



**GATEWAYS  
ON LOCATION**

for gifted Year 5 and 6 children with a  
love of reading and creative writing

## **'ALL HANDS TO ACTION STATIONS'**

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

**G.A.T.E.WAYS** is an independent organisation offering challenging and enriching activities and experiences to develop and extend highly able children. This *ON LOCATION* program for both girls and boys will run over two full days.

Have you ever wondered what you would do in an emergency? Have you ever written about it? Maybe you'd like to find out how! Battles, emergencies, explosions and natural disasters all happen in action stories...sometimes all at the same time! In this program, it's all action stations as we discover how characters react when their adrenalin levels begin to rise...

Leap, sky-dive, swing, flail, and fall into this non-stop program, and find out everything there is to know about action writing. You will learn how to create realistic life-or-death scenes – how to raise stakes, crack the pace, write without a safety net – and discover some real-life action heroes.

**Bring** : nibbles for morning tea and lunch (no nuts please), a water bottle, an exercise book or writing paper, pens and pencils, a thesaurus, an inventive mind.

**Before you come along**: You might like to read *The Cut Out* by Jack Heath to set the scene.

### **Day 1: Thrills, spills and energy**

Over the course of our first day you will begin your very own action story. First, we'll learn how people react in emergency situations and why. We'll discover some real-life action heroes – firefighters, paramedics and more. We'll also investigate how different people behave in critical situations, and how this affects character writing. Zombie attacks, sword fights, car chases, lightning strikes, explosions...we'll find out what types of action scenes might arise in a story, and how to show them on the page. We'll also learn what style of writing suits the situation and which writing techniques you can use to make action come to life.

But action is more than just fancy moves – we'll look at the characters and examine why they're fighting, including figuring out what purpose the fight serves in the plot. We'll make sure your action scenes serve your story, and see how the great authors do it.

### **Day 2: No-holds barred action**

Over the course of our second day you will learn about the adrenalin rush of raising the stakes and creating tension in your story. We'll find out how pacing action scenes moves both the action and the plot forward, and how to keep your reader turning pages by writing without a safety net.

We'll create realistic action scenes by researching the details, examining terrain (heat, snow, wet conditions, high altitude), and asking the experts. We'll also learn about 'minimum safe distance' – *aka* how to use specific detail in your action writing.

Before your story is done you'll know all about action scene aftermath, including how your characters will recover from injuries and adrenalin, and how they will change on the inside, which will give you some ideas for where the plot will take them next.

You will spend time working as a class, individually, and in groups to look at action scenes from all angles – there will also be plenty of time just for pure writing. So, if you're not too bothered by a bit of blood, sweat and tears, and you're keen for a high-octane thrill-ride, clip on your parachute and come along!

**Homework:**

Your homework will be to work on your story between classes – those with completed stories may like to publish them on the G.A.T.E.WAYS website.

**About the Presenter:**

Ellie Marney is a qualified teacher and writer of crime fiction for teenagers. Her first book, *Every Breath*, was shortlisted for the Ned Kelly Awards, the Davitt Awards and the Centre for Youth Literature's Gold Inky, and listed by ALIA as one of the most borrowed YA books in Australian libraries. Follow-up books *Every Word* and *Every Move* complete the trilogy, which has now been published in eight countries. When she's not writing, she talks in schools and libraries about books, writing and reading. Ellie lives in north-central Victoria with her partner, their four sons, and way too many pets. She likes a good book in her hand, *Die Hard* on the telly, and the occasional spot of remedial chain-sawing.

