel the icy rain spears hitting him, nor could he feel the pain of his fists colliding with rocks and trees in an attempt to relieve some of his rage that had built up inside of him. The rage was a product of being mistreated by people who he thought were his friends. Anger was his only friend at this point, so he kept on releasing more and more.

"Why," he thought to himself during a rest period, "why do they do this to me? Why do they make me do for them...only to destroy what I have done for myself?"

Aidan had done so many things for his friends; it was that kind of unthinkable kindness that had made him a target for these people. The group of stoner kids had used

Aidan to get their homework done. They treated him so poorly, and did so many wrongs to him, but he never quit doing things for them. He finally stopped, however, when they used his locker as a storage place for weed and crack cocaine. This would have ruined his high school career and the rest of his life if it weren't for the fact that there were too many witnesses to this heinous act. This, in fact, is what broke him and morphed him into the monster he had become.

He threw his fist into the trunk of an ancient redwood that had been growing there for ages, leaving a huge dent and a blood mark. He then launched his other into a crevice carved into a large piece of granite by rain and ice. Crimson liquids dripped into the piles of soft pine needles that had fallen off of the ancient tree. His civilized manner had forever been lost now, for he was enraged to the point of near insanity. But, as much as he did not want to, he relieved all of this anger into the mountain. What had the mountain done to him?

Then, in a short instant, Aidan collapsed to the ground. He did not collapse because of anger, nor did he collapse for any sort of exhaustion; he collapsed because he was crying. His tears flooded his face; though you could not tell due to the rain. The only reason anyone would know that he was crying was because his sobs and moans could be heard faintly. After all of his trouble to be friends with people, he realized that he may have lost many friends. Now the pain of dejection flowed through his veins, instead of the anger that hid his emotion. Crying was all he could do to stop him from screaming to the heavens and ruining the now peaceful tranquility of the scenery around him. The rain had stopped, for nature could sense that Aidan needed the cheerfulness of sunshine. He still sobbed for a while after the rain quit, for he was still in pain.

Just then, one of his true friends, Haley, had come up to see him. She had been his friend for many years and she could never let him do such things to himself, no less to the rest of his friends. She came and rubbed his back and he shot up from the fetal position he had put himself in a sort of panic. He wiped his eyes free of tears so she would not see his weakness, but she could see straight through this "tough guy attitude." She stood up and offered him a hand, and he took it. For once in his life, Aidan had taken help from someone instead of helping them. They both walked down the mountain together and, miraculously, Aidan had smiled for the first time in a long while.



Setting Romance

by Kristin, 11th grade writer

The misty breeze stroked her face. She had no idea where she was going but followed, her hand in his. Both his and her pant legs were rolled as they paced through the water and down the beach. After a few minutes of walking, they arrived at a picnic set for two.

He had prepared a romantic dinner just for the two of them. A silky red cloth was set on the sand. Two plates were placed on top with a candle lit in between. He sat her down and reached in the picnic basket to pull out salad, fruit, lobster, and more. He sat across from her and they began to feast.

After eating, the two sat on the red cloth and watched the sun go down. A slight shiver came from her, so he reached in the basket and pulled out a single blanket for the two of them to share.

The night's stars glistened in the sky, the full moon lit enough for the two to see each other. The silence was filled with the loud crashing waves. They both sat, gazing into each other's eyes. She thought to herself that the night couldn't get any better. He sat there thinking the same.

That was until he stood up, reached into his pocket and pulled out a little box. Tears of excitement rolled down her face. She knew this was it.

"Will you marry me?" he asked with a nervous crackle in his voice.

With tears rolling down her face she confidently replied, "Yes I will!"