

ANALYZING ATMOSPHERE

setting, tone, and mood

What is “atmosphere?”

Analyzing Atmosphere

in works of fiction

- At some point, you will be asked to analyze atmosphere in a passage
- You need to know what it is, how to recognize it, and how to identify it
- Atmosphere is created using setting, tone, and mood

Analyzing Atmosphere

in works of fiction

- * **Setting** is the time and place in which the story takes place
- * **Tone** is the feeling the author seeks to convey in the story (author is telling)
- * **Mood** is the feeling the reader experiences when reading the story (author is showing)

Tone vs. Mood

- **Tone** doesn't always align with **mood**.

Example: a mother may know that she'll never see her child again, but she doesn't want to overshadow their final visit with grief and tears, so she puts on a cheerful mood and selflessly creates a pleasant memory for the child.

- The **mood** (for the reader) is poignant because of the mother's bravery or sad because we know what the child in the story doesn't know.
- The **tone**, however is light, cheerful, maybe with some wisdom thrown in.

Mood vs. Atmosphere

- **Mood** is immediate. There may be multiple **moods** — tragedy, fear, triumph — in a single chapter.
- Atmosphere speaks to the work as a whole.

Analyzing Atmosphere

in works of fiction

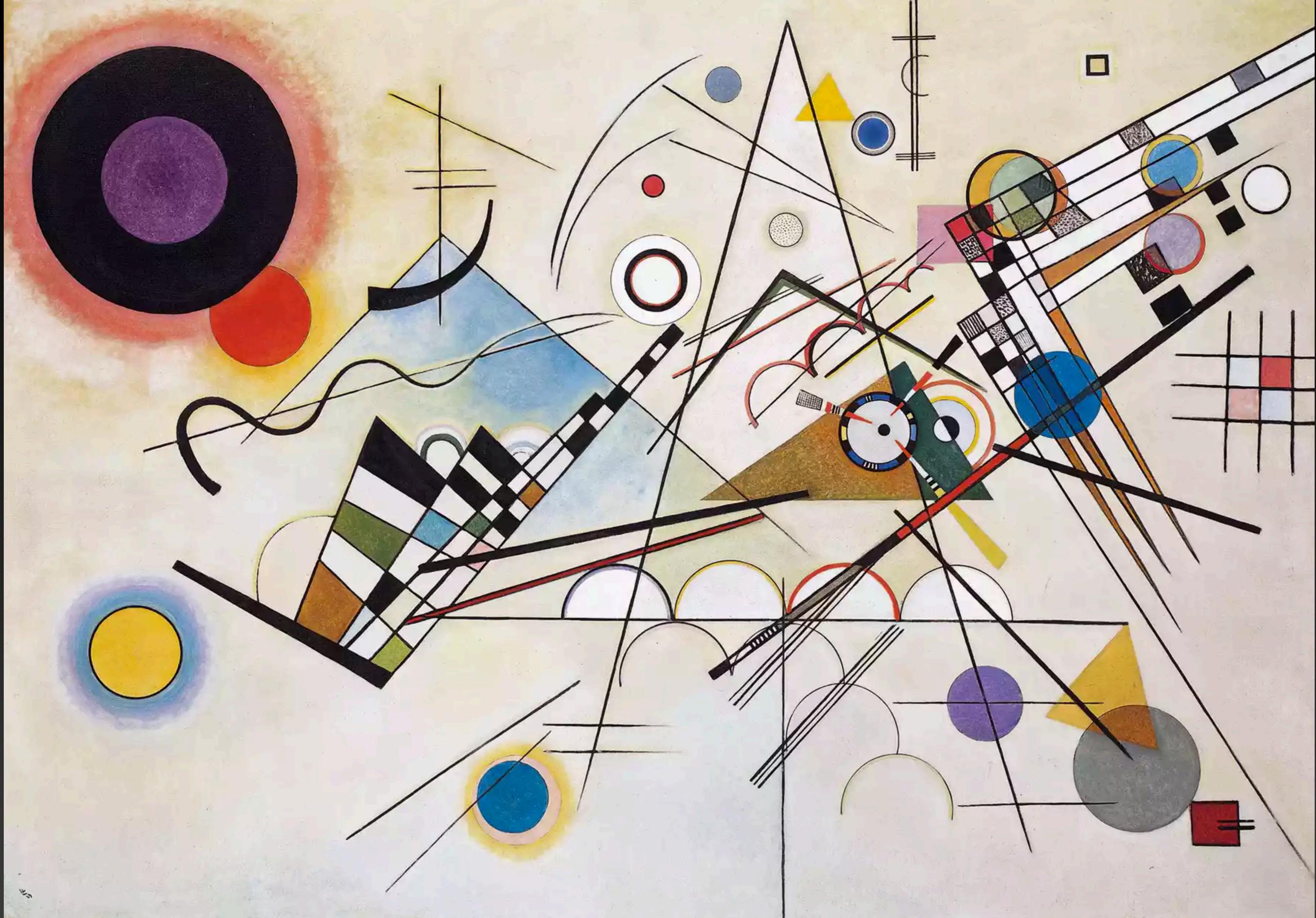
- A fiction author writes a story to make a point and to create an emotional response in the reader
- He or she uses tone to create several **mood** experiences in the telling of the story
- One over-arching atmosphere is imprinted upon the reader after the story has been completed

Artists paint pictures with color.

Let's look at 3 paintings. Identify the atmosphere of each.







Writers paint pictures with words.

Let's look at 3 passages. Identify the mood of each.

“A clammy and intensely cold mist, it made its slow way through the air in ripples that visibly followed and overspread one another, as the waves of an unwholesome sea might do.”

Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*

“Bambi bounded out [into the meadow]. Joy seized him with such tremendous force that he forgot his worries. Through the thicket he had seen only the green tree-tops overhead. Once in a while, he had caught a glimpse of the blue sky. But now, he saw the whole heaven stretching far and wide and he rejoiced without knowing why. In the forest, he had seen only a stray sunbeam now and then, or the tender, dappled light that played through the branches. Suddenly he was standing in the blinding hot sunlight whose boundless power was beaming upon him. He stood in the splendid warmth that made him shut his eyes, but which opened his heart.”

Felix Salten, *Bambi*

“To the memory of the brave who fought there! — Pledge me, my guests.” He drank deep, and went on. “Ay, that was a day of cleaving of shields, when a hundred banners were bent forwards over the heads of the valiant, and blood flowed round like water, and death was held better than flight. A Saxon bard had called it a feast of the swords — a gathering of the eagles to the prey — the clashing of bills upon shield and helmet, the shouting of battle more joyful than the clamour of a bridal!”

Sir Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe*