

Guided Reading Questions for “Blight” by Stuart Dybek

The following questions/activities will help you build an understanding of how important the setting (time and place) of a piece of literature can be. Some of the questions point to specific places in the text. Others are broader. Keep referring back to the questions as you work through the text.

1. What details does the narrator provide about his neighborhood in the South Side of Chicago?
2. How does the setting of the story, and the use of the term *blight* in reference to the neighborhood, shape the narrator’s point of view? For example, what connections are there between his neighborhood and his perception of Mayor Daley? Of people who live on Chicago’s North Side? Of himself?
3. How does the setting of the story create the conflict between Pepper and Linda Molina?
4. What is the narrator’s attitude toward his neighborhood? How do the words *blight* and *slum* contribute to his attitude? What are some of the different ways the characters use the word *blight*, and how does these plays on the word reveal attitude?
5. Look for places in which the setting shifts (the visit to Linda Molina’s house, the trip downtown, the passage of time at the end of the story). How do these shifts help you understand the narrator’s attitudes toward his neighborhood and himself?