



A G.A.T.E.WAYS JOURNEY

For gifted Year 1 and 2 children with a

love of reading and writing

'UNLOCKING THE SECRET GARDEN'

G.A.T.E.WAYS is an independent organization offering challenging and enriching activities and experiences to develop and extend highly able children. This *JOURNEY* will run over four sessions.

Mary Lennox is an orphan sent to live with her uncle in England, but her new home seems to be full of strange secrets and puzzles... Why is her uncle so miserable and morose? Who does she hear crying in the night? And how do you get into the mysterious walled garden whose hidden door is locked and whose special key has long been lost...?

Frances Hodgson Burnett's classic novel will be the inspiration for our own stories of marvels and mysteries, as we design our own secret places, forge alliances with remarkable fictional characters, and unlock the past with Mary to discover how history and famous fiction can still excite and fire up our imaginations today!

Session One: Sowing New Ideas

Story seeds are little ideas and inspirations ready to grow into stories, and we'll be collecting lots of them today as we meet Mary, find out about her life growing up in India, and investigate the English mansion that is her strange new home... We'll be plotting her path of exploration through the house and open gardens, mapping out some of the intriguing ideas already at play in the novel, and then each choosing our own creative writing direction: will you write in Mary's diary, design and describe a mysterious old house of your own, or maybe plant one of the story seeds you've gathered to see what grows...?

Session Two: Growing Budding Narratives

Mary asks lots of questions as the story begins to unfold: she wants to know **where** the garden is, **when** she can see it, **why** it's locked, **how** to get inside, **who** will help her and **what** will be behind its hidden walls...? We'll be helping her find the answers today by staging character interviews with gruff Old Ben, lovable Martha, amazing Dickon and her mysterious uncle Archibald Craven, tracing plot lines that are revealed, and then tending our own writing portfolio 'gardens': will you choose where, when, why, how, who or what as your personal writing challenge?

Session Three: Branching Out into Action

The magical garden is now Mary's own secret, but she has another mystery to solve – who does she keep hearing cry in the night? It's time for us to leap into action, follow the jumbled narrative clues, and see if we can work out what Mary will do next. Today our focus is on vigorous verbs, exciting events and keeping story-secrets, so you'll soon be pruning writing tasks into your own unique portfolio piece - which may be a new conversation with strange cousin Colin, an illustrated plan of action for restoring the garden, or even a mini-adventure with one of Dickon's animal friends!

Session Four: Flowering into Finales

How will Mary's story end? What will be the final fate of the Secret Garden? As we reach the climax of the novel, we'll be exploring all the beautiful, unusual, dramatic, daring language being used to create excitement and anticipation – and then picking some of these vocabulary flowers to adorn our own flourishing stories! For your final decision today, will your creative writing erupt into a thrilling tale of a surprise plan coming to fruition, a design and description of your own 'secret' place, or maybe even a poem about the magic Mary and her friends have discovered in the world?!

Requirements: Mystery-hunters, nature-lovers and budding novelists on this Journey will all need to bring:

- A large scrapbook
- some loose-leaf lined and blank paper
- A well-stocked pencil-case
- A snack (because literary gardening is hungry work!)

Homework:

There is no expectation to read the novel beforehand, but students will be warmly encouraged to develop and expand their writing portfolios at home between sessions by completing written work, decorating or illustrating, or simply writing more when feeling inspired!

About the Presenter

Kim Edwards 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! Kim is currently the club leader for G.A.T.E.WAYS *Tolkiens* Club and a new writers' club for Years 7-9, *The Inklings*.

