

The BRAINWAVES Club

Term 2 2021: Tolkiens – Years 5 and 6

Venue: Brighton Grammar School

Term Fee: \$285.00

I write only because / There is a voice within me / That will not be still.

–Sylvia Plath

Voices from the past, present - and the future? Is that even possible? You'll find out this semester as you explore a wide range of authors, how their style and voices differ across genres and how they have evolved over time. Become acquainted with some unusual new (old?) story structures, plan your work carefully using exciting tools to organise your thinking, conjure up new characters with very specific fears and loves, and share your thinking and literary creations with others. Who knows? Maybe there will turn out to be another Jonathon Swift, Ernest Hemingway, Veronica Roth or Cynthia Rylant among us!

24 April

Meeting 5: One, Two, Three – Switch!

Focus: Point Of View

Before you write a single word of your future masterpiece, you need to make one of the most important decisions for your story's development - which point of view will you use? No, I'm not talking about which character you're planning to follow (though that is important, too!). Today you'll consider the imperative question – how do you decide which of the four points of view best suits your story? Will you write from the first person or second person, or a limited or an all-seeing/all-knowing third person narrator? We'll work our way through the differences between them and how they work, starting with the easiest one first before we "switch gears". We'll be using excerpts from Cynthia Rylant's beautiful collection of short stories *Every Living Thing* as inspiration for our writing today.

8 May

Meeting 6: Go Small Or Not At All!

Focus: Nanofiction/Microfiction

Let's imagine that you had to pay \$50 for every word you wrote. I bet you would choose each word really, really carefully! Be inspired by the bet-winning, tear-jerking six-word story about baby shoes, and of more modern wordsmiths such as David Mitchell as you leap into the fascinating world of microfiction and nanofiction. These are stories where every word REALLY counts, and a chapter of 140 characters can be just as powerful as a novel of 140 pages. Experiment with this style of narrative today as you compose a suite of short but powerful stories.

22 May

Meeting 7: Every Cloud Does NOT Have A Silver Lining

Focus: Dystopian Fiction

Gulliver's Travels was first published in 1726 and kicked off a long line of dystopian stories which people have read with horrified fascination up until the current day. Today you'll travel along the dystopian fiction timeline. What were some mistakes people made in their time that authors thought we should avoid, or issues they hoped we wouldn't have to face again? How might the big ideas in *1984* apply to our lives in 2021? What does Lois Lowry's *The Giver* teach us about good ideas gone wrong? We will explore characters and setting through an exploration of the world of *Ruben* in Bruce Whatley's graphic novel and you will turn your hand at writing a short story set in your own dystopian world.

5 June

Meeting 8: Taxidermy Stories

Focus: Narrative Structure

We have all practised how to write “sizzling starts” and “exciting endings” at school but today we’ll be putting a twist on learning about story structure. What if I gave you the opening and closing lines from three classic works and gave you the task of writing their “magnificent middles”? These are what we call taxidermy short stories – because it’s your job to stuff them full of substance! This meeting we’ll explore how to render an exciting sub-plot into a stand-alone story and develop our thinking about how to get from the start to the conclusion in the most exciting and original way.

What to bring

Each week please bring a well-stocked pencil case, including scissors, pens and pencils, textas, sticky tape or a glue stick, your writers’ notebook, a nut-free snack, water bottle and hat (Term 1 and 4).

About the club leader: Layla Sacker

Layla has worn the hats of an early childhood, primary and secondary school teacher. She has a firm belief in the capacity of children to think outside the box and her creative writing students from primary school to university have done just that. She delights in using technology and multimedia as texts as well as drawing on traditional literature. Layla has a passion for art and science and has exhibited her own artworks.