

YOUNG WRITERS ONLINE

Senior Writers Sessions with Meg McKinlay

Released Term 2, 2020

What is included?

6 x Creative Writing Sessions

Session 1 – Fodder to Fiction (35 minutes)

This session focuses on getting the creative wheels turning, finding raw material in the everyday and taking specific steps to transform it into fodder for fiction. Meg will talk about how this process works for her, using practical examples, and provide students with a series of starters to fuel their own work. She will draw on and read from her novel *A Single Stone*.



Session 2 – Swimming Towards a Buoy (32 minutes)

Planning and structure do not come naturally to Meg; she has had to 'learn by doing' over many years, and many novels. In this session, she'll share some of her hard-won strategies and tips - important for all students but particularly those who get stuck in the muddy middle of their stories. Features examples and a reading from *Catch a Falling Star*.

Session 3 – Show Don't Tell (34 minutes)

This session combines elements of character, voice and point-of-view. Connecting readers to your characters is vital and a key way of doing this is to write from deep inside their perspective. This is "show, don't tell" with Meg's own particular spin, a nuts-and-bolts focus on technique with examples drawn from her novel *Surface Tension*, among others.

Session 4 – Dialogue Beats (31 minutes)

Dialogue! Huge, unrelenting slabs of it! But do we really speak like that? This session zooms in on dialogue and the in-between spaces of action known as 'beats'; getting the balance right, and making both elements work as hard as you can, is crucial in effective and well-paced fiction. Includes a reading from Meg's novel *Annabel, Again*.

Session 5 – Poetry (27 minutes)

In this session, we turn our attention to poetry, with a focus on the importance of embedding the abstract in the concrete, finding and depicting the small details that bring the intangible to life. Techniques will be linked to the prose work covered in earlier sessions and Meg will also share some poetry from her collection, *Cleanskin*.

Session 6 – Mining for Poetry (34 minutes)

Continuing our work on poetry, we build on the previous session – this time mining our own lives for poetic inspiration, gathering and sorting relevant imagery, and working towards writing a poem which, while personal and subjective, reaches out to universal experience and emotion. Meg will also give answers to some frequently – and perhaps not-so-frequently! – asked questions about her work, writing, and creativity in general.

Each session:

- Is a tailored pre-recorded writing workshop for students presented by WA young adult author, Meg McKinlay. They are designed to be used in sequence.
- Can be used at the teacher's discretion; one session at a time or together, as six private video links are provided. Privately enrolled students can watch as they wish.
- Includes a writing exercise and a short reading by the author from one of her books.
- Meg's books are available for purchase from the Centre and can be signed to your school or students on request.

About WA Author Meg McKinlay

A Fremantle author, Meg is the successful writer of picture books, YA novels and poetry for adults. She has published seventeen books for children. Her work for *A Single Stone* won the Prime Minister's Literary Award, the Queensland Literary Award, the Davitt Award for Crime writing and the Aurealis Award for Speculative Fiction and been shortlisted for numerous other awards. Her latest titles are *Catch a Falling Star* and picture book *Let Me Sleep, Sheep!* Both published in 2019. In August 2020, Meg was thrilled to receive the WA Premier's Prize for Writing for Children for *Catch a Falling Star*. With a PhD in Japanese Literature, Meg spent several years at the University of Western Australian where she taught Australian Literature and Creative Writing to Japanese students. Meg is an experienced presenter of the Talented Young Writers' Programme at The Literature Centre. On these days Meg always inspires her students to not only read widely but to write with confidence.

Your Feedback

As this is a new and exciting venture for The Literature Centre, your feedback on our Young Writers Online workshop is appreciated. We know there may be improvements and adjustments needed along the way. As always, the content and presentation style of each of our award-winning authors will differ. A short feedback survey will be emailed to all participating teachers.

Full Details on our Website

See our website for all the details including reduced fee, registration forms, timetable of authors, what to expect and more www.thelitcentre.org.au. Young Writers Online is suitable for school classes or individual students (home-school or privately enrolled) keen to write.