



A G.A.T.E.WAYS JOURNEY

for gifted Year 3 and 4 children with a

love of language and writing

'SUPERSMART SPIDERS SAVE THE WORLD!'

...an adventure into language and the world of spiders.

G.A.T.E.WAYS is an independent organisation 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 sessions.

Super smart spiders have evolved! Yes, in the desert of Australia where they tested nuclear weapons these amazing spiders have created a whole society. Luckily, they're not evil. *They're good!* More than that, *they're wise!* Scientists believe they have unique insights to share with us humans. Thus, we must learn to communicate with these spiders. We must listen to their myths, their legends and their poems, for these stories shared from spider to spider have helped them to create the amazing society they have. Then we must hear their wisdom before sharing it with the world!

Come join our party of experts as we set out on our expedition to remote South Australia. As young language enthusiasts will need to learn about hybrid languages: lingua francas, pidgins and creoles. As young naturalists you'll also be introduced to the amazing world of spiders – their unique senses, skills and modes of communication. As we try to develop our mode of communication, we'll need to explore the connotations and denotations of words, idioms and slang which make translating so difficult. We'll also need to fine tune our rhetorical and public communication skills – both written and verbal. It won't be easy bringing such vastly different worlds together – but that's the mission!

Session One: Amazing Spiders – they need YOU to help spread their wisdom!

The first stunned scientists to stumble upon the spider city in the desert were shocked by the insects' sophistication and the way in which they lived in peace. But conversation was practically impossible. Spiders communicate with scents, vibration, taps and their palps (little appendages around their faces) – they have no vocal chords to talk with! YOU have been selected to be part into this super-secret mission to start up a dialogue with these super smart spiders. Thus, you'll need to learn about how spiders communicate, how we humans communicate and how to develop a language to bridge the gap.

Session Two: Spider Words – they need YOU to help them be understood!

It's tough to understand these spiders! Even basic words and concepts are not easy to translate between two vastly different species: arachnids and humanoids. But we must try! You'll need to create brand new words for the spider's world and experiences; words that are distinct to their anatomy, society and the way they communicate. This will necessitate a study of neologisms: portmanteaus, truncations and the use of Greek and Latin words roots to form new words. And then, these new words will be used in poems to capture the intimate emotions and experiences of individuals spiders – helping us humans to understand, and empathise with, the miraculously peaceful community the spiders have created.

Session Three: Spider Stories – they need YOU to help them create new history!

Finally, the world of the spiders is becoming clearer. And one of the things that is emerging is the power and influences of the stories they share, particularly their myths and legends. You will need to learn about the style and story elements of myths and legends, and the role of archetypal characters. And from there you will be writing *new* legends, *new* stories about the coming together of spider and human society and wisdom. Why do we need to understand a culture's myths and legends? Because a culture is shaped by the stories it tells itself. Just as we in Australia have stories of 'mate-ship' and 'a fair go', the spiders have their stories of community and sharing. These

stories have made the spiders a deeply generous and inclusive society. We need to learn from their stories so we humans can also become generous and inclusive across all our cultures.

Session Four: Spider Secrets Shared – now here’s a story for you!

It is time to share this secret with the world! After learning about the basics involved in writing a press release, running a news conference and some simple rhetorical skills (repetition, climax, antimetabole, hyperbole) you will work in small groups to introduce the super smart spiders to the world. You’ll amaze the scientific and linguistic world as you share the language that has been developed for communication between spiders and humans. You’ll share fragments or examples of spider-human myths and spider poems, and finally, you’ll share the amazing message that the super smart spiders have for all of humanity.

Requirements:

Adventurers always come prepared! Pack:

- a well-stocked pencil case with pens and pencils for writing
- an exercise book
- a snack (adventuring is hungry work!)

Homework:

Aspiring and dedicated language enthusiasts on this Journey will definitely want to complete the extra word and arachnid challenges. This will add to their deepening understanding of languages and words as well as the wonderful world of spiders.

