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Choosing a Setting

A number of different factors are involved in the selection of a setting for your historical fiction story. As well as the time and place, you might want to select a time that's interesting to you. If you choose something that seems to be popular but in which you have little interest, the whole writing and researching experience could be a lot less enjoyable. Having said that, it's advisable to sometimes select a well-documented period so that the research is a little easier.

Location

The best place to start is to think about a part of the world that you're interested in. It could be the town, city, or country where you live, or perhaps you've always been fascinated with England, Egypt, China, India, Scotland, France, Japan, Ireland, South America, the Middle East, it's really up to you.

Time Period

Is there a particular time period that you're interested in? Ancient Greece or Egypt, the Roman Empire, the Vikings, the Middle Ages, the Aztecs and Incas, the Renaissance, the Tudors, Victorian London, World War I, for example, are all popular time periods. Most of these are very well documented. This means that there's a lot of information available to use in a story but also that you have to be very careful in your research and can't deviate too far from historical facts. A less popular time period gives the writer more opportunities to modify events. However, there are usually fewer sources to rely on and readers will be unfamiliar with your topic.

Events

Your story might focus on a specific event, such as the Crusades, the Black Death, the Spanish Armada, the French Revolution, the American Civil War, the Russian Revolution, or World War II. You then need to decide if events will form the main part of the story or will only be in the background.

Characters

You can use a well-known character from history in your story, such as Julius Caesar, Cleopatra, Genghis Khan, Columbus, Leonardo Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Napoleon, or Churchill. This will be more appealing to the reader. Even if these figures are not the main characters in your story, you can create fictional characters that interact with them.