



INTRODUCTION

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If children are to enjoy, and benefit from, writing it must be a pleasurable task which they really want to undertake. They need a *reason* for putting words together.

On the CREATE disc is a contribution by an 11-year-old from Mornington Peninsula Community School, a school which the visitor cannot fail to notice really belongs to the community (and has a welcoming open fire). Ben's story is typical of the extremely high standard which the school, and the children, expect. During the four or five years since the school opened the children have been involved in *Process Writing*, a term with which Australian teachers will be far more familiar than their British counterparts.

Each day all the children are involved in writing on subjects that *they* believe are worth writing about. It is the *process* of writing which is important. The embryonic text is discussed with the teacher or other children before being edited and improved upon. The process of producing something worthwhile may require several re-draftings but it is not a chore for the children because it is important to them and is something which they wish to perfect. When they are satisfied with their work and ready to make it available to a wider audience it is published in one of a variety of forms. Posters, books for the library, or word-processed copies are the end result and upstairs in the 'reading gallery' children are to be seen reading the published works of their friends.

Skegness County Junior School

The first three contributions were written by Second Year (Grade 4) children of Skegness County Junior School, Lincolnshire, UK, after they had used the MAKE-A-BOX program.

Our Box — Isba Javed

Our box was found in the cellar of an old house. When we had a look in the house Kirsty said it gave her the creeps and then she screamed when a spider landed on her head. I decided to help her when the spider was finally off her head. We went upstairs, we opened one of the doors and saw a spooky bedroom with pictures on one wall. We just happened to have a torch which we had bought from Co-op. We went into the bedroom and Kirsty tripped over some cushions. She fell onto the ground. Suddenly a panel came off the wall. We crawled into the hole. The torch gave us the light we needed. At the end we found a box which was red and on the box was a label that said 'Keep out'. It was very dusty and when I rubbed my finger on the sides of the box there were bright colours such as yellow and blue. The box was shaped like a treasure chest. The key was a hexagonal shape and the handle was shaped like a rectangle. We had to search all over the place to find the key. We found the key in a corner near a spider's web. Then Kirsty said, "The quicker we get out of here the less time we waste." Then we pushed the box out of the hole and put back the panel. "Hurry up, this key's heavy" Kirsty said. We had to carry it downstairs which is very hard. Then we had to push it out into the street and catch a taxi home. No-one saw me because when we got home mum and dad were out. I found a name in the box. It said "Mac Smith". The old box is made from oak wood. I still have the old box.

The Lost Box — Claire Darch

One hot afternoon we were playing on the beach when my spade struck something hard. We dug deeper. We saw a box then we all pulled the box out and we saw a key. Me and Katy shoved Andy down the hole to fetch the key then we ran back to the base. It was behind a waterfall. I went to cross a little bridge and I fell in. Katy tried to help me but she fell in herself. In the end Andy had to fish us out and throw us in the cave. We landed on the hard floor. Andy went to open the box. We shouted "Watch out" but he opened it. When me and Katy looked in we saw a skull. I picked up the skull and found out that it was King Henry's skull. I dropped it and it landed on Katy's head. It fitted her perfectly but it was a bit tight on her. We tried ever so hard to get it off her head but at last we got it off and we fell on the floor and hurt our heads. The box was dirty so we cleaned it. We saw it was made of silver. We went to look at the box properly. It was made of silver metal but the key in it was shiny and it had a pretty pattern on it. The colour was red. We saw that the box had some rusty hinges. "It's a rusty box" I said. "But wait" said Andy, "It's got a

label that says Private." "We'd better take it back" said Katy and I. So we took it back but then disaster struck. Andy saw an alligator. He pointed at it and dropped the box and it plunged into the murky water.

Bunnacula — Beau White

Our box is very special. It's special because it is old, about 200 years old. We found it in the cellars of an old house. It looked as if it was made of gold. I had some X-ray glasses with me and they proved that it was made of solid gold. We got some nicknames. Mine is SuperBeau, Donna's is Dodo, Louise's is Zoolo and Andrew's is Curly. When we were going to open it we were a bit scared. Would it be a ghost or a terrible monster? Louise had found a sheet and was now shivering under it! Andrew and Donna were hugging each other in fright and biting their nails, no wonder they were in trouble. At last I plucked up courage, turned and raised the lid. To my surprise there was nothing in it except a red velvet cushion. Then I had an idea. We took it home dragging Louise in the sheet. We painted it red and put a label on saying 'BUNNICULA sleeps here keep out'. Then we put in BUNNICULA our pet vampire rabbit. The box must have been passed down from father to son for 200 years. The box has some ornate fittings. BUNNICULA is a special kind of rabbit. He comes out at night but he's awake in the day time. We keep our box in an old castle.

Monks Abbey County Primary School

The following pieces were contributed by Fourth Year (Grade 6) children of Monks Abbey County Primary School, Lincoln, UK, after they had been adventuring. They offer their own explanations for some of the features of the land of the adventure.

William Millen explains how Yil, the one-eyed dragon, came to be partially blinded although in his version the poor creature seems to lose both eyes. He cleverly explains that the crookedness of the tower and the blindness of Yil were caused by the same incident.

The Ambitious Dragon

One sunny day in Treasure Land, Yil, the proud son of Yilkon the Great (a very powerful dragon in his time), was packing a few very large oxen into his packing case. Now Yil was very anxious to keep up the reputation his father had bought for him, and to do just this he had promised his family to fly the great trek from Dragon Hill all the way to The Deep. His family very willingly agreed to set up friends all the way across the land to make sure Yil didn't touch the ground. As soon as Yil had finished packing his tea he beat his wings and took off along the great journey. He had no problems across the wide moors but as he drew up to his turning point near Wood-in-the-Mists he completely overshot and went through the mist. The mist hurt his eyes. He closed them and in a minute he was out on the other side. Yil was so pleased with himself (as he was near his target) he didn't notice the straight tower growing in front of him! Suddenly he felt a massive bang and he realised that he'd banged the tower into a crooked shape. He was so surprised that his eyes popped out of his head.

Stuart Diamond and an unidentified author offer two quite different explanations for the crookedness of the tower. In one the tower's shape is caused by magic and in the other it is the builders who are to blame.

Why the Tower Became Crooked

The tower was a peaceful place long ago, until the fighting began. It started in 1878 when Sir James was living there. In the next village there was a man who desperately wanted to reign over all other men and live in the tower. He was next in line to be King and lived in the tower, but Sir James was a young fellow and he knew that he would be dead before James had finished ruling. A plan had to come quickly, a plan to get rid of James and become King. He had a slight problem though, he had to somehow make it look accidental. His mind boggled for days trying to think of the complete plan for getting rid of Sir James. Eventually it came, he had thought of an excellent idea, the most cunning plan ever, a plan which the Hooded Claw would be proud of. He would learn how to hypnotise people. Maybe it would work on Sir James. Little did he know

that a magician knew all that was going to happen. Meanwhile the hypnotism was working and he had left Sir James in a trance for ever. The magician thought to himself and realised a perfect punishment. Seeing he was such a crook and bad to everyone he would make the tower crooked for everyone to see what he did.

How the Tower Became Crooked

About ten years ago every builder in town made outrageous houses. For instance, in Little Boxwick the houses are all different bright colours. Some houses had extensions joined to their outside bedroom windows, not touching the floor! As you can imagine they were very odd indeed because the windows had to be turned into a door to get into the extensions. One builder called Fred, who had big brown eyes and was almost bald, had a great idea. He thought that he, and some of his workmates, could build a very tall tower and paint it pink. It kept falling down, though. In the end they all sat down to rest and talk over what to do about this problem. At last they decided that seeing how it kept leaning over they would build it crooked so they didn't build it pink because it already looked very different.

One of the girls explains that there are many different reasons why the Cave of Secrets may be so-called.

The Cave of Secrets

Long ago, about 1000 years ago, people used to play on the rocks on sandy beaches and in caves. When people came on the beaches they used to bring picnics with them and shelter in the dark caves so they didn't get sand in their food. Pirates used to go in caves on islands to find hidden treasure or something valuable, or maybe to bury dead bodies or leave them hanging from walls to rot. Maybe people used to find things like crystals which are very valuable. Children could bury something which they stole from their parents like jewelry or money. They could find something which isn't worth much like a little rowing boat which belonged to a child who got kidnapped when he or she was playing on the beach. If you went in the Cave of Secrets it might be damp, wet with seaweed all over it. Or it might be nice and clean and shine with crystals and diamonds. I think that's how the Cave of Secrets got its name.

Mount Macedon Primary School

It can be interesting, illuminating and educational for children to think about the sorts of 'treasures' they would keep in a treasure chest. One way of helping them to think more precisely is to add a sense of urgency to the exercise by suggesting that they have to collect their 'treasures' prior to their evacuation. There are many occasions in real life when circumstances cause people to have to leave home with a few belongings. There are other occasions when people lose everything they own. Valuable art collections, family albums and heirlooms vanish for ever and an author's manuscript, perhaps representing years and years of work, may become nothing more than a pile of ashes.

In 1983 widespread bushfires devastated large tracts of Australia. Hundreds, if not thousands, of families were confronted by the nightmare vision of their homes being totally destroyed by the conflagrations.

Mount Macedon, in Victoria, was one community which suffered widespread damage with many buildings being completely annihilated by the Ash Wednesday bushfires. More than half of the 126 children at the 125 year old Mount Macedon Primary School lost their homes. None of them lost family or friends but many pets, toys and personal belongings perished.

Two years later, in 1985, many adults and children were still having a variety of problems stemming from the disaster. In many cases no-one had the opportunity to rescue anything and one who has not experienced the trauma of such a catastrophe can only imagine the misery and grief resulting from losing everything. The following pieces were written by children from the school. They are not accounts of the fire itself but fictional answers to the question, "If you had 60 seconds to leave your home what would you take with?"

The first three were written by Grade 6 (4th Year Junior) children.

Jeremy

It all started when mum came running in at 1 am and said "Get up! Get up. There's a big fire on the Mount." So I jumped out of bed and ran outside to see the blaze. It was sky high and it also looked like a red line. I said to mum, "Can I go and get a few things?" and she said "yes".

So I ran inside and picked up these things;

Photographs, because they're irreplaceable memories and you cannot take them again.

Tape recorder, because it is my favourite toy and it is not insured and was expensive.

Old school books, because again they can't be replaced.

A jumper and blankets to keep me warm.

I ran out with my arms full of things and jumped in the car and drove away.

Fiona

I woke up, the telephone was ringing. I got out of bed and went to the phone. It was my mum. She had just been watching the 10.00 news. She said there were fires about where I lived. I said I would be ready for the fire if it came and hung up. I ran over to the window. Gosh, it was coming up the gully at the back of my house. I had 60 seconds at the most to get out of my house. I ran to the hall cupboard and grabbed my handbag then I ran into my bedroom. I grabbed a suitcase and put some clothes into it, took my jewelry and ran out to the garage, opened the door, shoved all those things on the back seat, grabbed the keys and started the car, backed into the driveway and raced down the main road. I got as far as the trading post and realised I was going into the fire not out so I turned round and drove as fast as I could up the main road to Woodend and then went around the bottom of the Mount onto the Calder Highway then I slowed down and drove to Ascot Vale. That is where my mum lives. I stopped and went into my mum's house. She couldn't believe it. The next day I went back home, or where home was, for all that was left were the brick walls.

Cathy

If I had only 60 seconds to get out I would take:

a woollen jumper

jeans

shoes

my 2 teddy bears

woollen socks

my brothers and sister and my mum and dad

Reasons why:

Woollen jumper, jeans, shoes, woollen sock are to protect me from the fire and keep me warm.

My two teddy bears would be because they are nice and I haven't seen ones like them about for years.

My brothers, sister, my mum and dad because I love them all (maybe not so much my brothers).

I was in bed trying to go to sleep when mum came in to shut my window a little and she noticed a spark outside and when she went to stamp it out it was raining sparks. She called us to get jumpers, jeans, socks and shoes. I had to wake my brother up and it took a while because he sleeps so soundly. When he woke up he got dressed and raced out to the car. We picked up the lady across the road and tried to get out. We ended up in a field for about 3 hours. When we got to Gisborne we went to my mum's cousin's.

The following pieces were written by children from Grades 1 and 2 (1st/2nd Year Infant). They illustrate the blend of worldliness and innocence, self-indulgence and chivalry which is so characteristic of young children.

Lucy

I will get my teddies because I like them. And I will get my cushion because it has nice prints on it. Ken and Mark made it. And I'd take my toothpaste so my teeth don't get rotten.

Kathleen

I would get Thumper my rabbit because I got him for Christmas because he would want me to take him. I would take Lemon Meringue my doll because she is my best doll. My monkey Bongo would come too because he is nice and furry and my organ because once I played it outside my mum's shop and I put out a hat and people gave me money.

Christopher

I would get my truck because if I didn't have it I would be upset as it is my best toy. I would get my toy box with all my toys and BMX bike and crash helmet.

Noah

I would get Humphrey Bear because he is my only monkey. I would get my knight rider car because my brother took my others.

Virginia

I would get my teddy because I got it when I was born. I would get my bike because I like it so much but I would have to take my toad.

Kate

I would take my Barbie because I got her from Santa. I would take my family's clothes because they are important. I would take my books because I like reading.

Kara

I would take my petticoats and my Barbie and my pillow. I would take my petticoats because I sleep with them.

Emma

I would want my bike because I love it and I ride it. I would take my rubber doggy because I love him very much and I take him in the bath. I would take my toy dog and platypus. I like them and they are cute.

Peta

I would take Samantha my big doll because she is my best doll. I would take my bicycle because it is good fun and my Barbie Doll because she is pretty. I would also take some food.

Greg

I would take Fluff my blanket because I got him when I was one and Fluffball my best Teddy and Dino my dinosaur teddy and my bicycle because it's the best bicycle that I have ever had.

Nicholas

I would take with me my Big Foot, a car with levers because it can go up a hill. My Koala, a toy because he is as old as I am. I would take my bicycle because it is fast and my snake because it looks real.

