# inside story

## creative writing for students
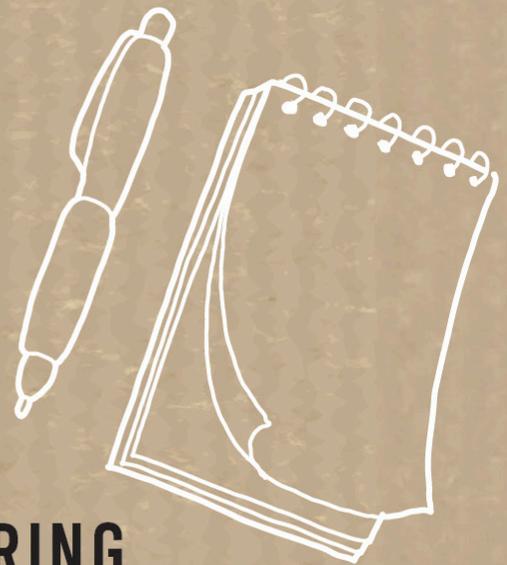
SUE LAWSON & JODI TOERING

## Blurb:

Creative writing.

Where do you start?

Inside story is full of prompts, exercises, tips and tricks to flex your creative muscle and get going.

## Specifications

| | |
|---|---|
| Author: | Sue Lawson and Jodi Toering |
| Designer: | Guy Holt |
| ISBN: | 9781742036670 |
| Extent: | 64pp, self ended |
| Format: | 198 x 129mm |
| Binding: | Fexibound with flaps |
| Genre: | Juvenile Non-fiction |

## Curriculum Links

- ENGLISH
- LITERATURE
- LITERACY

## Australian Curriculum Outcomes
Year 3 to Year 8

# Synopsis

How to plan, draft and write stories for young students and teachers alike, step by creative step.

Inside Story breaks down the key elements needed to tell a story, guiding young writers to make a start, plan, write and edit their story.

# Australian Curriculum Outcomes

| Year 3 | Year 6 |
|---|---|
| ACELA1483 | ACELA1524 |
| ACELA1484 | ACELA1525 |
| ACELT1600 | ACELT1617 |
| ACELT1601 | ACELT1618 |
| ACELT1791 | ACELT1800 |
| ACELY1682 | ACELY1714 |
| ACELY1683 | ACELY1715 |

| Year 4 | Year 7 |
|---|---|
| ACELA1496 | ACELA1764 |
| ACELA1498 | ACELA1537 |
| ACELT1606 | ACELT1623 |
| ACELT1607 | ACELT1625 |
| ACELT1794 | ACELT1805 |
| ACELY1694 | ACELY1725 |
| ACELY1695 | ACELY1726 |

| Year 5 | Year 8 |
|---|---|
| ACELA1511 | ACELA1548 |
| ACELA1512 | ACELT1767 |
| ACELT1611 | ACELA1547 |
| ACELT1612 | ACELT1632 |
| ACELT1798 | ACELT1768 |
| ACELY1704 | ACELY1736 |
| ACELY1705 | |

# About the Authors

## Sue Lawson

www.suelawson.com.au
Sue Lawson writes books for children and young adults. Her books include You Matter – Be Your Own Best Friend, Peregrines in the City, What's The Big Idea? and An Important Message From Mr Beaky.

## Jodi Toering

www.joditoeringauthor.com
An author, artist, performer, teacher and literacy specialist, when Jodi is not on the road facilitating workshops or teaching in schools around the country, she writes picture books for children, most notably Mallee Sky and Night Watch.

# About the Designer

## Guy Holt

www.guyholt.com
Guy Holt is founder of GUY Design Studio and for more than 20 years has been based in Melbourne, Australia. Guy worked in the UK, Germany and Papua New Guinea before moving to Melbourne. Guy has also written and illustrated How Far is Deep Space and From Space to Core.

# Making a Start

## Tools – Page 6

Encourage each student in your class to create a writer's notebook. There is no set formula for success – any type of scrapbook, journal or sketchbook can be used as a writer's notebook, and anything can be added.

Set aside time each week for students to add drawings, pictures, excerpts and vocabulary to their notebook, and use these notebooks when planning a piece or developing ideas.

Writer's notebooks are a great place to practise warm ups and writing exercises, too, as these gems often become the basis for a new story.

You can also develop a whole class writer's notebook to model in, or develop a digital one. The sky is the limit.

## The Problem - Page 7

A narrative needs a problem to hook the reader in. Picture books often have great examples of problems, and they make fantastic mentor texts for any year level, as they are short, accessible and can be utilised easily in a single lesson. (Of course, any text can be unpacked with students, such as class novels, comic books, poetry or ballads.)

Read mentor texts such as Possum Magic by Mem Fox and Julie Vivas, or One Careless Night by Christina Booth, and identify the problem. Encourage students to brainstorm a list of possible problems in a section in their writer's notebooks.

Discuss the problems in students' favourite movies or TV shows. Ask students why they think these shows or movies are so engaging and popular? List and discuss how they could be adapted into fresh story ideas by changing the setting or characters.

Rate possible problems from most engaging to least engaging. Which problems would make great stories, and which problems wouldn't? Why?

## Warm Ups – Page 8

Just as it is important to warm up before playing sport or exercising, it is equally important to warm-up for creative writing. The warm ups in Inside Story build students' confidence and belief in their ability to write creatively. Before every writing session, use the warm ups from Inside Story to prepare students' brains and imaginations for creative writing. Set a timer for 2-5 minutes and allow students to write. Encourage students to share their warm up examples and offer feedback on strengths and areas of focus.

Allow students to create a warm up section in their writer's notebook, to use as a bank of story ideas over time.

# Writing Your Story

## Ideas – Page 15

Set aside time to enable students to revisit their writer's notebooks or journals to glean ideas for a story. Innovate on a familiar story as a class, or support students to take a favourite, well-worn story of their own choice, and modify the characters or the setting to create a new idea.

Use mentor texts such as Beware the Deep Dark Forest by Sue Whiting and Annie White, or When Henry Caught Imaginitis by Nick Bland, to explore the author's ideas and discuss ways in which students can use these stories as a springboard for their own.

## Planning – Page 19

Read a favourite mentor text such as The Stone Lion by Margaret Wild and Ritva Voutila, or revisit a class novel, then summarise the problem, series of events and resolution.

Use a story arc to model a good planning structure and support students to create their own, remembering to include the problem early. (Insert story arc graphic with orientation / problem, series of events, resolution.)

Fold a page in thirds and label each section Problem, Series of Events, Resolution. Encourage students to brainstorm a plan.

## Drafting – Page 21

There is no secret formula or right way to draft a story, except to support students to use their plans, make a start and get their ideas down on the page! Demonstrate how to write from any point of the writing plan. Students might like to start writing from the end, then spiral back to the beginning. Explore and experiment with writing from the end then backfilling the sequence of events.

Encourage students to write their draft on every second line, or double space the draft if working on a computer. This will come in handy later in the editing and revising phase!

## Point of View – Page 23

Unpack mentor texts as a whole class to support students to understand point of view such as My Place by Nadia Wheatly and Donna Rawlins to illustrate First Person, How to Make a Bird by Meg McKinlay and Matt Ottley demonstrating Second Person, or Matthew Flinders, Adventures on Leaky Ships, by Carole Wilkinson and Prue Pittock as an example of third person narration. Discuss.

Support students to practise writing in first, second or third person. Practise the exercises on page 24 to help students decide on their preferred point of view for a particular story.

Encourage students to write on every second line to leave room for refinement and amendments later on.

## Beginnings – Page 25

As a class, explore mentor texts such as Flood by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley, The very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle or the opening pages of Shaun Tan's the Lost Thing.

In writer's notebooks or journals, encourage students to experiment with different story starts such as dialogue between characters, an ultimatum, exciting action or an event, a sound, a time reference, a question, a character description or description of a setting. Remind students the problem and characters need to arrive in their story as soon as possible to orient the reader, and hook them in.

Finish

Start
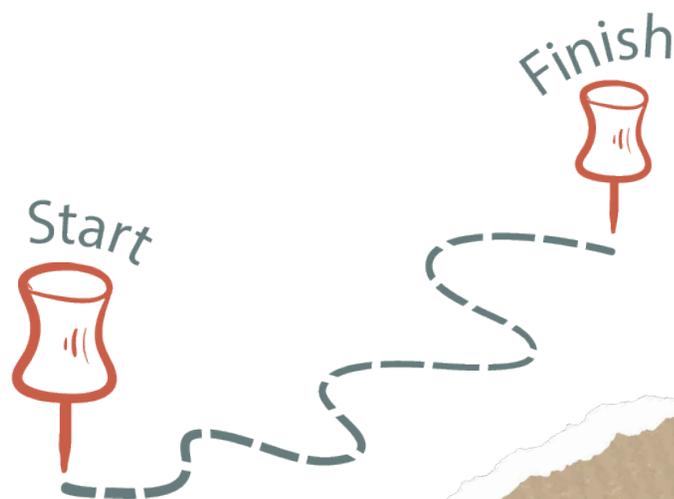
## Characters – Page 28

Brainstorm a list of students' favourite book characters and discuss their personality traits. What makes these characters so strong and memorable? Discuss.

Explore mentor texts such as Pig the Pug by Aaron Blabey or How to Bee by Bren McDibble, and identify how the author has brought the characters to life through their thoughts, words and actions.

Support students to create a character section in their notebooks. Cut out photos or pictures of people or animals and experiment giving these characters interesting names and traits.

Supply a range of images of people or even famous celebrities and encourage students to make up a secret back-story for them to develop a new character. Encourage students to draw interesting characters and develop a profile for each one, including as many details as they can, e.g.: the character's name, age, home, family members, pets, school, secrets, super powers, etc.

## Dialogue - Page 33

Good dialogue brings characters to life, shows characters' personality and feelings, demonstrates relationships between characters, provides information and details related to the problem and adds tension or drama. Look at excerpts of dialogue between characters in familiar class texts and discuss what the dialogue is demonstrating.

Show a short clip from a familiar movie such as Toy Story, and look at the way characters converse. Explore the character's dialogue, not only including what they say, but how they say it, to determine the characters' personalities, feelings and traits.

Encourage students to practise some of the writing exercises from Page 35 of Inside Story in their notebooks to practise bringing their characters to life.

## Settings - Page 36

As a class, explore picture books such as Cicada by Shaun Tan, or novels such as The Bone Sparrow by Zana Fraillon. Identify the ways the authors have brought the settings to life using language and word choice. Describe the settings and explore how each setting relates to the problem and tension within the story.

Encourage students to revisit the character sections in their writers' notebooks, choose an interesting character and create a map for their character's street or town.

# Editing

## Editing and Revising – Page 39

The editing / revising phase involves a lot of reading, refining, then re-reading again! It is often the hardest phase for students to engage in, as often, once they have completed their first draft, they think they are finished. However, the draft is only the beginning!

Ask students to read a piece of writing they have been working on and underline all the boring words such as got, lots, nice, some, went. Replace these words with stronger ones.

Encourage students to re-read their work with a checklist including prompts or questions, e.g.: Will my story engage my reader from the beginning? Have I included a sizzling start? Did I introduce my problem early? Is my story well sequenced? Does it make sense? Are my characters believable? Will the reader care about them? Does my writing make sense? Is the ending satisfying?

## Description and Detail – Page 44

As a class, read mentor texts such as the classic Owl Moon by Jane Yolen. Identify the descriptive words, phrases and imagery used in the story.
Have students read a few sentences of their own writing to a friend who has their eyes closed. Can the listener visualise what is happening, or are they unsure about what is going on? Are there enough details? Encourage students to use this feedback to add more detail, or remove boring and unnecessary details that don't move the story forward.

Ask students to revisit their character section in their writer's notebooks, or look at a character in a piece of writing they are working on. Practise showing how the character is feeling using language and word choice, describing thoughts, dialogue, actions and body language to bring the character to life. Invite students to choose an image such as a storm scene, a city street or the ocean. Ask students to write a paragraph describing the image with details from their senses. What would they see, hear, feel, smell or even taste in this setting?

## Painting Word Pictures – Page 52

Explore mentor texts with the class, such as Iceberg by Claire Saxby and Jess Rackyleft or The Bone Sparrow by Zana Fraillon, and identify how the authors paint pictures in their readers' minds using description, detail and imagery.
Encourage students to create a Figurative Language section in their writer's notebooks. Explore the different aspects of Figurative Language as a class, and identify these in favourite mentor texts.

Unpack simile, metaphor, personification, idiom, onomatopoeia, hyperbole or alliteration as a whole class, then practise using examples of this in groups or pairs.
Create an exemplar for the class to refer back to in the form of a poster, slide show or a flip book.
Borrow words or phrases from authors, then allow students time to practise using the same sentence structures or vocabulary in sentences or paragraphs.

## What Now? – Page 57

After all that hard work practising the craft of writing, encourage students to take a special piece of their choice to the publishing stage.
There are so many ways to publish and present student writing pieces. Allow students to choose a format that suits their purpose and audience. Then, don't forget to celebrate it!

Publishing gives students a purpose for writing. Celebrations motivate and inspire students.

## Publishing ideas:
- Picture books
- Webpages
- Pamphlets
- School Magazine articles
- Blog posts or Vlogs
- Dramatic plays or scripts
- Newsletter pieces
- Stories for the library
- A post for the school Website
- Turn the story into an iMovie
- Create a story-time recording for younger students to listen to in literacy time
- Record the story as a podcast

When publishing student work, be sure to add an author biography, photo, and a blurb, too.

## Publishing Celebration Ideas

- Throw a class publishing party where the students share their work with each other.
- Set aside a time for older students to present their published piece to junior students.
- Set up an exhibition of books in a corridor or school display area. Have peers write reviews for stories and display them.
- Hold a Learning Celebration and invite parents and caregivers to come along to listen to their child's stories.
- Host a book launch, just as real authors do. Invite your principal, local MP or other special guests.
- Invite the local kinder to come and share stories written by students, or visit a kinder or day care centre and allow students to read their stories.
- Display published stories in a shared space in your school so that stories can be read and celebrated.