

Shackleton's Hut: Setting (a writing task)



We've worked on at least one 'setting' description this year, so consider this to be an extension. What you see here is Shackleton's hut in Antarctica, just as it was on his expeditions around the South Pole in the early 20th Century (look him up – he is a fascinating man). As you can imagine, the weather outside is bleak and you could be holed up in here for several days at a time. The stove, at the far end of the room, is the focal point – it is your heat source and your cooker.

Your task is to describe this setting from the point of view of somebody who has just walked in out of the cold. You'll see the provisions of tinned food on the shelves, feel the warmth of the stove and potentially collapse onto one of the beds (left hand side of the image).

As you walk around the room and describe, remember these key tips:

- Use interesting sentence openers.
- All senses can be used, I would expect the room to smell smokey with the sound of crackling coming from the stove. There may be the voices of others.
- Your choice of third or first person, but be consistent.
- One paragraph per object or area of room.
- A degree of back story is OK, but remember this is setting.
- You can bring objects to life using metaphor/simile – Like a hug, the warmth of the room embraced me following the cold of the snow outside; the tinned food called to me, urging me to open them up and take a look inside...
- Mix up the past tenses (use simple, progressive and perfect).
Simple: The beans boiled on the hob of the stove.

Progressive: The beans were boiling on the hob of the stove, when....
(good for interrupted actions)

Perfect: The beans had boiled on the stove for some hours and were now perfect for consumption (an action that started in the past but continues at the time of writing).