

The BRAINWAVES Club



Term 4 2021 | Tolkiens | Years 5 and 6

Venue: Alphington Grammar

Term Fee \$285.00

A Fearless Flash of Form: Experimenting with Writing Formats

Becoming multi-talented in many writing forms is a wonderful asset for budding writers to develop – besides being an exciting creative challenge to tackle! Many of the world's great writers turned their hands to different kinds of writing over the course of their successful careers before settling into the format that made them famous. Plays on stage and screen, poems miniscule and momentous, fiction in pictures, paragraphs or pouring across pages: what new writing format will you unexpectedly find a real passion for as your creative abilities start taking 'form'?!

Meeting 1: From Page to Stage or Scene to Screen

Focus: Playing with Plays!

We're probably all used to the format of novels or even the look of a poem, but composing a play script for film or theatre requires a lot of specialized format finesse! Today we'll be talking about typography, layout and the real importance of form for writers: WHY does a script have to look the way it does? How much creativity does a playwright or screenwriter need in setting the scene, defining the characters, and keeping the plot rolling? The challenge of scripting focusses on writing great dialogue and establishing great character relationships: who's going to be talking to who in the blockbuster scene you're going to write?

Requirements: Read a play script, musical libretto or screenplay for one of your favourite shows or films and print out the first page to bring along. (ie. You can buy cool play versions of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* for example, use old musical or theatre scripts you performed at school like *Beauty and the Beast* or *Kids at Sea*, check out your local library or op shop, or find film scripts like *Wizard of Oz* online!) Note any formatting features: what will you need to do to make writing look like a script?!

Meeting 2: The Secrets to Short Story-Writing

Focus: The Many Tales of Aussie Authors!

How short *is* a short story? Why is it that short stories just seem to have a different feel to actual novels? There's something very unique about the plot, characters, pace, composition and style of short stories, and we'll be ferreting it out by analyzing both an old classic and a more modern one! Comedies, tragedies, sci-fi or fantasy, romance or action-adventure: what genre will you pick when it comes to carefully crafting your own short story plotline?!

Requirements: Read any short story by Andy Griffiths (ie. The 'Just' books), Jackie French (ie. *Rain Stones*), Sally Morgan (ie. *The Flying Emu*) or Paul Jennings (ie. *Weirdest Stories*) – what made you choose the story you did, and how was this reading experience different to a novel/book series...?

Meeting 3: What's So Novel about the Novel?

Focus: Facing the Adventure with *Skulduggery Pleasant*

The novel is still probably the format best beloved by passionate readers like us! Why *are* novels so especially popular? What is so appealing about their form that makes them one of our favourite things to read? *Skulduggery Pleasant* is a well-constructed, well-developed and entertaining novel where the author really understood his craft:

beyond what we think of the story, what can we see being achieved in narratives like this, and how will our own opening chapter to a novel aim to do?

Requirements: Read *Skulduggery Pleasant* by Derek Landy - what does the novel form give writers like us the freedom to achieve?!

Meeting 4: Telling Your Own Story
Focus: Writing Autobiographies

Our writing skills have been stretched and spun out and stimulated in a multitude of ways in recent weeks! So this final session is about gathering up our thoughts, bringing our new achievements home to rest, and reflecting on all our creative triumphs and try-outs... How are you growing and evolving as a writer? What has experimenting with new modes and forms of writing revealed to you about literature and about your own literary strengths? (N.B. This might just end up being the most memorable and important story you've written all semester...!)

Requirements: Read an interesting autobiography of your choice and bring it along to share today! (ie. Jessica Watson's *True Spirit*, Roald Dahl's *Boy*, Lemony Snicket's *The Unauthorised Autobiography*, Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl*, Gary Paulsen's *My Life In Dog Years*, Adeline Yen Mah's *Chinese Cinderella*, Jacqueline Woodson's *Brown Girl Dreaming*, Bill Peet's *An Autobiography* or Laura Ingalls' *Little House on the Prairie*...!)

What to Bring:

- **Come ready with a well-read copy of the text for each week.**
- **A well-stocked pencil case!**

About the presenter – Kim Edwards

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!