

G.A.T.E.WAYS

invite gifted Year 5 and 6 children

with a love of language and writing to

'Word Play..

an outrageous adventure'



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*.

This *JOURNEY* for both girls and boys will run over four sessions. What is the longest word in the world? Why *isn't* the plural of 'moose' 'meese'? How can you fill *in* a form by filling it *out*? What do they mean that 'disorientated' and 'alot' aren't real words? And what if, as a writer, you *want* to split infinitives and dangle participles and splice sentences and mix metaphors?!

Let's face it: the English language is completely WEIRD! Its history is so crazy and so action-packed that we break the 'rules' as fast as we find them! This Journey is all about uncovering the deep, dark secrets of our language that very few people will EVER know through word games, writing challenges, amazing facts, and hysterical stories and sayings – from the paradoxes of punctuation and the stupidities of spelling, to the intrigues of etymology and the hilarities of grammar!

Who would ever have guessed that the mechanics of writing could be this fun - and so funny? Oh, wait – *you* have!

Requirements: Pack your passionate love of writing and your wonderful obsession with words into a bag with a well-stocked pencil case, a new blank exercise book, and a yummy snack! (no nuts please)

Session One: Alphabet Soup (or the Complete and Entire Evolution of All Language Ever in Under 150 Minutes...)

Where in the world did we get words? And when did we work out writing them down? And what on earth (or beyond it!) is happening to language nowadays?! Our first adventure is a whirlwind time-travel through the history of language, from Rudyard Kipling's caveman kids to the LOLs of txt talk. Can you unravel the timeline to figure out when we started getting awesomely nerdy and wordy, and then create an unusual alphabet book to explain it all to any passing aliens, baby robots, or dinosaurs that we clone?

Session Two: Verbing Weirds Me Out (and other Grammatical Glitches)

So we know where words came from, but does anyone *really* get how they work? What's completely fun about grabbing onto grammar is knowing the rules... so you can break them whenever you want! From adjective objectives and the bizarre behavior of your/you're/yaw (?!), to fighting verbs, plagues of plurals and splitting infinitives, quizzes, quests and questions will create our quixotic quandaries today! In fact, we'll be giving grammar a really hard time (so don't tell grandpa!)

Session Three: Punctuation Pandemonium (or "?!?!.....?!")

Words – check. Words in a row – check. Joining and dividing the rows of words up with strange little hieroglyphs that look like someone squashed a bug on the paper, or their pen slipped or the printer is broken... Um. Maybe not. What DO you use a semi-colon for? Why did someone invent paragraphs? Are there seriously books that don't use any punctuation at all? With some inspiration from Lynne Truss' amazing book *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*, this session we'll be trying out the famous Grocer's apostrophe, starting a war over the Oxford comma, and laughing ourselves silly with the phonetic punctuation game!

Session Four: Having the Last Word (or Making Cents by Coining Words)

Our language might be as mad as a sentence splice, but that's why we love it! English offers writers like us SO many choices and clichés and problems and possibilities and vocabulary options and versatile variables that creative writing is always infinitely exciting and evolving and invigorating! Today we'll put all our new knowledge and talents to the test in inventing new words to add to the English dictionary, creating new metaphors to put into our cultural database, and taking up the challenge of an 'autological' writing task on the things we love about language, that cleverly and incredibly *demonstrates* exactly what it's describing!!!

Homework:

Writers like us simply can't stop writing! That's why everyone on this Journey will be desperate to finish off their writing tasks at home each week to share the following session, and will love our weekly challenge of delving into the dictionary to find out and report back the strange and surprising stories of mystery words!

About the Presenter

Kim 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!

