



A G.A.T.E.WAYS JOURNEY PROGRAM

For gifted Year 5 and 6 children with a

love of language, literature and writing

'The Secret Shakespeare Club'

G.A.T.E.WAYS is an independent organization 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 mornings. **Pst.... Wanna know a secret?** So, this guy called William Shakespeare has been considered the world's greatest playwright for 400 years. People nowadays are either scared of his plays or really serious about them.... But guess what?

Shakespeare's plays were the big action Hollywood-blockbusters of their day! They've got sword-fights and ghosts, comedy and danger, battles and street gangs, and magic potions and mysteries... all our favourite fun stuff to do and see! That means we'll be solving secrets, staging scenes, snickering at silliness and savoring all the super-cool stories that even some grown-ups simply can't understand! (Hehe!) So what's our club's best kept secret...? ***Shakespeare plays are TOTALLY FUN!!***

Session One: Cool Kids and Mortal Enemies

Everyone's heard of Romeo and Juliet, right? Star-crossed lovers, schmaltzy romance, yadda yadda... But did you know Romeo was in a street gang and his awesome best mate Mercutio wouldn't stop teasing him about all the girls he has crushes on? And Juliet was actually 13 years old and Romeo not much older?! Then there's Hamlet – goes off to uni and comes home to find his mum has remarried, his girlfriend is acting weird and his frenemies are all talking behind his back... We'll be finding out some amazing facts and startling trivia about this Shakespeare guy, decoding some of his famous cryptic speeches that lots of grown-ups get wrong, and playing out Juliet's balcony scene or the sword-fight finale of Hamlet before making up an hilarious version of our own!

Session Two: Historical Heroes and Vile Villains

People all around the world watched the royal wedding of Kate and Will, but how much do you know about their ancestors?! Shakespeare took real historical figures and turned them into dynamic, daring or dastardly characters in his plays, from gallant Henry the Fifth who led his troops to victory against France to Richard the Third with his hunched back and murderous heart... Choose a side today: we'll be looking at the key decisions of some remarkable good guys and bad boys (and girls!), debating their choices, and questioning their honeyed or haughty words. In the heat of battle, on the eve of war, when kingdoms or fortunes are at stake – what would *you* say to get what you want, save your country or survive the night...!?

Session Three: Meeting Witches and Seeing Ghosts

Bring on the special effects! Shakespeare's audiences came along wanting to see spectacle and be surprised, and he never let them down. This session we'll be joining his theatrical troop to face the problems of directors from his day and ours – how to stage the impossible! From the mysterious three witches of *Macbeth* and Hermione the 'living statue' in *The Winter's Tale*, to the bizarre ghost of Hamlet's father or Macbeth's floating dagger, we'll be designing stage sets and exploring modern and traditional special effects devices to bring the supernatural eerily to life on the stage!

(IMPORTANT!!! Bring along a large shoe box with lid for this session!)

Session Four: The World's Worst Play, By The World's Greatest Playwright!

A Midsummer Night's Dream is one of Shakespeare's craziest, funniest and most popular works, and also has a play within a play, where a bunch of characters who are really terrible actors rehearse and perform their completely awful (and totally hilarious!) show "Pyramus and Thisbe"! Shakespeare loved jokes about the theatre and performing, so our final club meeting will be played for laughs as we explore his ideas and comic quips about his own profession, ponder his amazing legacy for pop culture and modern movies, and reenact "Pyramus and Thisbe" (complete with props and costumes) for ourselves!

Homework:

Each week, you'll be set one special cipher challenge to complete before the next club meeting – will you be wise and witty enough to unravel the words of Shakespeare on your own?!

About the Presenter

Kim Edwards teaches English literature and creative writing to university and high school students, and drama and theatre skills to both adults and kids all over Melbourne. She has run book clubs and cabarets, performed Shakespeare and written sonnets, dabbled in Dickens and is best buddies with the Brontes, and while she loves a ripping good yarn, she is still convinced *everything* we get to read and write in our lives is always a thrilling new adventure!

Requirements: Requirements: Thou must pack something to write upon, something to write with, and thy love of playing with language for as Hamlet says – "The play's the thing", so GAME ON!; a labelled photo and a snack (no nuts please) and a stamped, self addressed DL envelope for your report.