



*Dream of  
Travel Writing*

# Creating Ambiance with Journalistic Detail

by Gabi Logan, founder of Dream of Travel Writing

A blurred background image of a coffee shop setting. In the foreground, there is a white cup of coffee on a saucer. To the left, a smartphone is visible. In the background, there is a vase of purple flowers and a white napkin. The text "Today, we're going to talk about..." is overlaid in the center.

Today, we're going to  
talk about...

1. Checking back in on what journalistic detail is and what it can do for you

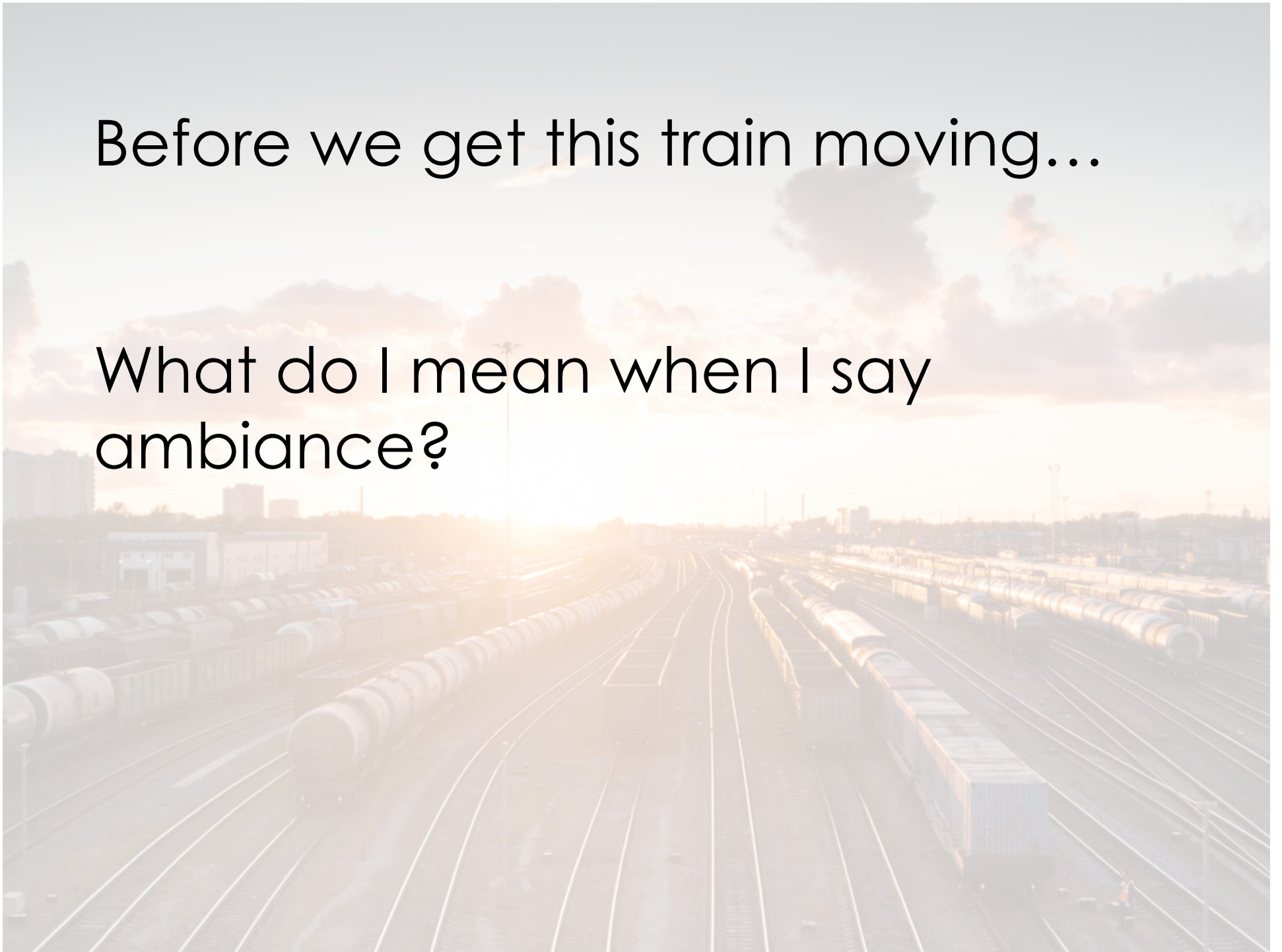
2. The particular challenges of incorporating journalistic detail in descriptions of places (and why you don't want to describe places at all, most of the time)


3. Breaking down real-world examples



Before we get this train moving...

What do I mean when I say  
ambiance?





Every time we talk about  
journalistic detail, I tell you  
the same thing:

It's job is to create that  
“show”

# ambience noun


am·bi·ence | \ˈam-bē-ən(t)s,  ˈäm-bē-än(t)s

variants: *or* **ambiance**

## Definition of *ambience*

: a feeling or mood associated with a particular place, person, or thing : ATMOSPHERE

// The restaurant's soft music and candlelight gave it a romantic *ambience*.

A person wearing a dark jacket and a light-colored knit hat is seen from behind, looking out over a vast, hazy landscape. The foreground is a flat, light-colored expanse, possibly a field or a plain. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a pale, overcast sky. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

What is the **mood** you're looking to create with this story?

What are you trying to influence people to **feel**?

A woman with long blonde hair, wearing a red dress with a white floral pattern, is shown in profile from the waist up. She is looking down at a laptop screen. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with trees and foliage, creating a bokeh effect. The overall image has a light, airy feel.

No seriously.

**How did you  
feel?**



# Can you take notes on that later?

- Capturing feelings in your stories starts in the moment
- Tim Cahill's compulsive note-taking
- The Book Passage interview-to-story exercise and the surprising efficacy of feeling in a sea of facts
- This is the core of journalistic detail folks: taking notes on the facts that create your ambiance
- Don George and his one-destination, one-story model

# My “Story”

“Trapped and stymied,” seasoned ESL instructor Liz Fonseca punctuated every sentence with as if the phrase—and the feeling—were as normal as a period.

During a teacher training in Huain’an in China, even though she’s spent time in other communist countries, as she spent her entire days and evenings with her outwardly hospitable hosts, she couldn’t shake them—or the feeling they may have been handling her.

# My “Story”

“We were having this conversation on WeChat, which had a translate feature, so we could see the conversation out guide had with his boss —‘The foreign ladies want to go on the boat trip.’ ‘No, no, security risk,’” she explained, lingering on the last phrase, “security risk,” as she narrowed her eyes and gave a quick flash of a glance to her side as if suddenly feeling that constant presence again of someone under her shoulder.

Was she the security risk or was the risk to her own security? All she wanted was to know.

A woman with long hair is sitting at a desk in a bright office, working on a laptop. The scene is softly lit, with natural light coming from a window in the background. On the desk, there is a white mug and a pair of glasses. The overall atmosphere is professional and focused.

Let's hit the  
examples!

Thanks so much  
for joining us today!

It was a pleasure chatting  
travel writing with you 😊

Have a follow up question on this webinar? Email [questions@dreamoftravelwriting.com](mailto:questions@dreamoftravelwriting.com) and we'll cover it in an upcoming webinar or in our Monday reader mailbag post on the Six-Figure Travel Writer blog.

