



invite gifted Year 5 and 6 children with a
love of language and writing to

'What A Twist In The Tale!'

At The Victorian Writers' Centre, Level 3, The Wheeler Centre, 176 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne

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 program for both girls and boys will run over two full days.

How often have you read a story or watched a film and been amazed and shocked at a twist at the end? (Warningspoilers ahead!!). Who will ever forget the moment they found out Darth Vader was Luke Skywalker's father at the end of *The Empire Strikes Back*? Or what about the original *Planet of the Apes* when it is revealed that the futuristic story is not taking place on another planet, but on Earth. When a writer totally surprises you like that, it makes you think they're pretty clever, doesn't it?

The premise of the twist in the tale story is very simple – the writer deliberately takes the reader one way during the narrative, then turns the tale on its head at the end with a 'never saw that coming' twist. It sounds easy, but these types of stories are anything but.

In this program you will not only learn how to come up with a twist – you'll also be guided over the two days to create both a short story and short film script that incorporates your twist. Twists work in any story genre, so your story might be a gothic horror tale, or a sci fi adventure, a fantasy or even a comedy. Your twist might be shocking, it might be a revelation. Whatever it is, it will take your audience by surprise..

Who knows, after your writing is complete you and your friends may be able to film it. After all, just about every smartphone is now a movie camera.

What to bring: writing materials, a notebook; snacks, lunch and a drink (no nuts please), a jacket to wear outside (we may have lunch outside the State Library)

Day 1: A twist in a short story

We'll begin by reading some short stories and watching excerpts from a couple of short films that all have twists at the end. What are the characteristics of these stories? The twist must come as a complete surprise but it needs to be set up properly. A few clues or signposts should be sprinkled throughout so the twist 'makes sense' even though it catches the reader off guard. In fact, the best twist stories have the readers kicking themselves for not seeing the end coming. Of course, it pays to know how you're going to end your story before you start writing it. But plot twists must be about more than fooling readers. They have to be consistent with the storyline and with the characters. After working through some of the characteristics and mechanics, we will explore the different types of twists and come up with lots of our own ideas. We'll then work through a guided process as each student commences work on an original short story with a twist.

Homework

In between the two workshops, participants will be expected to complete their short story.

Day 2: A twist in a short film

We will start by sharing our short stories from Day 1 and receiving peer and presenter feedback. Once your story is perfected, you'll then be guided on how to turn your story into a script for a short film. The key to this is to understand how to tell a story visually, though you'll also learn how to progress your plot through dialogue and directions. You'll also learn all about the basic structure for a film – the three-act structure. In the three-act structure, Act One establishes your character, sets up the story, and begins the journey. Act Two contains the bulk of the conflict, as the protagonist faces the things that stand in the way of what he/she wants. Act Three is the climax and resolution – and in our case, contains the twist. By the end of the two days all participants will have a completed short story and short film script they can be mighty proud of.

About the Presenter

Dr Jacqueline Ross draft is a widely published author of fiction and non-fiction. She has had several novels published for adults and children as well as numerous short stories. Jacqueline has a PhD in creative writing from Swinburne University and a BA in Professional Writing and Editing. She has taught writing at all levels and in most genres for the last eleven years.