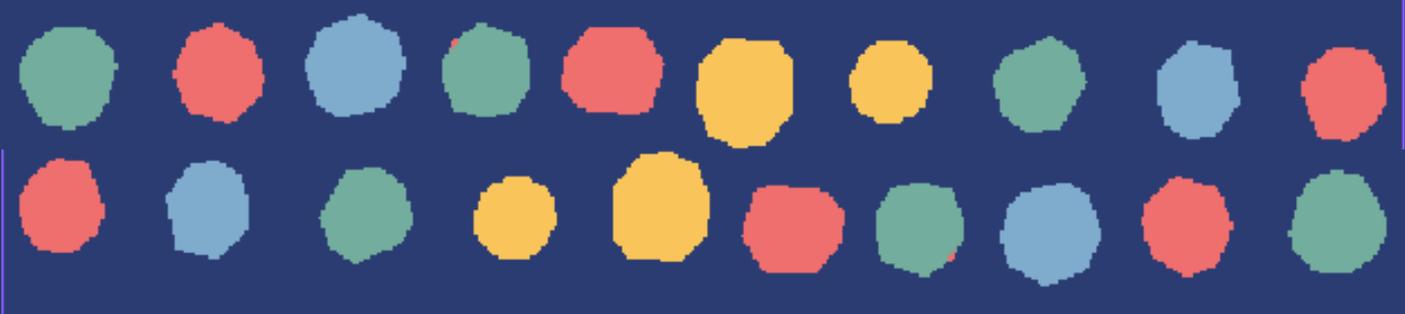




# Express Media & Hachette Australia Prize for Young Writers Teachers Resource

*Express Media acknowledges and pays respect to the traditional custodians of the land on which our offices are located, the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation. Express Media also acknowledges and pays respect to the Elders of the lands on which our programs and content reaches. It was, is and always will be, Aboriginal land.*





# Hachette Australia Prize for Young Writers Teachers Resource

The Hachette Australia Prize for Young Writers is a developmental award open to Australian secondary school-aged students across the nation.

The prize recognises writing excellence in three categories: Fiction, Creative Nonfiction and Poetry. Entries can include writing for readers of any age.

The Prize is sponsored by Hachette Australia and administered by Express Media, Australia's peak youth literary organisation. Shortlisted writers get the opportunity to receive mentorship from an established author. In 2020, the Hachette Australia Prize for Young Writers Mentor is Will Kostakis.

The Hachette Australia Prize for Young Writers gives young writers the opportunity to hone their skills under the guidance of some of Australia's favourite authors. The Prize aims to ignite passion for creative writing and poetry in the minds of Australia's secondary school students, and to encourage them to pursue writing and publishing opportunities inside and outside of the classroom.

The prize winner in each category will receive:

- \$500 courtesy of Hachette Australia
- publication of their work on the Express Media website
- their names and an acknowledgement printed in Voiceworks, Australia's premier youth literary journal.

All fifteen shortlisted writers will:

- Be invited to participate in a writing masterclass
- Attend an exclusive Q&A with Will Kostakis
- Be invited to participate in a special showcase event at National Young Writers Festival in October 2020
- Receive a book pack of YA Titles courtesy of Hachette Australia

The prize is judged by representatives from Hachette Australia and Express Media.

Entries are now open and close at 11:59pm AEST on Monday 17 August 2020. To submit or for more information head to: <https://expressmedia.org.au/programs/hachette-australia-prize/>

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# About this Resource

The following resource has been created to provide students with inspiration and a starting point for their writing. For teachers, these dynamic and generative exercises are intended to get students enthused about writing for submission. A range of example activities are included for each category and can be linked to the Australian curriculum.

All prompts are based on 2019 winning submissions and the work of 2020 Mentor, Will Kostakis.

Please note that submissions to the competition are not required to respond directly to these writing activities. The prize is unthemed, and these are simply additional resources for students and teachers to spark the creative process.

This resource was created by Rafael Ward for Express Media.

## Benefits and Connections with Curriculum

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

Understand that Standard Australian English is a living language within which the creation and loss of words and the evolution of usage is ongoing (**ACELA1550**)

Understand that roles and relationships are developed and challenged through language and interpersonal skills (**ACELA1551**)

Explore and reflect on personal understanding of the world and significant human experience gained from interpreting various representations of life matters in texts (**ACELT1635**)



# Monuments: Will Kostakis

This first section uses the work of 2020 Hachette Australia Prize for Young Writers Mentor, Will Kostakis, as a prompt to encourage creative writing.

*“When we think of writers, we tend to imagine solitary figures slouched over keyboards or notepads, ignoring the community that empowers them to realise their creative ambitions – the mentors who offer guidance, the prizes that encourage. I am the author I am today because of the generosity of my mentors, and that has inspired me to spend the past decade touring extensively, encouraging the next generation of Australian voices. I am honoured to be this year’s Hachette Australia Prize for Young Writers Mentor.”* - Will Kostakis, 2020 Mentor



## Warmup Writing: Yes, and...?

*I took a semester of drama in Year Nine. When an improv scene partner would say something, no matter how inane, we were encouraged to accept and build off it. So, when my partner Joshua Parks exclaimed, ‘Look! A dinosaur!’ in what was supposed to be a Parisian cafe, I had to say, ‘Yes, and...’*

*That blanket acceptance only spurred Joshua on. The scene kept escalating, and by the end of our five minutes, we were duelling an alien warlord on the moon.*

[Excerpt from Monuments by Will Kostakis, pg 37, Hachette Australia]

In pairs or by themselves, students are to write out a series of events that might happen in a story. Each time, asking each other or themselves “Yes, and...” to help prompt further exploration. Saying “and then...” or other alternatives is fine too. It doesn’t need to inevitably become out-of-this-world, but it’s fine if it does as this is just an exercise to start them feeling creative.

Some prompts to start asking ‘Yes, and...’ to if needed:

- The bus to school has broken down...
- I was home alone that evening...
- We were running late for our plane...

## Writing Task: Conversations with a god

*I look at the floorboards and imagine the earth beneath them collecting every word I say. Does it judge me? Mum can't handle the slang we use nowadays, so I can only imagine what the eternal earth must think.*

*'Do you, like, cringe when you hear how we speak?' I ask Darroch.*

*He laughs. 'If I were a purist, then every word beyond a grunt would be an aberration. I would have to consciously choose a moment when language was perfect, ignore its evolution prior, and condemn its evolution since. That is foolish. I learn a new phrase and relish it. It means the language is alive.'*

*I'm still stuck imagining the earth cringing at how many times I drop like daily.*

*Darrich's gaze is unwavering. 'May I ask a question now?'*

*That's how conversations tend to work. 'Sure.'*

[Excerpt from *Monuments* by Will Kostakis, pg 57-58, Hachette Australia]

16-year-old Connor already had a bit of attitude before he met a deity, but the revelation and subsequent adventure didn't render him mute. Instead, he is true to his voice, and this is maintained throughout in Kostakis' work, where Connor has all the sass, slang and self-deprecation of any teenager.

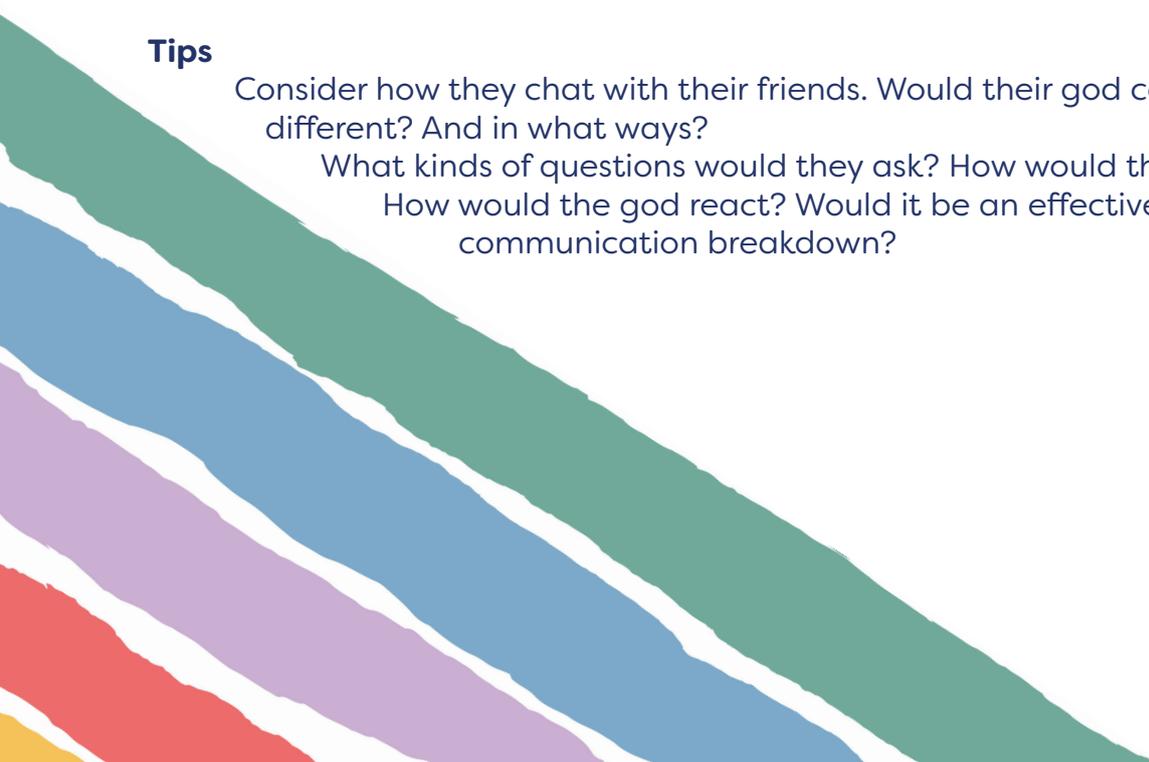
In this writing task, students are to imagine how they would speak if they were face to face with a god. It can be biblical, ancient roman, earth spirit or anything in between that they'd like to chat with. However the important factor is to draw inspiration from the way they speak now, complete with any slang or turns of phrase. They should aim for this conversation to be able to indicate the kind of person they are just through how they represent themselves in their speech.

### Tips

Consider how they chat with their friends. Would their god conversation be different? And in what ways?

What kinds of questions would they ask? How would they ask them?

How would the god react? Would it be an effective conversation or communication breakdown?



# Nonfiction

*It started off as your typical political article, which are always a good laugh: Scott Morrison did this, this guy wasn't happy about it, this man would have done a better job, we need change... But then I saw a headline that made my stomach clench: "Budget surplus reflects NDIS cuts"*

[Excerpt from Preethika Mathan's *The Truth and Lies between Love and Hate*]

Preethika Mathan's [The Truth and Lies between Love and Hate](#), explores her relationship with her brother, and shows the implications of policy decisions on families such as hers. In the piece, Mathan provides details that help to show that personal experience rather than simply tell it.

## Warming Up: Telling Yourself

In this task, students are encouraged to come up with some very quick prompts and reflect on personal experiences that they may want to write about.

Using the following prompts, fill in the blanks. Don't spend too long on it, write the first thing that comes to mind.

1. I love to talk about \_\_\_\_\_
2. I am an \_\_\_\_\_ expert in (chess, teaching the dog a trick, building a fire)
3. I wish I could read more writing about \_\_\_\_\_
4. Small things that would make the world better for me are \_\_\_\_\_
5. I hate reading about \_\_\_\_\_

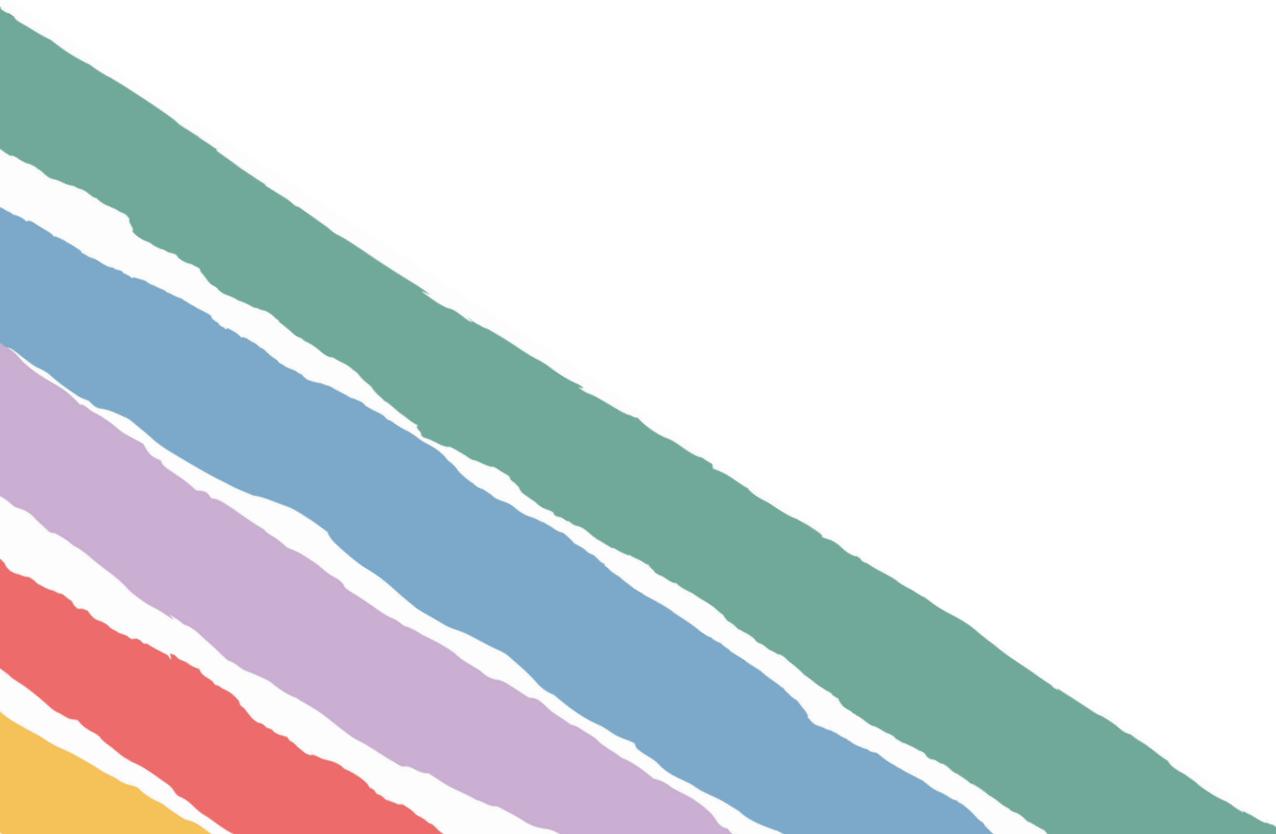
## Writing Task: Show Yourself

Here, students are encouraged to write the above prompts into a piece, but to show instead of tell the reader about themselves.

For each answer above, write a detail that could be included in a story that would show the reader this fact about them.

*For example, if you answered, “A small thing that would make the world better for me is a wheelchair ramp at every entrance,” you could write about the time you had to leave the school group to use the back entrance to Parliament House because the front entrance didn’t have a ramp. Mention how that made you feel – annoyed? Rushed because you had to catch up with the group? Left out?*

These kinds of details can paint a picture of the author’s lived experience for the reader & let them know who’s telling the story.



# Poetry

*There are, heavily,  
many things that I remember,*

[Excerpt from Quang Mai's Rememory]

Quang Mai's winning poem [Rememory](#) explores memory in a style that makes it almost a living reflection, something that occurs in two distinct states of time and is brought together by the life force of a grandmother and her grandchild. There is history, but there is also love, war, and an insight into Vietnamese language. Inspired by the unique structure, the following writing tasks can be used separately or brought together to replicate the two distinct time periods of Mai's piece.

*The days have expired a long time  
ago & I remember you  
gave me an answer under that browning night*

## Warmup writing: a memory into a poem

In this exercise, students will be transforming a memory of their own into a poem.

Criteria for a memory:

- It has to be something with some strong emotion behind it
- Ideally it should be vivid so as to have plenty of details to draw from
- Make sure it has a person in it (to make it easier for part two)

In making a memory poetic, notice how Mai has chosen precise images to evoke a feeling, rather than necessarily making it obvious what's occurring.

*your charcoaled hair, our rotten  
teeth. They looked just like orphans, ready  
to fall onto this quiet ground.*

However it's possible to also use clues, keywords, hints that will help give the reader context.

*Hand in hand  
towards the napalms, sharpening the sky  
with their all American beauty & glory*

## Tip

When writing this first memory poem, it might need a few drafts in order to choose the lines that evoke rather than explain, while still being clear enough for the reader.

## Writing Task: An interview into a poem

Students are to choose 5 questions they would like to ask the person who featured in their memory in the first task.

Like in Mai's poem, these questions can be clear "How do you feel grandma?" "What's left of the war? What's left to tell, your legacy?"

They can be a little unclear "What do you see, now & then?", "Your mother?"

Or they can hold within them a sense of the poetic "And what's the price of carrying this much blood?"

Students can use a mix of all three, or even use a different mode of questioning that works with their relationship with that person.

The next step is to imagine the answers to these questions. These will be used as a stepping-off point for the stanzas in the poem.

*What's left of the war? What's left to tell, your legacy?*

*Two hands. Our barb-wired hearts. And home, the shape of our people.*

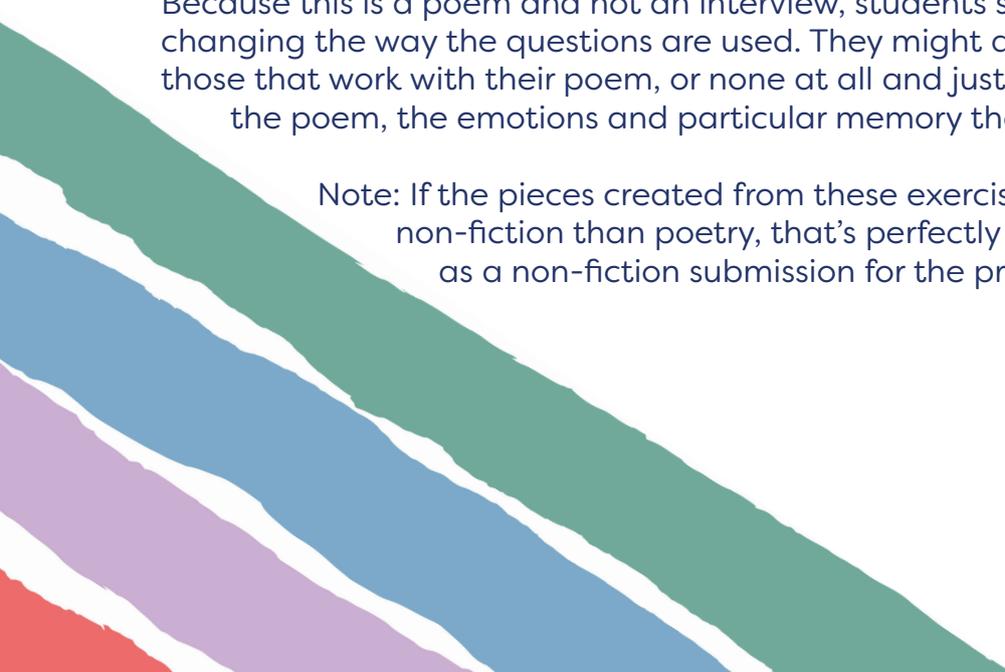
In imagining the responses, students should be encouraged to be more evocative than factual. This can be done through choosing certain images over others, and accepting that memory itself is inherently fallible.

*Your mother?*

*I used to wear her 'please Lord' like a beggar. Always on her collarbone, there was another God sitting, opening his throat - always, an answer.*

Because this is a poem and not an interview, students should feel comfortable changing the way the questions are used. They might decide to keep only some of those that work with their poem, or none at all and just the answers. It all depends on the poem, the emotions and particular memory they wish to evoke.

Note: If the pieces created from these exercises turn out to be a little more non-fiction than poetry, that's perfectly fine too, as it could then work as a non-fiction submission for the prize!



# Fiction

*For me, the tragedy isn't in the death. It's in the quietness of it all.*

[Excerpt from Hanqing Li, *Birdsong*]

Hanqing Li's winning story [Birdsong](#) explores two kinds of grief: the small deaths that are affecting the town, and the larger, personal one that the narrator is almost too raw to articulate. Instead, we receive clues, regrets and intimacies spoken directly to a "you". Aided by an old man on the train, the reader and the narrator come to a place of understanding together.

## Warmup writing

Use the line from Hanqing Li's winning fiction piece as the new starting line for a story of your own.

*There's something hidden in this town, some deep secret, but to tell you the truth-*

## Writing Task: Your reader and You

*I can't sleep at night because there's this little part of me always wondering if you went off into the hills to do something grand and come back with the evidence of it, of surviving in the woods alone, because of me. Because you wanted to show that you weren't weak just because you associated yourself with me, because you couldn't deal with the way you felt about me and wanted to prove that you were stronger than it all.*

[Excerpt from Hanqing Li, *Birdsong*]

Using the 'first person direct address' (one character speaking to another directly) can be a powerful device in your writing. Li's story uses it as a way to introduce an unseen figure, one who stands to the side of all the others due to the importance inherent in the way they are addressed. We never see them directly. Instead, the reader has to learn about the relationship one step removed – we only know about one character by what we are told from another.

This is not about writing a new piece using direct address (which is an option too if students are keen). This is an editing exercise looking at how to find stories from ones that students have already written that are suitable for the introduction of a first person direct address, and then seeing the effect this has on the reader.

Some questions to consider when choosing a story to introduce direct address into:

- Is it in first person?
- Are there strong relationships? Or relationships that should be strong but aren't?
- Is there a mystery? Something left unsaid?
- Does your narrator have a different perspective on a character to everyone else? Is there something new which will be brought to light, or obscured, by the reader hearing about this "you" character via your narrator?

You don't necessarily need to know the answers to all these questions, but thinking about them will help you consider what can be done with the direct address device.

Additionally, the very nature of this mode of address means you have to consider your reader when using it. The reader is going to be receiving a biased description of your "you" character, and so it is also suggested that you do some planning to consider:

- Who is your audience and what preconceptions might they have about the character or the story? Remember the audience is different from the character being addressed.
  - What will be revealed and what will be obscured?
  - How does this address change how the relationship between the two characters is perceived?
  - What will the reader learn about that they didn't know before?
  - Will using this device be effective for your audience? Will they understand and appreciate its effects?
- 

# Competition guidelines

## HOW TO ENTER

1. All entries must be received by 11.59pm AEST, Monday August 17, 2020
2. One entry may be submitted, per category, with a maximum of 2 entries across the 3 categories
3. Each entry must be submitted via the submissions portal, with one entry per submission form. DO NOT put multiple submissions in one word or PDF document
4. Submissions of fiction or nonfiction may be up to 3,000 words in length
5. Submissions of poetry may be up to 100 lines in length
6. All entries must be typed and double-spaced
7. Submittable accounts must be created in the entrant's own name and list the entrant's contact details

## PRIZE DETAILS

All fifteen shortlisted writers will:

- Be invited to participate in a writing masterclass
- Attend an exclusive Q&A with Will Kostakis
- Attend a special showcase event in October 2020
- Receive a book pack of YA Titles courtesy of Hachette Australia

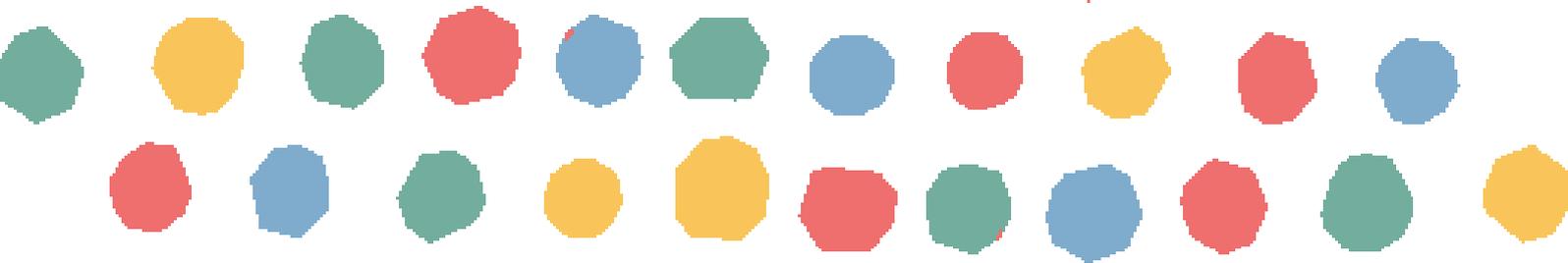
The first place winner of each prize category receives the above, plus:

- \$500 courtesy of Hachette Australia
- publication of their work on the Express Media website
- their names and an acknowledgement printed in Voiceworks, Australia's premier youth literary journal.

Go here to submit:

<https://expressmedia.org.au/programs/hachette-australia-prize/>

For more information contact  
**[creativeproducer@expressmedia.org.au](mailto:creativeproducer@expressmedia.org.au)**



# MEMBERSHIP

If you're aged 13 to 30 with an interest in writing, reading, or storytelling, become a member of Express Media and subscribe to Voiceworks to access opportunities to develop, share, and publish your writing. Plus, you'll receive invites to launches, events and workshops and join a community of young writers across the country!

## **Express Media Membership**

\$25 per year includes:

- A subscription to the monthly Express Post newsletter packed full of the latest writing and publication opportunities
- Unlimited submissions to Express Media's publications, prizes and fellowships
- Unlimited access to Express Media's courses, workshops and events
- A PDF version of the latest issue of Voiceworks delivered to your email inbox each quarter

Add a print subscription to Voiceworks for just \$50!

To sign up for an Express Media Membership visit [expressmedia.org.au/membership](http://expressmedia.org.au/membership)

We offer joint memberships with writers centres across Australia – find the membership suitable to you in your state via our website.

## **Voiceworks Subscription (4 issues)**

\$60 per year

The best way to get involved with Voiceworks is to read it! Each issue is stuffed to the gills with a varied selection of work by remarkable young writers and artists. Over the past year, our pages have been filled with stories about moon-visiting dogs and hidden queer identities; essays about Maltese prickly pears and murderous kookaburras; poems about clones and teenage gorgons; and comics about intimacy and the Dutch Golden Age.

Sign up for an annual subscription to get four issues a year delivered straight to your door.

Add an Express Media Membership for just \$15!

To sign up for a Voiceworks Subscription visit [\*\*expressmedia.org.au/subscribe-to-voiceworks\*\*](http://expressmedia.org.au/subscribe-to-voiceworks)