

The BRAINWAVES Club

Term 2 2021: Tolkiens – Years 5 and 6

Venue: Bondi Public School

Term Fee: \$285.00

THE WORLD IS A LITERARY OYSTER

Are you familiar with this famous quote from Picasso: “Good artists copy; great artists steal”? Good ol’ Pablo didn’t actually mean great artists should STEAL anything of course! What he really meant was for artists to get as much inspiration as possible from others to create a unique work. Would this idea also work for writers? Only one way to find out: go around the world and “steal” the best writing ideas from the best writers in the world! From Tanzania to Britain, from the USA to Japan, from France to Palestine, there are plenty to choose from. Our aim when we get back? Create the BEST Australian story, of course!

1 May

Meeting 1: Definitions, definitions

Focus: Ethics and literature

Before we start our trip around the world, we need to define some concepts and make sure we won’t be sued by the writers we will meet! For example, what is the difference between copying, paying tribute to another writer and plagiarism? Is writing in the same style as someone else stealing from them or is it a way to learn and grow? Tricky? Wait till we read about famous cases of plagiarism in literature (Helen Keller and T.S. Eliot among others!), compare stories written by different writers and create our own story “in the style of...” Finding our own literary style is certainly not an easy path but it’s worth trying.

Please research and read: about famous examples of plagiarism in literature and the arts.

15 May

Meeting 2: From Paris with Love

Focus: Detective stories and fantasy

She’s lived in Zimbabwe, Belgium and Britain, has been compared to the likes of Roald Dahl and Eva Ibbotson and has won the Blue Peter Book Award and the Waterstones Children's Book Prize. Who? British author Katherine Rundell, of course! The perfect author to start our investigations on style, imagination and creativity. From London to Paris, we follow her heroine Sophie as she searches for her mother. Along the way we will certainly learn a thing or two about detective novels, fantasy and how to organise a story. Most importantly, we will try to imitate Rundell’s inimitable style and make it our own.

Please read: Rooftoppers by Katherine Rundell. Available in Sydney libraries or online via Booktopia.

29 May

Meeting 3: Ode to my Mother

Focus: Poetry

Poetry is the earliest form of Arabic literature and has played a major role in its written but also oral form. Some poems are so powerful they’ve even been turned into songs. Take Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish, and the poem *Ummi* he wrote to his mother in 1966. He uses metaphors and comparisons so unusual and beautiful, the poem is still read today, and sung, thanks to Lebanese musician Marcel Khalifeh, who made a song of it. What can we learn from this wonderful poet in terms of the translation of sensations and use of linguistic tools to express intimate feelings and nostalgia?

Please read: [To My Mother](#) by Mahmoud Darwish.

19 June

Meeting 4: The Land of Laughter

Focus: Allegorical short stories

In Treeland: the Land of Laughter, Tanzanian writer Mkama Mwijarubi tells the story of imaginary people in an imaginary land who love trees and laughter. But their land is threatened by archaic patriarchal traditions and outsiders who start cutting their beloved trees down. A beautiful story for children? Not only my friends! It is also an insightful allegory of the threats of power on environments, modernity versus tradition and feminism vs patriarchy. A lot to take on! No wonder the book won the Burt Award for African Literature in 2009... How about we study Treeland in close detail? We will learn the differences between allegories, comparisons and metaphors, when to use them in our writing, and maybe create the next award-winning allegorical short story!

Please read: *Treeland: The Land of Laughter by Mkama Mwijarubi. Available online via Booktopia.*

What to bring:

Please bring a notebook and a well-stocked pencil case to each meeting as well as a hat, drink and snack for the break (no nuts please). Please be sure to complete the meeting preparation each fortnight.

About the Club Leader: Anna Jahjah

Anna has a Master's Degree in British and American Literature and Civilisation and a Bachelor in Arabic Literature and Civilisation from Aix-en-Provence University, in France. She has taught storytelling and creative writing techniques to French children for over 8 years but one day realised that her heart belonged to Sydney! 20 thousand kilometres and 24 hours later she found herself giving writing and drama workshops to Australian children and has never looked back.