THE WAY

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WRITING WORKSHOP WITH KRISTIN DARELL

The winners of the 2026 Writing Competition from Years 1 to 6 recently participated in a special writing workshop led by author Kristin Darell.

Kristin shared insights into the inspiration behind her stories and the creative process she uses when writing her books. She encouraged students to think deeply about their characters by considering their motivations, wants, needs, fears and weaknesses. Understanding these aspects of a character can help writers develop engaging story problems and meaningful challenges for their characters to overcome.

Students also learned the importance of creating vivid settings by appealing to the senses. Kristin explained how describing what a character can see, hear, feel and smell helps bring a scene to life. She highlighted the value of including emotional responses in writing, noting that a phrase such as “It felt like home” can create a stronger connection with readers than simply saying, “I liked being there.” Careful selection of words can create mood and atmosphere. For example, the smell of freshly baked bread can suggest warmth and welcome, while burnt toast may imply haste or interruption. The presence of mould can evoke feelings of neglect, loneliness or the passage of time.

The students thoroughly enjoyed working with Kristin and enthusiastically applied what they had learned to their own writing. At the conclusion of the workshop, they were challenged to respond to the prompt below, with just 10 minutes to plan and write their piece.

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PROMPT: You are being chased through a forest. You see a cottage. It looks abandoned. You race inside. It is pitch black.

It was stunning, a perfect place to lay low. Dark, brooding, just the way I like it. My skin tingles as a draft of wind sends shivers down my spine. It is a paradise; broken chairs, rotting roof and the head slumped on the floor in the corner. The eyes watch me. They are all hunting me. Do they know where I am? Will they find me? Can I prepare the item before they come for me? My paranoia overwhelms me. I then scream in agony as a slice of sun pierces the window.

The night is over.

The hunt for me is on.
- By Leo V, Year 6

I put my bag on the black creaky floor. I hear crickets, bees, and a big boom outside. I smell dirty old bread hidden in a bright green bowl. I see cobwebs and vines hanging from a palm tree outside. They say "That's strange, I love this house. Wait… someone is in here." My heart skipped a beat. I have a big butterfly fluttering in my tummy. I am scared it's about to burst.
- By Rosalia C, Year 1

Mrs Alex Saville
Gifted and Talented Liaison for the Junior School

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