



HERE FOR
YOUNG
WRITERS



*The John Marsden
& Hachette Australia
Prize For Young Writers*

TEACHERS' RESOURCE KIT

The John Marsden & Hachette Australia Prize for Young Writers awards unforgettable opportunities to writers aged 18 and under, across the categories of poetry, fiction and creative nonfiction.

The following resource has been created to accompany the story starters provided by John Marsden. The teaching kit provides teachers with a practical roadmap for getting students enthused about writing original work which they will then be able to submit to the competition. Writing activities and prompts are included for each prize category and are linked to the Australian Curriculum. Please note that submissions to the competition are not required to respond directly to the story starters, they are simply additional resources for students and teachers to spark the creative process.

To submit to the prize, or for more information head to

www.expressmedia.org.au/jmp

Entries must be submitted by 9am July 1st 2016

By participating in the following activities and submitting original work to the competition, students will be able to:

- Understand that authors innovate with text structures and language for specific purposes and effects
(A C E L A 1 5 5 3)
- Identify how vocabulary choices contribute to specificity, abstraction and stylistic effectiveness
(A C E L A 1 5 6 1)
- Interpret, analyse and evaluate how different perspectives of issue, event, situation, individuals or groups are constructed to serve specific purposes in texts
(A C E L Y 1 7 4 2)
- Explore and explain the combinations of language and visual choices that authors make to present information, opinions and perspectives in different texts (A C E L Y 1 7 4 5)
- Create imaginative, informative and persuasive texts that present a point of view and advance or illustrate arguments, including texts that integrate visual, print and/or audio features
(A C E L Y 1 7 4 6)
- Review and edit students' own and others' texts to improve clarity and control over content, organisation, paragraphing, sentence structure, vocabulary and audio/visual features
(A C E L Y 1 7 4 7)

Poetry

John Marsden Poetry Prompt:

*“She placed a key in my hand,
A key to a magic gate.”*

EXERCISE ONE: MINDMAP

- Share the John Marsden poem prompt with students. Invite each student to draw a mind map of options for who the subject of their poem might be and places where this magic gate might lead to.

EXERCISE TWO: BLACKOUT POETRY

- When creating a new work, it's sometime easier to start when the materials are already available. Blackout poetry allows students to make thoughtful choices about the words they are using, without putting them under pressure to write from scratch.
(A C E L T 1 6 3 7)
- Blackout poetry is made by redacting newspaper articles with permanent marker. Meaning is created by the choice of words to remain, which mimic the format of free form poetry.
- Provide the students with newspaper clippings (alternatively photocopies from books or magazines can be used) and ask students to underline any words that they like, or cross out any words they don't like. Eventually the entire newspaper article will be blacked out, excepting the words chosen by the students.
- Once completed, ask the students to copy the words of their new poem into their notebooks. They can then continue writing and editing the poems.

EXERCISE THREE: PEER-TO-PEER EDITING

- Ask students to swap their poem with a friend or the person sitting next to them.
(A C E L Y 1 7 4 7)
- As part of the editing process, ask students to:
 - Read the piece out loud and underline any phrasing that sounds clunky or awkward
 - Edit redundancies, i.e. 'innocent childhood' could become simply 'childhood'
 - Circle 10 words in the draft and suggest two alternative words that could suit the line better. Students don't need to actually swap the words, but seeing alternatives could open them up to other possibilities in the poem that they might not have considered
 - Underline any spelling or grammar mistakes
 - Make a note of any parts of the poem that are evocative or intriguing and comment on how the poem makes you feel overall
 - Remind students that there are many ways to structure a poem, and there is not necessarily a 'right' way. If the poet is unsure of the poem's structure they can try cutting up their poem into lines and reshuffling the order. The structure chosen by the poet should be the structure that best represents the poet's intentions
- Encourage students to continue work on their new poem and submit a final draft to the 2016 John Marsden & Hachette Australia Prize for Young Writers.
- Submissions of poetry may be up to 100 lines in length.

Fiction

John Marsden Fiction Prompt:

“The last glimpse I had of her was on the Number 1 platform of Grey River Station. I was coming down the stairs when I saw her stepping into the first carriage of a train. I dropped my bag and took a dozen steps in two crazy leaps, but too late. The doors closed and the train began to move.”

EXERCISE ONE: AUTOMATIC WRITING

- Automatic writing is a good way for students to ‘loosen up’ and begin working on a specific piece of writing. Students are encouraged to become less intimidated or self-conscious about starting their writing process. The aim is for students to write in a way that is continuous and instinctive.
- Explain the rules of automatic writing (below), and write out the John Marsden fiction prompt as an ‘anchor point’ on the board. Explain that the students have a set time of 5 minutes to respond to this story starter with automatic writing.
- The rules for automatic writing are:
 - Silent writing
 - Write the anchor phrase and write down the first thing it suggests
 - Keep writing
 - Go with the first ideas that come into your head
 - Don’t cross out or change anything
 - If you get stuck write the anchor phrase, or a word from it, over and over until you get a new idea
 - Don’t worry about spelling and punctuation

- When 5 minutes is up, ask students to read their work back to themselves and underline any phrases that stand out.

EXERCISE TWO: CRAFTING CHARACTERS

- Explain to students that it is often easy to think of a character as solely inhabiting the scenes and moments you’re reading them in – but for many writers their characters have entire lives and histories, which exist outside the story as you’ve read it.
- Ask the students what makes a character clichéd. Can they think of some examples of clichéd characters in any books or movies they have recently read or seen?
- By first discussing the idea of a cliché or what makes a cliché, students will be more aware of their own writing and be able to provide nuanced characteristics and background for the following exercise.
- Remind students of the John Marsden fiction prompt.

- Ask students to respond to this prompt a second time by answering the following questions in their notebooks. This will provide them with the groundwork for the characterisation of their story's protagonist.

- **Name:**
- **Age:**
- **Appearance:**
Include details such as height, weight build, hair colour, eye colour and distinguishing marks.
Now choose one aspect of your character's appearance and describe it in further detail.
- **Relationships:**
Who are the most important people in your character's life?
What is your character's cultural background?
Does your character have any enemies?
- **Occupation:**
What does your character do all day?
- **Location:**
Where do they live? Where did they grow up?
- **Do they have any powers or special abilities?**
- **What are their individual character traits?**
Are they bad-tempered, insecure, thoughtful, selfish?
- **What motivates your character?**
- **What is your character's greatest fear?**
- **Now write ten truths that you know about your character:**

- Encourage students to integrate this character development exercise and their automatic writing task into a piece of short fiction.
- Encourage students to submit a final draft of their fiction piece to the 2016 John Marsden & Hachette Australia Prize for Young Writers.
- Submissions of fiction may be up to 3,000 words in length.

Creative Nonfiction

John Marsden Creative Nonfiction Prompt:

“A trickle of water becomes a creek, the creek becomes a river, which one day flows into the ocean. This is a pattern familiar to us all.”

EXERCISE ONE: FINDING THE STORY

- Telling a story effectively is a big part of nonfiction writing, but so too is being able to generate story ideas and direct research. As a class, brainstorm some areas where nonfiction writers might find inspiration for their stories.
- Examples could include:
 - Their own experience
 - The experience of their friends and family
 - Eavesdropping in public to discover what people are talking about
 - Social media: what’s trending and what are people sharing online?
 - Local newspapers
 - Attending and covering a local event
 - Reading widely from a variety of publications
 - Legal notices and classifieds in newspapers and online
 - Tip-offs from anonymous or identified sources

EXERCISE TWO: IDENTIFYING THE CIRCLES

- This exercise demonstrates the larger powers and spheres of influence that effect the student’s day-to-day life and helps participants identify areas in their life they could write about. The aim of this exercise is to help participants identify how larger political machinations affect them, and to pinpoint 2 to 3 specific examples to begin writing or reporting on their first piece.
- Give each participant an A3 piece of paper and get them to start by drawing a circle the size of the page to represent themselves.
- Ask participants to brainstorm areas of their life that are shaped by politics, social mores, religion and government. These could include their hobbies, romantic relationships, family or work. Within their large ‘self-circle’, they should add in smaller circles for each part of their life they identify.
- Encourage student to identify the broader topics at play and ask them to note down specific examples within the smaller circles.

EXERCISE THREE: WRITE IT OUT

- Get students to pick one issue they identified in the previous circle exercise. Provide students with the John Marsden nonfiction prompt. Ask them to imagine the prompt is the by-line to their story and get them to answer the following questions in their notebooks:

- **What is the headline of your story?**
- **What is the background of your story?**
- **What is the central focus of the story?**
- **How can you bring this story to life?**
Detail the angle you might take to communicate this story effectively.
- **Who is involved with this story?**
List the characters, spokespeople, and sources that may be involved.
- **What methods of communication will you have with them?**
- **Do you have an opinion about the subject or issues presented in the story?**
Consider how you are going to reconcile your views with the stories of the other people and parties involved.

- Encourage students to continue work on their piece of creative nonfiction and submit a final draft to the 2016 John Marsden & Hachette Australia Prize for Young Writers.
- Submissions of nonfiction may be up to 3,000 words in length.