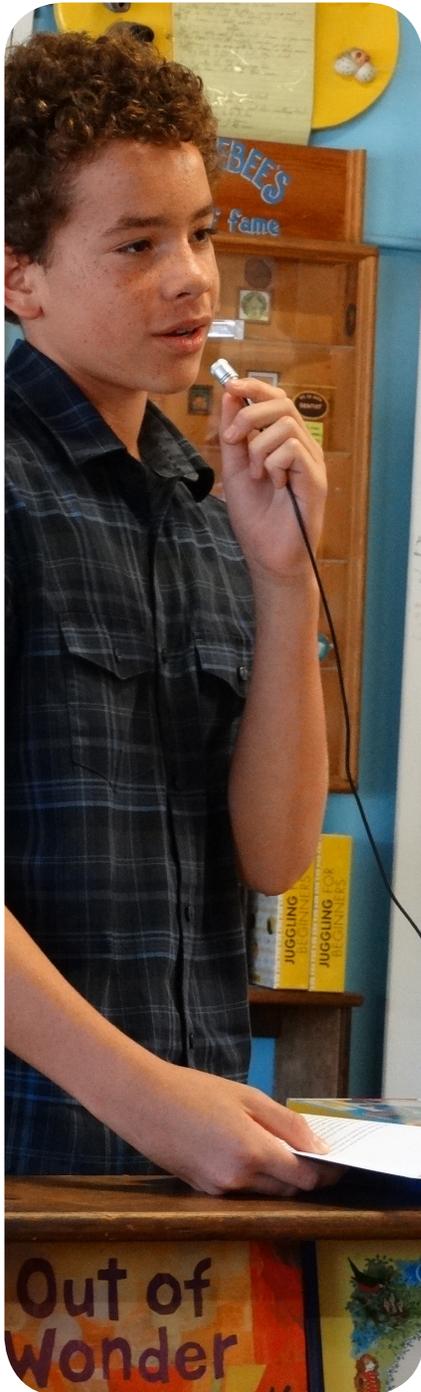




# society of young inklings

How creative writing builds  
master skills that lead to  
academic and overall success.



# Overcome Scarcity and Rigid Thinking with Lateral Thinking Skills

## WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Many writers approach the page feeling as though they don't have any ideas, or at least that they don't have any "good" ideas. When we approach any problem believing that there is a right and a wrong answer, we box ourselves in and create unnecessary friction. Whether we're writing a fantasy novel or an essay, being able to see the project from a variety of angles, and believing that we can access a wealth of ideas makes a huge difference.



## HOW MIGHT CREATIVE WRITING HELP?

Edward DeBono teaches about vertical and lateral thinking. Vertical thinking builds one right answer atop another. Lateral thinking sidesteps and explores alternatives, even if those possibilities are surprising or even improbable. When we think laterally, we shake loose of what we know to explore what we don't yet know. An odd idea may lead to an exciting breakthrough. The point is to shake things up. Creative writing gives writers a playground in which to try a number of possibilities. They discover that more than one answer is workable, and that exploring options beyond the first one that pops to mind leads to interesting, unique results. When writers prove to themselves they are strong lateral thinkers, they take that confidence into every writing task.

# Overcome Lack of Stamina with a Growth Mindset

## WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

One of the biggest challenges for writers is maintaining focus. Focused thinking requires effort, and most of us deal with some amount of “monkey-mind.” One of the loudest, most distracting voices is our inner critic. Whether that critic points out the flaws in our writing, or our frustrating lack of focus, ultimately, writing stamina requires the willingness to fail. When we learn to fail, and more importantly, how to get up and try again, we push past much of the emotional friction at the root of our lack of stamina.



## HOW MIGHT CREATIVE WRITING HELP?

When we write creatively, it's natural to follow our curiosity and explore. We wonder: How might I make this scene more tense? More surprising? More hilarious? This willingness to write something once, and then rework it to add depth, is one painless way to build a growth mindset. When we surprise ourselves with our intriguing capacity, we find ourselves asking: What else might I be capable of achieving? Carol Dweck defines growth mindset as a “belief that our most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work.” When we prove this truth to ourselves through creative writing, the knowledge can't help but transfer to other subjects and tasks.

# Overcome Self-Doubt with a Sense of Confidence

## WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Writing reveals our thinking on the page. Our ideas are out there, for all to see, debate, and judge. Maybe because writing is such an ordinary part of school, of work, of life, we forget how risky it is to put our thoughts down in black and white on a page. Sometimes our words disappoint us—they don't quite express all we mean to say. It's important to remember that writing brings up the self-doubt gremlins and requires vulnerability and courage.



## HOW MIGHT CREATIVE WRITING HELP?

Brene Brown says, "There's nothing more vulnerable than creativity. It's not about winning; it's not about losing. It's about showing up and being seen." Somehow, though, a "what if" question captures the imagination and helps us bypass resistance. Before we know it, we're so enthralled with our idea that we can't help but see it through. We care about our story and we're willing to brave obstacles to figure it out, finish it, and even to share it. While we might never raise our hands and volunteer to practice vulnerability, creative writing provides a playful way to tumble into that experience without quite meaning to do so. Writing creatively gives us plenty of landscape to build strength that we can take back to the other challenges in our lives.