

The BRAINWAVES Club

Term 1 2021: Imagineers – Years 3 and 4
Venue: Canberra Girls Grammar School, Grey Street, DEAKIN
Term Fee \$285

All great writers have the ability to entertain us whilst making us think about some of life's challenges.

This semester we will take a look at what it is like to feel different from other people and to understand what this might mean. We will explore the world of a girl who never makes mistakes, try to imagine what it might feel like to be a witch, or to possess an ability which some children might find embarrassing, or to be labelled as one of "the worst kids in the world".

As well as studying and practising the skills which make good writers, such as creating exciting characters and using vivid and evocative language, we will also examine the issues of peer pressure, understanding ourselves and learning to accept life as it is, without complaining.

There will be many opportunities to work together in groups, share ideas and learn to comment critically on our own and others' work in a positive way.

Other activities will include writing and producing our own play (using our PA system to generate interesting sound effects) and learning how to structure a story effectively.

Meeting 1: The Value of Mistakes
Focus: Character development

The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes by Gary Rubinstein

Meet Beatrice Bottomwell: a nine-year-old girl who has never (not once!), ever, ever made a mistake. She never forgets her maths homework, she never wears mismatched socks, and she ALWAYS wins the yearly talent quest at school. In fact, Beatrice is known as *The Girl Who Never Makes Mistakes*. Life for Beatrice is sailing along pretty smoothly until she does the unthinkable: she makes her first mistake. And in a very, very, very public way!

What would it be like if we all went through life without ever making a mistake? Would it be a good or a bad thing? And how do we deal with our own mistakes? Do we get upset, do we complain, do we blame someone else, or do we just see mistakes as part of life's learning process? We'll discuss all of this and much, much more about life's little mistakes and what we can learn from them.

Meeting 2: Vile Creatures
Focus: Tropes in character development

The Witches by Roald Dahl

Real witches disguise themselves as lovely ladies, when secretly they want to squish and squelch all the wretched children they despise. The Grand High Witch of All the World is the worst of them all - and now she has gathered together all the witches of England for an annual conference at the Hotel Magnificent in Bournemouth to plot to eliminate all children. Luckily, one boy and his grandmother know how to recognise these vile creatures and they have a plan to get rid of them for good...

How does the author construct his plot and what does he do to bring the characters to life? Some people think this book is very unfair to women because the villains in it are all female – what do we think? (Many other 'evil' characters in literature also have some sort of a disability, such as a hunchback, an eye patch, a wooden leg, or a hook in the place of a hand.) We'll create our own 'evil' male character.

Does such a character have to be completely 'bad' or might he have some redeeming features, such as kindness to animals, or honesty? We'll also identify some 'heroic' characters in recent literature, such as Harry Potter, Luke Skywalker, Batman, Wonder Woman and Spiderman. Can we identify one or more 'good' qualities they all had in common?

Meeting 3: Twists and Herrings

Focus: Plotting and mystery

The Mystery of the Mummy's Mask by Paul Holper and Simon Torok

Zac and Hannah are at the Clairsville Museum as Millie Nyall is about to unveil her most exciting new exhibit: the gold burial mask of the famous pharaoh, Ramses. But the mask has vanished!

Follow the red herrings, the evidence and the twisty plot. Suss out the shady characters, test out the clues and piece it all together.

Everyone loves a mystery – except maybe those characters caught up in one! Today we are going to team up to collaborate on either a short story or a play to tease out the fun in the mysterious! We can use the techniques of drafting or storyboarding to tease out our storylines.

Meeting 4: Lessons in Laughter

Focus: Humour

They're Torturing Teachers in Room 104 by Jerry Piasecki

It's sixth graders 5, and teachers 0 in Room 104 at the Marbledale School, where no teacher has lasted more than a week. And the school year has only just begun!

So, when a new teacher turns up to take the "104 challenge," the kids aren't particularly worried...until Ms Merriweather lets loose with some hair-raising mischief of her own.

Soon she's making spitballs backfire and bubble gum bubbles grow bigger than beach balls. Who is this Ms Merriweather, and where does she come from? No one knows. But before she's through, the terrors of 104 learn a hair-raising and hilarious lesson they'll never forget!

Roald Dahl's *Matilda*, was subject to some dreadful treatment from her own school teacher (the scary Miss Trunchbull) – what similarities and differences can we draw between these two stories? What makes the characters of Ms Merriweather and Miss Trunchbull so hilarious? Today we focus on humour in writing: what makes a story funny, how important are the characters in creating this humour and how we can craft laughter-filled tales of our own?

What to bring

- Well-stocked pencil case with writing pencils, sharpener, rubber for edits, coloured pencils and textas, scissors and glue stick.

About the club leader: Ken Fraser

Ken is a former primary school teacher. He has five grandchildren, two of whom attend primary school. Ken writes short stories for children and has recently published a book of 99 short stories called *Tales Out of School - the Complete and Utter Collection*. Many of the stories feature the natural wisdom and kindness of children. Ken has spoken at conferences around the world on topics such as self-esteem, personality type and emotional literacy and lists organic gardening and playing the bagpipes as his main hobbies.