



A G.A.T.E.WAYS JOURNEYS PROGRAM
for gifted Year 5 and 6 children
who want to excel in persuasive writing
‘Listen Up!!!’

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 half days. Are you a person with strong opinions? Do you like to debate hot issues? Would you like to learn how to put your point more strongly, to advance the views that you believe in?

This program will focus on developing real world persuasive skills: how to write a letter to the editor, a blog post or digital petition, how to persuade a selection panel that you are the right person for them, how to lobby a case or cause with our decision makers, the politicians, and a how to persuade others to your point of view through impassioned speech. You'll learn how to gain clout using your knowledge and sincerity, and how to establish credibility. You'll use a range of rhetorical devices and persuasive tactics to 'knock the socks' off your opposition. You'll master the knack of attaining message clarity by defining your purpose and audience clarity by determining your audience's orientation – very important if you want to 'hit your mark'. We'll model a number of argument structures and choose the best fit for our purpose. Finally, we'll incorporate great delivery skills and put it all to the test in a passionate speech. Are you ready to go?

Requirements: Bring writing materials (a tablet or laptop is also fine), a Thesaurus and/or dictionary will also help, an email address or USB, a small photo of yourself, a snack (no nuts). Also bring a stamped self-addressed DL envelope with your name on the back, for your report.

Session One: “This is just wrong!”

Do you think junk food manufacturers should be allowed to advertise on TV during kids' viewing times? Do you think parents who won't immunise their children should lose the benefits paid to them by the government? Do you think we should have harsher penalties for texting drivers?

Ever wanted your opinion heard? Ever felt people need to be told? So, take action – get your views published and affect public opinion! We'll begin by brainstorming the issues we are passionate about, then we'll play 'Yes but ..' to generate arguments for and against our positions, before focusing on how to make a powerful argument. First, you'll learn some powerful persuasive tools called ethos, logos and pathos. These are all means of persuading others to take a particular point of view. Ethos is an appeal to ethics, and it is a way of convincing someone of your character or credibility. Pathos is an appeal to emotion, and is a way that you can convince your audience of an argument by creating an emotional response. Logos is an appeal to logic, and this is when you persuade your audience by reason. We'll find out about lots of other specific persuasive tactics such as rhetorical questions and visualisations. You will use all of these powerful tools to write a truly convincing Letter to the Editor or digital petition. You'll need to type your finished product up at home then bring it on USB so we can submit it for publication.

Session Two: “I'm the one that you want!”

Would you like to be selected to represent your school at a Junior Parliament or young people's environmental council? How about being elected to go on a leadership camp run by your local government? Would you love to 'win' that coaching position for a junior sports team? Well then, how are you going to make yourself stand out from the crowd? How do you convince people that you will give them what they want?

In this session we will focus on winning the position you want. Through brainstorming and discussion, we will explore what is being asked for in a position description and how to find the unexpected skills and qualities that you have to offer as well as the evidence to support them. You will learn the vocabulary needed to be convincing, to sell yourself! Then you'll write a position application in scintillating prose. After that you'll learn some great tips on how to make a good impression in person, role play some interviews, discuss the persuasiveness of each candidate and who decide whether you should get the position!

Session Three: “Mr MP, listen to me!”

How should asylum seekers be treated? How should we tackle climate change? Should Essendon be allowed to play? Today you'll become a master lobbyist. Lobbyists are people who pitch the interests of their clients to governments. They have to be very skilled at arguing that what their client wants is good for the country (or re-election). Today you will design and present your case for action on a big issue to the State or Federal minister responsible for your issue. Like an archer, you'll find the best arrows (arguments) for your target (MP) and decide the best tactics for the archer (the way you manage your arguments). You will learn the many ways to structure your argument and the best structure for your purpose. You'll discover the importance of message clarity and audience clarity and you will experience the **'five essentials for winning an argument'**. You will use these, and last sessions' devices, to put your case. And win! Go for it.

Session Four: "On your soap box"

Watch out mums and dads, here comes an even better arguer! Today you are going to convert your argument from last week into a passionate, powerful, persuasive speech when you will rewrite your case for the public! How do you transform something in written form? To make your point orally you must be simpler, clearer, more repetitive and signpost where you are going. We will practise our presentation skills to learn how to add impact using voice, gesture and body language. Then you will get up on your soap box and 'knock our socks off'. Who knows, you may even be Prime Minister or lawyer material!

Homework

Before:

- Before Session 1 if you have a target you'd like to win over bring it!
- Before Session 3— fired up about an issue? Bring your ammunition.
- If you aren't passionate about any specific issues don't worry, we can supply you with lots to think about.

Throughout the Journey

- Bring your completed piece on USB to Session 2 as well as a position you'd like to run for (if you have one). It can be real/imagined. Other homework may be set from week to week.

About the Presenter

Ron Thomas is a published poet and travel writer. He runs advanced writing skills seminars for students in primary and secondary Schools. He delivered the keynote speech "The Vibrant Literacy Classroom" at the Leaders in Literacy Teaching Conference in Brisbane and Adelaide in 2014, as well as workshops on inspiring boys to write and write well. His 'How to Effectively Teach Persuasive and Creative Writing' seminars have won acclaim from teachers in Hobart, Perth, Adelaide and Melbourne. He has just been commissioned to write a textbook on inspiring the best writing from students'. He has twice coached teams to the Debating Association of Victoria Grand Final and is a Gold Level Toastmaster. Ron is a trained English, Literature and Drama teacher and brings an active methodology to all he does. You won't be bored!

