



**G.A.T.E.WAYS**

invites Year 3 and 4 children

with a love of language and writing to

## ***'ON THE TRAIL OF DRAGON TALES'***

**G.A.T.E.WAYS** is an independent organization offering challenging and enriching activities and experiences to develop and extend highly able children. Established in 1994, G.A.T.E.WAYS runs a range of stimulating school programs as well as the Saturday *Brainwaves Club*.

*'Scales and tails, claws and wings  
These and other awesome things  
Fantastic fiction, facts and features  
Come investigate these creatures!'*

All over the world and throughout history, it is not surprising that Dragons have been a source of fascination. There are so many different species to admire, question and learn about! What is it that makes a dragon a fantastic friend or fearsome foe? Can you work that out just by looking at a dragon's face or its body parts? Art and architecture give us plenty of clues to help answer these questions. Many myths and stories tell of intriguing dragon characters and what they mean to people in different cultures. Some dragons use their powers to wreak havoc (like the fire-breathing, venom-spitting British dragon that the good knight St George faced) and others to save the day (like Falkor the wise, friendly Luck Dragon). So which dragons can you trust? Maybe you need to sort out fact from fiction by chatting to a dragon! In that case, you'll also need to know the secrets of communicating in language dragons understand. Luckily, that's one of the investigations we undertake on this journey as you encounter dragons of every variety. If you have what it takes to be a dragonologist (a rich imagination, a love of writing or passion for drawing and plenty of curiosity) then pack your binoculars and notebook, and let's hit the trail!

### **Week One: Windows into worlds!**

Who can provide a passport into the magical and mysterious world of dragons? Brilliant writers like Carole Wilkinson (*Dragon Moon*) and Cressida Cowell (*How to Train your Dragon*), or awesome artists like Graeme Base (*The Discovery of Dragons*) and Dean Jones (*The Dragon Companion*), that's who! We dive into the imaginary worlds created by many clever authors and illustrators to explore how they bring dragons to life using words or pictures. What can we learn about inventing interesting dragon characters in our own stories? How are dragon features described in written language or illustrated in different art forms like sculptures, paintings or drawings? We read, listen and observe closely as we discuss an amazing array of dragons. Using new vocabulary and vision from today, you too can create a dazzling detailed dragon description and share the splendid sight in words or pictures!

### **Week Two: Riddle-me-this!**

Did you know that dragons are mad (in the good way) about riddles? These clever creatures can't resist the challenge of solving these perplexing puzzles, so it is handy to know a few in case you should need to get out of danger or calm a fiery dragon. In this session we will read and crack many complex riddles to figure out not just the answers, but the rules for making them tough enough to keep our scaly companions guessing! And while we are on the subject of communicating with dragons, every dragonologist needs a collection of carefully crafted spells and mesmerising chants to accomplish tasks such as summoning or catching a dragon, seeking its help or befriending it. We take a look at examples known to be powerful and purposeful from literature so we can use them as models. Then we'll compose wondrous whisperings for our own dragon-taming needs. Maybe you can even master writing in dragon script and make messages for our majestic mates in their own language... "Flammifax! Arfax! Orfax!" *Come and heed my dragon call!*

### **Session Three: Mythology and Make Believe**

Since ancient times, and in many cultures, dragons have played important roles - sometimes admired and revered like the many kind and beautiful Chinese dragons, other times feared and avoided, like the lethal ancient Greek dragon or the menacing Iranian dragon! The presence or sighting of a dragon could be a very positive sign or a worrying warning depending on where and which one it was! Did you know there is a record of dragon sightings between 523BCE and 1706?! We'll find out what it actually was that scientists, travellers and story tellers reported seeing. We also talk about world myths and what dragons mean to people in different cultures. Buildings will be especially helpful this week! Why? If you look closely, you'll see dragons perched over, hiding in, coiled up on or leaping from buildings all over the world so today you'll explore these to get even more ideas and inspiration for writing your own myth or designing your own architectural dragon-esque feature!

### **Session Four: Egg-citing Endeavours!**

We start this session with a little bit of science – studying the life cycle of a dragon. After all, it's a special birthday today - your own original dragon will be hatching! The goal is to convince eminent dragonologist Dr Ernest Drake to include your wonderful new species in a new version of his respected "Remarkable Field Guide to Dragons". You'll get to choose your egg and then write a compelling letter explaining the special features of your original creature to Dr. Drake. Everything we have learned so far will help you to hatch an egg-sellent plan and deliver a persuasive, informative message like the dedicated dragonologist you've been training to be!

Dr Drake will be looking for rich detail and depth of knowledge in what you produce, so you must weave words as a writer and arrange images as an artist, like the many amazing literary role models we've met on this Journey. Let's get cracking – we can't wait to see what emerges!

### **Requirements**

Each week, please bring a notebook (at least A5), and a pencil case containing a glue stick, scissors, sharpener, eraser and writing implements (grey leads and coloured pens or pencils). Please also bring a hat and a nut-free snack.

### **Homework**

Homework may be set between sessions. At the end of the program a short, written report will be completed on each student and forwarded home to parents.

### **About the presenter**

Andrea Blake is an experienced teacher who has worked extensively in the field of Gifted education. She relishes reading and generating ideas for programs that ignite curiosity and creativity in young learners. Using wonderful authors and artists to serve as role models and inspiration, Andrea designs journeys that challenge and extend students' capabilities.