



A G.A.T.E.WAYS JOURNEY

for gifted Year 3 and 4 children with a
love of stories, language and writing

'Calling all Cleversnikes and Tinking Gumbles'

G.A.T.E.WAYS is an independent organisation offering challenging and enriching activities and experiences to develop and extend highly able children. This *JOURNEY* for both girls and boys will run over four sessions. Are you a Bottersnike or a Gumble? Do you enjoy paddling in creeks like a Gumble, or are you the type to fear water and keep a Gumble in a jam tin as a slave?! There are plenty of both in the real world, ready to argue any issue! In this Journey we will use the theme of the environment as we put real arguments into the world of make-believe. We will address serious issues such as bushfire, pollution and drought through the telling of fantasy stories. We will examine the reasons why this can be a more successful strategy than lecturing, and you'll use all your persuasive writing skills, along with your imagination, to create entertaining tales. As we explore the bushland and rubbish dump homes of the 'Snikes and Gumbles, and the messages the author delivers through clever use of language, we will gain all the skills needed to write a short fantasy story that packs a powerful message.

Students must read The Selected Adventures of Bottersnikes and Gumbles by S.A. Wakefield before attending this Journey.

Session 1: Count the Gumbles and Change the Guard!

The Bottersnikes and the Gumbles work in opposition on all issues. They look, behave, play and believe in completely different ways. They have totally different ways of viewing and responding to the bush world they both live in. The lazy Bottersnikes live in the rubbish dump, finding everything they need there, and can't understand why the Gumbles have a fondness for lyrebirds and playing in the bush. Have you ever tried to persuade someone whose viewpoint was completely different from yours? Why is it such a hard thing to do? To start our Journey you will choose an environmental issue to explore and base your story on. Whether it's ocean pollution or bushfire, there will be plenty to discuss. Then comes the dreaming up of crazy new characters and wild locations to help explore these issues and themes.

Session 2: The Qwertyuiop

Chank finds an old typewriter and begins to write a story for the Bottersnikes.

Once upon a time there was a Savage Feersom monster called the Qwertyuiop it had 2006 teeth and a sharp spike on the end of its tale. [sic]

Does your story have 2006 teeth and a sharp spike? It should! Using what you have discovered about your chosen issue, we will begin to structure our stories using the *Hero's Journey* pattern often found in mythology and modern movies. Our main character will travel from their regular world into one of adventure, seeking answers to problems and meeting key character types along the way. When we write for different audiences our 'voice' needs to change to get the message across most effectively. What does writing in another 'voice' mean? (It's not to do with funny accents!) We will practise with some short journalistic pieces inspired by little Willigumble's distracting and mis-informative radio show before starting our own story.

Session 3: Cast Your Votes

The Bottersnikes are going to elect a new King! It will be a perfectly democratic election done by guess-the-marbles-in-the-garbage-can. Cast your votes and throw a party, for spring is in the air! Idioms and the impossible will be our focus this week. Can you pick up that hole by the corners and move it? How about a swim in some dry water? Humour is commonly used to 'lighten' heavy messages and in this session we'll look at how Wakefield subtly uses

language to effectively entertain while getting his message across. There'll be plenty of activities for you to try out these techniques and apply them to your story. As we finish off we will add plenty of figurative language by way of metaphor, simile, personification and idiom. You'll hand in your completed story at the end of today and get it back next session.

Session 4: The Dump Development Scheme

Now we get down to it – but not down in the dumps I hope! This week we will present our research findings on our chosen issue to each other using all the strategies we have learned over this Journey. The various characters in the book will all get a say, from Glag the Artist to Smiggles the Dreamer. Expect some rigorous debate as we look at some techniques of arguing effectively, and learn to pinpoint poor logic. Strawmen will tumble, weasel words will be weaseled out and we will make sure to get off any bandwagons. Hopefully we'll have time for a game of Gumbleducks before we go!

Requirements:

- Bring an A4 notebook and a well-stocked pencil case. Also bring a stamped, self-addressed DL envelope for your report and a small, labelled photograph of yourself to Session 1. Each week bring a snack (no nut products please)
- Students must read *The Selected Adventures of Bottersnikes and Gumbles* by S.A. Wakefield before attending this Journey.

Homework: There will be homework each week for this Journey, researching your chosen topic and continuing to write your story.

About the Presenter:

Rachel Holkner is a writer, arguer and loves wandering the bush dreaming up strange little creatures. She has a Bachelor of Media Arts and a Graduate Diploma in Professional Writing specialising in children's literature. By use of a wild imagination, Rachel is keen to encourage others to look at the world in new ways.