



G.A.T.E.WAYS and Montsalvat

Invite Year 5 and 6 gifted children

with a love of, and a talent for writing to

‘MAGIC, MAYHEM AND MYSTERY’

G.A.T.E.WAYS is an independent organization offering challenging and enriching activities and experiences to develop and extend highly able children. Established in 1994, G.A.T.E.WAYS runs a range of stimulating school programs as well as the *Saturday Brainwaves Club*.

This two-day creative writing course for young writers will take place ON LOCATION at Montsalvat, an historic artist colony in Eltham. Using the evocative grounds and history of this beautiful artistic haven as inspiration, young writers will be guided through activities that will evoke ideas for sumptuous setting, intriguing characters and thrilling plots. Over two jam-packed days of literary endeavours, young writers will produce one or more sustained narrative pieces in a genre of their choice and develop their writing talents from moment of inspiration all the way through to a full draft under the guidance of published author, Kate Mildenhall.

Day One: Another world

A young architect, recently returned from adventures in Europe, stumbles upon a beautiful untouched block of land in rural Eltham in the 1930s. With the help of his artist friends, he designs and builds what will become Montsalvat—a haven for robust conversation, dancing, wildness and above all things, for art.

This is the beginning of a true story, the story of the place you will explore today. But your beginning will be very different... Perhaps you will feel you've stepped straight into a magical world (Montsalvat is MORE than a little reminiscent of Hogwarts!), or maybe you've travelled back in time to a medieval French village? We'll spend today exploring the grounds with our notebooks and using the locations as inspiration for the setting of your narrative. We'll commune in the chapel, wonder under the wisteria next to the ornamental pool, and scribble furiously in the founder's very own studio.

Then you'll choose one of the extraordinary pieces of art hidden around Montsalvat to weave into your narratives. Was it stolen? A secret gift to a lover? Used as a weapon in a terrible murder? A magical portal to another realm? We'll wield our words to create story magic!

Day Two: Enter if you dare...

We return to our writing studio to share our words and adventure out into the magical world of Montsalvat once more. Are you brave enough to join me as we slip through the gate to the historic cemetery and search for the characters who will inhabit our stories? We delve into the minds of our characters and get to know them intimately through a series of writing exercises.

How do we keep our readers entranced? We'll plot our narratives, building tension and hooking them in with our wonderful words until we reach the climax of our stories and all will be revealed!

Students require:

- notebook and pens/pencils and laptop or other writing equipment
- an A4 clipboard
- camera if desired
- warm clothing and rain jacket
- lunch, snacks and drink bottle
- a small labelled photograph of themselves and a stamped, self-addressed DL envelope for report

About the Presenter

Kate Mildenhall is a writer and teacher. Her debut novel, *Skylarking* (Black Inc., 2016) is based on the true story of Kate and Harriet, best friends growing up on a remote Australian cape in the 1880s, and the tragic event that befalls them. Kate has taught in schools, at RMIT University and State Library Victoria, and has volunteered with Teachers Across Borders delivering professional development to Khmer teachers in Cambodia. Recently, Kate worked on the Young Researcher Fellowship program, developing an online research course and connecting young Gifted and Talented learners in regional Victoria with experts at the State Library of Victoria. She lives with her husband and two young daughters in Hurstbridge, Victoria, where she is currently working on her second novel.



Some feedback about Magic, Mayhem and Mystery from a parent:

I want to let you know how much my daughter has loved both the programs she has done with you so far. She is so engaged by the way you teach. Last Friday at Montsalvat though, she was absolutely enchanted. It was the perfect combination of teacher and location. Thank you for imparting your knowledge and inspiring her love of writing as you have.

.. and from a student:

I have enjoyed every minute at Montsalvat. The whole setting was very inspiring. Kate was an incredible teacher. She teaches in a unique style... She manages to teach with skill, humour and just lifts up the whole experience. Altogether, it was incredible to learn with her.. Thank you for this opportunity. It was a unique and awesome experience.
Francesca