



Nurturing excellence in  
*children's and young adult literature*

## Young Writers Online

### Year 9 to 12 students with Michael Pryor

#### What is included?

#### **6 x Creative Writing Sessions**

##### **Session One: The Writer's Toolbox**

Michael introduces himself and outlines the Four Stage Writing Process he's refined over more than twenty years of writing and he reads from his book *10 Futures* to demonstrate the results of following these stages. He introduces the concept of the Writer's Toolbox, and leaves students with a writing activity that uses the Most Important Writing Tool of Them All, the tool that can make a mediocre piece of writing into something that shines like gold.



##### **Session Two: Telling Stories**

Michael explains that he sees himself as part of the grand traditions of Storytelling, and then introduces the Three Classic Elements of Story, the components that, when optimised, produce engaging narratives. He analyses the first of these – Plot, or Series of Events – and introduces three alternative story structures ranging from the Ancient Greeks to the world of movies, and he also reads from his novel *Graveyard Shift in Ghost Town* highlighting the plotting structures he used in writing this funny, scary adventure. He presents a number of alternative plotting outlines as a writing activity for students.

##### **Session Three: Location, Location, Location**

The second classic element of Story that Michael analyses is Location, or Setting. He presents students with a writing tool he uses in every story, a vital part of the preparation stage of writing: mapping. He demonstrates how a simple sketch map, or plan, can help generate hundreds of ideas for stories as well as a multitude of details that will convince the reader and help them step into the world of the story. He then takes the next step, showing how to use the details generated and sift them into a narrative. Of course, students then can produce their own writing based on the map/plan they generated alongside Michael's demonstration.

After this, he reads from his book *Gap Year in Ghost Town* to show how small details of setting help set the tone and the atmosphere of a novel.

### **Session Four: Character, the Most Important Element of Story**

Unconvincing, unengaging characters ruin any story. Michael shares a simple preparation tool that will allow students to create vibrant, realistic characters ready to launch into a story, a tool he constantly uses himself. He then presents a writing activity that takes the next step into making a character come alive before reading from *Blaze of Glory*, the first volume in his six book steampunk series 'The Laws of Magic' demonstrating the various tools he uses to make the main character a believable, human protagonist.

### **Session Five: Writing Like a Professional**

Michael comes back to his Four Stage Writing Process to emphasise the importance of Stage Three: Rewriting and Revising. What exactly does a writer do after the first draft? Michael breaks down the process into three easy to follow steps designed to eliminate weaknesses and maximise strengths. He uses actual examples from his book *The Extinction Gambit* to demonstrate the sorts of changes he made from a first draft to a final version, and he leaves students with a variety of rewriting/revising activities.

### **Session Six: Language, the Glue that Binds the Other Elements Together**

This session concentrates on a number of writing tools that aim to optimise the language used in storytelling. Michael demonstrates the difference between complex and simple sentences, and how dull writing can be brought to life with a few judicious techniques. He shares some novel tools like the Power of Three and a simple method for making dialogue more natural. He also reads from his current work in progress, sharing the opening scene of a new epic story he has nearly completed.

#### **Each session:**

- Is a tailored pre-recorded writing workshop for students presented by VIC author, Michael Pryor. 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 his books.
- In keeping with the writing program, Michael's books are available for purchase from the Centre.

#### **About VIC Author Michael Pryor**

Michael Pryor has published more than twenty-five fantasy books and over forty short stories, from literary fiction to science fiction to slapstick humour. Michael has been shortlisted six times for the Aurealis Awards, has been nominated for a Ditmar award, and six of his books have been CBCA Notable Books, including three books in the Laws of Magic series. Michael's most recent books include The Chronicles of Krangor series for younger readers, The Laws of Magic series and The Extraordinaires series for older readers, as well as *10 Futures*, a collection of interlinked stories imagining what our next 100 years might be like, and middle grade technothriller *Machine Wars*.

#### **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 after sessions are released.

**Full details on our Website**

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