Analysing setting

In any narrative, setting can serve several functions:

- it can be a literal representation of a real environment
- it can be based on places we already know but that are clearly fictional
- it can be a completely invented ‘new world’.

Which of these functions do the settings of *The Great Gatsby* serve?

New York: offices, Myrtle’s apartment, Plaza hotel
East Egg: Daisy and Tom’s house
West Egg: Gatsby’s and Nick’s house
The Valley of Ashes (including Wilson’s garage and eyes of Eckleburg)

You could choose more than one function according to the different environments.

Settings can also have more metaphorical associations with the wider significance of the story being told. Construct a table like the one below in order to consider this aspect of the key settings of *The Great Gatsby*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Symbolic significance</th>
<th>How Fitzgerald presents the setting to us and how it connects with the symbolic significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Egg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Egg</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Valley of Ashes</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

How do your expectations of the establishment of setting vary in a novel as opposed to a poem, for example?

How important do you feel setting is in *The Great Gatsby*?

Can you think of any other novels or novelists that are closely associated with a particular geographical location?