


Proofs for review. Not to be reproduced.



primary 
eureka

Over Two Decades Of Creative Writing
For Today's Primary School Pupils **4**

Written, compiled and edited by
Diana Tham

 Marshall Cavendish
Editions

Contents

Forewords
Author's Note
About this Book

Wish Upon a Star
Chicken Rice
Friendships
A Sacrifice
Telling the truth
A Prank
Time and Tide Waits for No Man
Saying Goodbye
A Difficult Decision
Owning Up
Doing What's Right
A Fight
A Narrow Escape
An Honest Act
Making a Choice
An Embarrassing Misunderstanding
Regrets
A Celebration
A Brave Deed
A Dilemma

A Dishonest Act
A Mistake
A Heroic Act
Honesty Always Pays
An Unexpected Gift
A Rewarding Moment
A Theft
A Kind Act
A Difficult Decision
Learning a Lesson
Jumping to Conclusions
Where There's a Will, There's a Way
Neighbours
A Success
A Courageous Act
A Surprise
Betrayed
Being Upright
The Secret Place
The 'Win'
A Special Project
Being Responsible

Helpful Notes for Teachers and Parents
About the Author

Author's Note

Lost time is never found again.

– Benjamin Franklin

In my more than twenty years of teaching, I have found myself citing this quote to countless students and my own children. Truly, sometimes I wish there is a pause button in people's timeline, or even better, a 'rewind' button that we can press, to go back into the past.

Unfortunately, there isn't. There is no better time to pick up a book, to show love to one's family and friends, to learn a new recipe, to grasp a pen in one's hand and let the inspiration of knowledge flow from the nib, than *now*.

There is no better time than *now*, to present a new lot of budding writers and thinkers, who have passed through my hands.

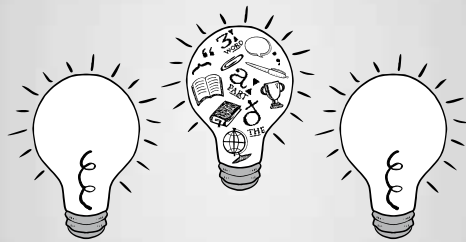
I have said in my previous books that "teaching is in my blood, while writing is in my soul". Mentoring and bringing up a new generation of writers is something that remains dear to my heart. There is nothing that I can teach if there is no one who wants to learn. I cannot fill a cup that's already full. Thank you for reading this book to learn effective writing.

This reminds me of what an ex-teacher of mine once told me – that she could never believe that I could write. But if I had not taken the time to persist in refining the craft of writing, the Eureka series would have never existed. I believe that the time to put your hands to the keyboard and let your creativity appear on screen, or on paper, is *now*.

To those who have a deep desire to turn thoughts into words and musings into reality, the time to start is *now*. To those who have been discouraged by people who never believed that you could write, the time to acquire the skills and fan the flame of passion for good writing is *now*.

It doesn't matter what occupations my students eventually choose to take up. What matters is that they continue to apply whatever knowledge they have learnt from me, and keep the love of reading and writing alive in their hearts and burning long after they have left my classroom.

Read on. Write on.



About this Book

You cannot create experience. You must undergo it.

– Albert Camus

He was right. Of course, Camus had to be right.

Experience is never something one creates. One must undergo experiences in life to have truly lived.

My Primary Eureka series that was released several years ago encapsulated the creative techniques behind developing plots for stories. These new Eureka books, featuring primary and secondary model essays, are to remember the students behind my years of teaching and writing.

I chose to feature my students' model essays and none of my own in these new books as these are meant to be a showcase of those who have studied under me over the years. These are students whom I have seen pass through the naiveties of childhood mischief as they bloomed into budding and blushing teenage writers (those whose essays are featured in the Eureka secondary school book).

While all my Eureka books exist for the reason of propagating good writing techniques crystallised in the form of easy-to-grasp strategies for young budding writers or those who

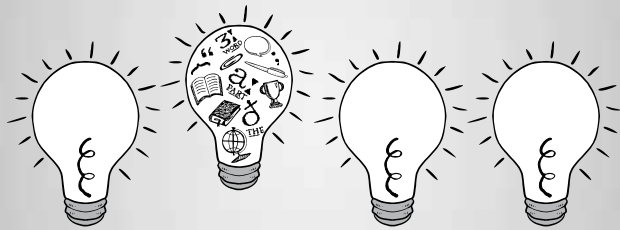
just need that extra push, guidance and tips on how to craft good compositions, these two special books also exist to encourage and honour those who have excelled at the craft of writing, some after hard work and redrafts.

It has always been my hope and prayer that my students will grow to enjoy that special experience of writing that imparts passion in life.

It is my honour and pride to present to you further Eureka compilations of excellent essays penned by generations of writers in both of these primary and secondary school model essay collections.

Camus said in another quote, “Men (and women) must live and create. Live to the point of tears.”

I pray that all students will undergo the experience of writing with cheer and hope, to live and create stories, to the point where they write with excellence and a burning passion.



Before You Start

I am excited to have conceptualised a series of skills that effectively targets areas of weakness in writing that students periodically or for some, regularly encounter.

I call this skill set the **Eureka Writing Techniques™** which is a comprehensive and thorough guide, essential for the serious learner of the English Language to acquire in order to excel in his or her creative/narrative/critical writing assignments. This set of **Eureka Writing Techniques™** is specially designed by me to lead students through a step-by-step writing process and encompasses a plethora of other skills other than those outlined in these books. However, the first and most pivotal step of good writing starts with the weaving of plots which is what this series of books demonstrates in great detail.

The skills necessary in writing narrative picture compositions must be grounded in two aspects:

1. Content/Plot
2. Language

This book will clearly delineate the various skills required in crafting story plots and manipulating language to work for the students when writing narrative essays or short stories.

In the primary school English Language syllabus, the format for continuous writing in accordance with the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) comprises a series of three pictures based on a themed question.

This section provides tips for dealing with the demanding continuous writing component of the English Language paper in the PSLE.

What Do I Do First?

The Continuous Writing component of the PSLE English Language paper comprises a series of three pictures that may not be connected. One, two, or all three of these pictures may be used in no particular order. However, the picture(s) used must be in conjunction with the given theme.

For example, the series of pictures could be:



(A)



(B)



(C)

The student should choose the picture(s) and align it/them to the given theme.

If, for instance, the given theme is Making Friends/A True Friend, the student can choose either one or two pictures to align to the theme and which he can base his composition on.

Suitable pictures for the topic of Making Friends could be Pictures (B) and/or (C). The composition plot could revolve around how friendship is forged when you as a student extend

a warm helping hand to a classmate who is less academically inclined than you and needs some help in revision.

Alternatively, if the theme/topic is about A True Friend, students may decide to use Picture (A) instead, where you caught your best friend being pushed onto the floor and extorted for money by the notorious class bully during recess and you decided to stand up for your friend and defend her before she became seriously injured by the bully. This you did, even though you were afraid of the big-sized classmate known for his vicious and violent nature. However, you proved yourself to be a true friend indeed when you came to your friend's rescue even though he was much bigger and fiercer than the both of you put together.

The student should exercise his/her own discretion and select pictures that he/she can best relate to the theme. This should come through adequate practice on the student's part.

I do not usually advise students to use more than two pictures as this could lead to an excessively convoluted plot. The problem with convoluted plots is that their plots contain too many critical points and important happenings that they would not get sufficient time to fully develop their plot and elaborate on critical points of their compositions.

Most may also get carried away by a lack of time and rush through developing and describing various climactic points of the plot, resulting in a lack of critical links through the composition.

However, the most important thing about selecting pictures is more than merely matching them to the given theme for compositions.

Weaving interesting story plots is a critical skill which students must learn in order to write creative stories, which brings me to my next point:

How do I weave interesting plots?

Plots that are interesting generally follow a proper Plot Development Graph. I have devised my own developmental graphs for plots and hope this section will be a source of enlightenment for students where crafting their own plots are concerned.

Introduction -> Problem -> Complication ->
Climax -> Resolution

STEP 1: INTRODUCTION

Introductions are meant to be engaging and fun, not boring and monotonous.

Typical introductions would be:

“It was a lovely Monday morning.”

OR

“I awoke to the sound of birds chirping merrily outside my window.”

Not that there is anything wrong with these introductions.
Just that they are boring and serve no real purpose.

Introductions can be lively and dramatic. Or tenuous and unexpected.

Something like this:

“The sight that lay before me was shocking.”

OR

“Coffee. I had never liked the smell of coffee. Until something happened one day that changed my sentiments towards this beverage that is often so popular with adults...”

STEP 2: PROBLEM

The problem typically refers to the main conflict happening in the story, like:

- a stolen wallet
- a lost child
- a petty fight that broke out
- a cheating incident
- a fire that broke out, and the list goes on ...

The student will need to identify the problem accurately before he starts writing his composition.

STEP 3: COMPLICATION

Complication entails identifying the REASON behind the PROBLEM stated in the aforementioned step 2.

For example, if the PROBLEM is a lost child, what is the reason behind that?

Is it because the child:

- was distracted by someone dressed up as Santa Claus in a crowded mall and had followed him for candy that she lost her parents?
- did not stay at the place to wait for his parents as they had instructed?
- had been swept away by the milling crowd at the mall while watching a live Chinese New Year lion dance performance?

Students need to be clear about the complication behind the problem for their composition for their story plot to be vivid, logical and organised.

STEP 4: CLIMAX

All English Language teachers would have taught this before at some time or other.

The climax of a story is the highlight of the story and usually features the most exciting part of the story usually comprising the time when:

- the thief is caught
- the robbery is foiled
- the bullies are apprehended
- the truth (behind some guise) is uncovered or discovered

STEP 5: RESOLUTION

The conclusion of a story is what most students struggle with.

Many students lack the creative idea on how they can end their compositions.

There are many creative ways that students can end their compositions, of which a few shall be highlighted in this section.

Some suggestions:

- A. Reflection:** This is the easiest and the one that weaker students should utilise to end their compositions as it is fuss-free and effective.

Example:

Having survived this near-drowning incident unscathed, I have learnt how important and necessary warm-ups are before engaging in vigorous swimming activities or competitions. I am infinitely grateful to Sammy and his friend for sounding the alarm in time and for their heroic act of leaping into the water to keep me afloat after I had passed out.

- B. Quote/proverb:** While effective, this method of ending compositions requires students to read widely so that they can create their own compilation of proverbs, famous sayings and quotes covering a diverse range of topics that they can utilise for various compositions.

A few examples of such topics they may find useful include: friendship, sincerity, honesty, love, forgiveness, happiness and life

Example:

As Jack Lemmon once said, “Failure seldom stops you. What stops you is the fear of failure.” While my fear of failing my parents or failing my examination may be crippling, I know, deep down in my heart, that fear is something that I would have to overcome. It was exhilarating to have overcome my fear of losing the tennis competition, but my success meant more to me simply because I had believed in myself and my ability to win after the devastating failure a few years ago.

- C. Twist:** Students may wish to explore having twists or unexpected endings in their conclusions. However, this is NOT advisable for weaker students who may not have a good grasp of the topic at hand or who are

already having difficulty with aspects of the language such as grammar, vocabulary and syntactical structures.

Example:

In my moment of haste and extreme carelessness, instead of spending my long-awaited week-long vacation watching birds on the panoramic cliffs of Scotland with my parents, I ended up watching birds on the television screen on Discovery channel. While lying miserably on the hospital bed and thinking about my foolish act of attempting the bicycle trick, I had wanted to kick myself hard. Each time, it was only then that I would realise that I could not even kick myself due to my broken ankle. Such are the little ironies of life.

D. Personal insights/perspectives: Students can write about how their personal insights and perspectives regarding a friendship or honesty have changed after the event/incident has occurred in the story.

Example:

As I gazed at my little sister and mused solemnly over the times I had bullied and mocked her cruelly about her academic grades, disconcerting guilt about how she had selflessly defended me from the robber despite my inconsiderate derision of her would blow

like gusts of raging wind into my consciousness. From that day on, I treated Sarah with as much respect and love as an elder brother ever could ...

Whichever method you may choose to end your composition, it would behoove students to know that they should always **reiterate** the main theme given in the question, whether it is an Act of Kindness, An Honest Act, A Frightening Incident or A Memorable Holiday.

It would be ideal if the student could write about what value or lesson he or she has learnt from the incident.

Important Note:

All the essays written in this series of Primary Eureka are based on a theme. The PSLE English Language paper requires students to base their compositions on BOTH a theme and 1, 2 or all 3 pictures provided, depending on the student's choice.

However, because of the innumerable permutations of pictures that may be set, each essay in this series is designed specially to relate to a general spectrum of pictures to capture and allow for the greatest possible permutation of pictures with the essay theme and plot development.

So when students read these model essays, an important consideration and tip is that they should read them in light of the themes allotted and attempt to match plausible pictures to these themes when they are given similar thematic questions at school or for practice.

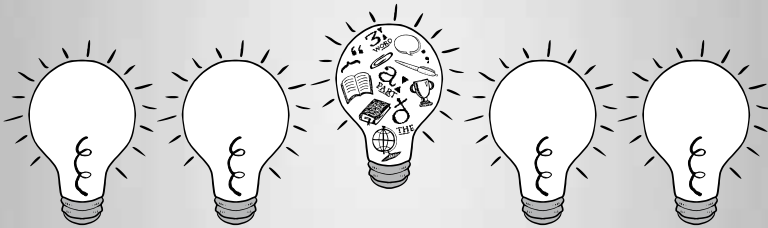
Wish Upon a Star

Gabrielle Tan

Methodist Girls' School

In a faraway place, where no one really went, there was a city called The City of AD. It was a city, where ADults ruled, where babies were considered annoying lumps of flesh and fat waiting to transition into children, which society considered mini-ADults with no other function except as parasites that wasted the time, resources and manpower of ADults in society. There was then a mad rush as scientists saw the great need to invent and develop serum that boosted the powerfully unimaginable growth that transformed crying, irritating babies into silent, brooding, unhappy teenagers in the blink of an eye in mere weeks.

In his bid to get rid of all the mischievous, troublesome and useless children and as the last ruler of The City of AD, President Han vowed to renew and revolutionise the city, and the brutal decision was to start with ensuring all children got injected with the serum that propelled unparalleled growth that would end childhood for all. As the legend goes, when every child turned six months, they were forcibly shuttled to The Hatcheries, where they were injected with the serum that miraculously made all





children alive on planet earth grow up faster. No childhood to speak of. It was an accelerated growth spurt that raced through years and time itself.

The serum was almost akin to a magical potion in its ability to increase the rate of physiological growth at unbelievable speeds. One dose of that transparent liquid and infants grew up and turned into children, then teenagers, and then before you knew it, there were grown-ups sprouting up left and right like weeds! More astoundingly, it not only worked wonderfully on children, but the effects of this serum were also observed to slow down the rate of growth and ceased to have any more spectacular effect once the children turned eighteen.

That meant high growth rate, high life expectancy. The best of both worlds!

The problem was that the serum had to be injected every fortnight in increasing dosages, or else the serum's effectiveness would decrease progressively. Forcing or requiring children to visit a medical facility so often was inconvenient, which was why the idea of housing them at dormitories was raised. This suggestion was readily accepted.

It was a giddy rush to inject the serum into every child from there. At the edge of society and in the most isolated parts of the city stood the towering buildings that were The Hatcheries. They were many metres wide, many stories high, but despite the immense size of The Hatcheries, children who stayed there did not see the light of day until they were

at the equivalent of sixteen years old. Their stay lasted a few months with fortnightly injections that yielded impressively exponential results faster than the normal growth rate that normal children experienced.

The citizens never knew what happened in The Hatcheries. Hushed whispers pervaded the atmosphere. People were sworn to secrecy. Parents sent their children away as infants to The Hatcheries and they returned as adults, expressionless, laden with dazed memories of their childhood – hazy and hard to recall.

Over the years, there had been an increasing number of people amongst the public, consisting of mostly parents, who were strongly against the idea of the serum and refused to send their children to The Hatcheries. Parents spoke out against the government's decision boldly, calling it an issue yet to be addressed and demanding critical change. The more angry parents did so, the more their ideology, words and actions influenced the people of AD, becoming a significant pain in the neck for President Han.

One day, President Han assembled the whole city for an announcement. Mothers and fathers shook with fear and dread, clinging tightly to their babies. Parents bore signs that shouted, "CHILDREN ARE PRECIOUS!" Other ADults stared menacingly at the parents and their kids, muttering.

"Waste of space!" spat one.

"Pesky nuisances!" scowled another.

"Useless creatures!" one ADult growled.



The roars were unanimous. It was clear. There was hardly any place and space for children to grow up normally in a world that hated their very existence.

Suddenly, President Han cleared his throat loudly. He announced, “Good morning. I’ve assembled you all today to give all parents a final warning – if you refuse to hand your child or children over to the official registers of The Hatcheries, you will be punished accordingly. In order to provide this city with a complete renewal of life and to completely eradicate all unwanted elements, trash, scum ... eh-hem ... we need to reach an agreement about these children. Can any of you please tell me, why, why ... WHY in the world, are children so precious? I cannot, for the life of me understand ... look, they consume vast amounts of resources, suck an incredible amount of manpower from us, the juvenile courts, our state police force, educational institutes are a rowdy mess ... they trouble society constantly with their thoughtless shenanigans and imperious attitudes, youthful recklessness and constant misdemeanours, misbehaviour ... enough is enough! Honestly, I think they’re just a waste ...”

“Children are important!” one voice suddenly resounded, causing heads to turn.

A young woman pointed furiously at President Han. Everyone gasped in horror. “Who do you think you are?” President Han raised an eyebrow. “Saying things like that won’t change anything.”

As security guards gripped her by the shoulders, she cried and resisted, “Why do we need to make them grow up? They’re not unimportant! Everyone here’s been a child before, don’t you remember? Why make them grow up before their time, lose their childhoods, where all that remains of their childhood are false, shoddy memories sparked by this poisonous serum? You only experience the joy of childhood once, you know!”

With this, the raging female ADult who was a mother, clinging on to her month-old infant sucking contentedly on his thumb, suddenly closed her eyes and burst out into a tuneless rendition of ‘Somewhere Over the Rainbow’.

Faces of parents gathered in revolt broke into indulgent smiles, their happiness evidently radiant as the sun as they cuddled their children. The faces of Adults who had stood around defensively just moments ago softened, while guards loosened their grip on her.

“Someday I’ll wish upon a star, wake up where the clouds are far behind me. Where trouble melts like lemon drops, away above the chimney tops ... that’s where you’ll find me ...” The triumphant note sounded in the song, unmelodious and unimpressive as when it first started, but ringing with a note of sincerity that shook every human fibre that still remained in a society that had become giddy and drunk with the wretched serum.

Tears streamed down everyone’s cheeks. It was a simple song, yet it contained such deep meaning that it touched everyone’s hearts.

This was childhood. Simple faith. Pure and simple. That was why childhood was precious. It was meant to be ADventurous. Not an ADversity ...

Memories that had been programmed hastily into the memories of the ADults of AD City suddenly melted like cold candle wax before the sun. The people of AD remembered. Effortlessly, ADult inhabitants of AD, who had grown up the natural way, who had unADulterated, unprogrammed memories of childhood, who retained conscious memories that once were, who had once lived wonderful memories of childhood – who still remembered how they used to dream, wished upon a star, and believed that somewhere over the rainbow, light would eventually dawn from the darkness – smiled and slowly sang tuneful songs ...

Because only children wish upon a star.

Chicken Rice

Raeanne Tham

Methodist Girls' School (Primary)

I gawked in horror. What an awful sight!

They were all either roasted or steamed cruelly before ending up on someone's plate. I could almost hear them screaming their lungs out in that cursed crescent-bottomed wok before they ended up atop a heap of rice. Chicken rice, that is.

Glancing around my now empty coop which used to be filled with the whole gang of us: Rooney Rooster, Cocky Connie, Hen-pecked Harry, Hen-rietta and Bird-Brain Bobby ... the list was endless. There was literally no pecking order. I sank down in a discouraged, feathery heap on the floor.

With no other galline to squawk to, I reminisced about how we were all 'cooped up' in small cages. We were foolish then, deserving of every 'pea-brained' insult that came our way, delighted with extra space in the corral with every 'fowl extraction' from the coop which meant more space. We had presumed upon the kindness of our owner, Mr Lim, that he had given us away one by one to those neighbourhood children to keep as pets for a day or two.

But the strange thing was that they never returned.



It ruffled our feathers to hear that they had ended up in the roast. Bones in the pot, fat in the rice, offal in the wok and meat on the plate. As months passed, we grew increasingly suspicious when Mr Lim kept up his ‘fowl extractions’. After our loss of Polly Pullet from the nesting box, we decided to investigate. Six of us took turns watching.

Over time, we discovered (with our birds’ eye view) that our friends were not actually kept as pets, but were cooked for the consumption of humans and their greedy stomachs! It turned out that Mr Lim owned a chicken rice stall at the marketplace and our comrades had been cooked, broiled, braised and served to sate the insatiable appetites of these abominable, hungry humans!

It was not until we discovered rotting, unwanted red combs, wattle and wasted plumage that had been ripped from out of comrades’ carcasses that a massive cathartic outrage ensued in the chicken coops. The mayhem lasted a good, frenzied few nights before we decided to make plans to get back at those disgusting *homo sapiens*. But all our plans came to nothing.

Eventually, due to a severe shortage of manpower and widespread commotion and unrest that ran rampant in our coops that sparked fear in our little chicken hearts, we had to chicken out.

Literally.

After our discovery in Mr Lim’s dingy, death-swathed kitchen, we despised humans with all our chicken hearts. From

then on, gazing at Mr Lim brought infinitely dreary moments of horror and terror. It was a terrifying face: the frown, the snarl, the mean-faced, buck-toothed fearsome glares – the face of doom.

Now that all my fellow gallines have gallantly nourished the bellies of the *homo sapiens*, my heart is filled with fear and longing for my lost buddies. Being the last-surviving member of my clutch-mates, try as I might to duck the fearsome hands that reach out to grab me, I await my doom.

They say, “Don’t put all your eggs in one basket.” Mr Lim surely delights to put all his hens in one broth.

To humans, the aroma of chicken rice is heaven. But to me, chicken rice means death. My fate rolls around tomorrow, I hear.

Atop a plate of chicken rice.