

GATEWAYS JOURNEYS

G.A.T.E.WAYS invites high-ability Year 3 & 4 students with an interest in writing and environment to...

Our World at a Tipping Point

Welcome to the year 2219. What does it look like for you? Have the ice caps melted? Has the sea level risen? Has deforestation played havoc with our natural resources and food supplies? How do these conditions shape your daily life? Is your community impacted by drought, or blizzards, or other unpredictable weather patterns unique to your region? How do you struggle to survive in, and adapt to, your new reality?



In this Journey, we'll take a glimpse into the future, and explore how the concepts of global

warming and environmental issues shape and influence characters, plot, and setting in both speculative and realist fiction. The popularity of [Eco-Fiction](#), [Cli Fi](#) and [Solar Punk](#) are on the rise, so let's take a leap 200 years ahead to discover how – by using climate change and ecological challenges as a springboard - we can create our own compelling pieces of fiction writing journal entries as narrative for the 2219 you've created. When combined with the art of worldbuilding, the only limit to this powerful literary technique is your imagination!

Requirements:

- **Bring** your favourite pens or pencils, and a notebook (or an electronic device if you prefer to work on one). Bring a snack (nut free please) and a hat (Term 1 and 4)
- **Before the program:** Please read *How to Bee*, the award-winning novel by Bren MacDibble.

Session 1: Looking to the future while learning from the past

We'll begin by discussing what climate fiction (cli fi), eco-fiction, and their sub genres are, and how and why cli fi can be used to raise awareness about important environmental issues. It's not all 'doom and gloom' though. Through our stories, we can also give voice to a hopeful – albeit changed – future. Next, we'll look at some classic and contemporary examples in literature to compare how what was once seen as futuristic writing is rapidly becoming our reality. We'll be introduced to Peony, who lives in a dystopian landscape in a world without bees (*How to Bee* by Bren MacDibble) and *The Animals of Farthing Wood* (Colin Dann), a group of animals seeking refuge when their wood is threatened by human development.

From the plights of the forests of Borneo, to the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, and the thawing of Antarctica, human impact on the environment is everywhere. We'll brainstorm a variety of eco issues and threats (or perhaps you'd like to invent one of your own) and select one as your **2219 scenario** to outline and expand on in journal's fictional narrative.

Session 2: 2219 – It's Your World

This session, we'll fuse facts with creativity as we use the process of worldbuilding to create our futuristic worlds: not only the setting of your story, but every aspect within it. Your version of 2219 may take place on a parched earth, or a flooded world where the ocean is boss, a frozen continent, or perhaps an urban cityscape in a dystopian future. It might not even be on earth! Whatever your 2219 looks like, you'll learn how to bring it to life by journaling a detailed worldbuilding profile of your vision focussing on elements such as climate, terrain, people, food and water, flora and fauna, transport and technology. We'll check back in with Peony for some examples of world building and meet the *Fremen*, the adaptive, hardy inhabitants that live on the desert

planet of Arrakis from Frank Herbert's *Dune* universe. You'll be amazed at the inventive ways they conserve and store any kind of moisture ... perhaps you'll have some ideas of your own when it comes to making the most out of your world's natural assets.

Session 3: When the going gets tough ...

What challenges and obstacles faced Peony? What threats did she, her family, and community face and what were the outcomes? A whole lot of changes and challenges await **you** in 2219! Now that you've got your scenario natted out and have determined how the different aspects of your world will impact on how you (and your characters) interact with their environment and each other, it's time to start putting everything together. Through your journal you'll explore how you and your characters struggle to survive and adapt to your new environment. Will they get inventive and band together ... or will they become mistrustful and divided? Your journal entry this week will reveal all as you document a challenging or threatening event. What is the incident? What is at stake? Who is impacted ... and what is the outcome?

Session 4: The future is bright

2219 sure has been a tough year! But, while it may have sometimes seemed there was no hope for the future, so long as there are people who care for each other, the other inhabitants who share our world, and the environment that supports and sustains us, there will always be hope. In our last session we'll revisit the environmental issues discussed in our first session, and focus on the research, conservation movements, technology, boycotts, and inventions that are being embraced in an effort to either slow down, halt, or reverse threats to our planet. Even the little things we can do to make a difference in our day-to-day lives. Remember, small steps lead to big changes!

We'll then consider our 2219 worlds, and devise initiatives that can help positively impact our own climate / eco scenarios. Can you think of ways that will benefit your fictional society? Is there a new technology on the horizon? A new farming method? A vaccine against a disease? A promising new leader or uprising? Has a species been brought back from extinction? Perhaps solar, wind power, or hydro has been harnessed in a new and effective way? Maybe two separate groups who were once enemies have decided to work together for the common good? Perhaps the secret to success has been under our noses all along but we didn't know where to look? Your final task will be to write a bright future so that your scenario ends on a positive note! This session's journal entry will document hope for the future. What impactful event has transpired ... and what does it mean for 2200 and beyond?

Homework:

There may be some homework between sessions. This may involve completing writing tasks started in class and/or polishing/editing these pieces.

About the presenter:

Rebecca Fraser is an Australian author, with a Master of Arts in Creative Writing, and a Certificate of Publishing (Copy Editing & Proofreading). She copywrites in a freelance capacity and copy edits for a publisher of children's and speculative fiction ... however her true passion lies in storytelling. Rebecca's short stories, poems, and flash fiction have appeared in numerous Australian and international anthologies, magazines, and journals since 2007. Her junior teen fantasy adventure novel *Curtis Creed and the Lore of the Ocean* was released in 2018. Rebecca is passionate about sharing her skills and knowledge.