

# THE Elsie Locke Writing Prize 2020



for narrative writing by students in years 7 and 8

Since 2009, thousands of students have participated in the Elsie Locke Writing Prize. Support your students to take part, too. The prize commemorates Elsie Locke's life, both as a writer and as a person who was concerned about peace, the environment, and the community. The winner receives \$250, together with a certificate, and their story is published in the *School Journal*.

## TOPIC FOR 2020: Life as a new New Zealander

Write a fictional short story about someone who has newly arrived in New Zealand. This person could be in your class, your friend, a parent or another relative – or it could be you. Imagine an event, big or small, that your character is responding to. It could be a party invite, a game of football, a Skype call with a friend or family member in another country, or even a virus lockdown. How does your character respond? Don't forget to consider their feelings more generally. For example, are they anxious? Homesick? Lonely? Excited about living in a new country? Or maybe it's a mix?

This topic links to the following level 4 achievement objectives.

**English:** Select, develop, and communicate ideas on a range of topics; Use a range of language features appropriately, showing an increasing understanding of their effects. **Social Sciences:** Understand that events have causes and effects; Understand how people participate individually and collectively in response to community challenges.

Relevant *School Journal* and School Journal Story Library content:

"Home" by Kate Paris (SJSL, L3 2018); "Chinese New Zealanders" by Helene Wong (SJ, L4 November 2019); "New New Zealanders" by Adrienne Jansen (SJ, L3 November 2017); "My Name Is Rez" by Toby Morris (SJ, L3 November 2017); "Thumbprints" by Serie Barford (SJ, L3 May 2017); "Fly Me Up" (SJ, L3 November 2018); "Ramadan Is Coming" by Marita Vandenberg (SJ, L2 August 2013); "The Polish Refugee Children" (SJ, L2 November 2016); "Mossie" (SJ, L2 November 2016).

## JUDGING

The judges will look for the following:

- an original and thoughtful response to the topic
- a sense of time, place, and character
- an understanding of the event described and its importance to the main character
- the ability to engage the reader
- clarity, coherence, and an effective use of language.

To read winning stories from previous years, see "War Games" (4.3.09); "The Half-crown" (4.3.10); "Too Close to the Wind" (L4 October 2011); "Past, Present, and Future" (L4 October 2012); "Close to the Edge" (L4 November 2014); "Mr Archibald" (L4 October 2015); "Mirror Image" (L4 November 2016); "The Moa" (L4 November 2017); and "Save Our Sheep" (L4 November 2018). These stories can also be read on the Elsie Locke website: [elsielocketrust.org.nz](http://elsielocketrust.org.nz)

## COMPETITION RULES

The competition is open to students in years 7 and 8. Entries should be around 500–600 words. All work must be the writer's own, and a condition of entry is that the winner's story will be published in the *School Journal* under Crown copyright. Entries need to arrive by 10 July and should be sent to:

Susan Paris  
Lift Education  
PO Box 11 309  
Wellington 6142

Entries can also be emailed to: [elsielocke@lifteducation.com](mailto:elsielocke@lifteducation.com)

The winner will be announced on 10 August on the Elsie Locke website (see address above) and Lift Education's website: [www.lifteducation.com/elsie-locke-writing-prize-2020](http://www.lifteducation.com/elsie-locke-writing-prize-2020)  
Schools will also be notified if a student was in the top ten.

Please photocopy the form below and **staple it to each entry**. If your student is entering by email, please make sure the following information is included:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Year level: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

# Teaching suggestions

## READING

### **Build understanding of the context and themes**

Use related *School Journal* and School Journal Story Library content to generate a discussion about what it's like to live in a new country. The texts mentioned below will help students understand the many day-to-day challenges and conflicting feelings new New Zealanders commonly experience.

Provide guiding questions that help students connect with and understand how people adjust to their new lives. It might be helpful to record, compare, and analyse these ideas in charts or graphic organisers.

- How different is life in New Zealand compared with the places they've left? What do they enjoy or value about their new lives? What do they miss about their homeland? How do they adapt? ("Home", "My Name Is Rez", "New New Zealanders", "The Polish Refugee Children", "Ramadan Is Coming")
- How easy or hard is it fitting into a new school and community? How do the actions of others help or make belonging difficult? ("New New Zealanders", "Home", "My Name Is Rez", "Chinese New Zealanders")
- How do people maintain their own cultural practices? What experiences are new and how are they dealt with or approached? What aspects of New Zealand society (or events) help to bridge cultural experiences? ("Mossie", "The Polish Refugee Children", "Ramadan Is Coming", "Fly Me Up")
- What particular difficulties do people face as they adjust to life in New Zealand? Did they experience bullying or racism? How did they respond to these challenges and the assumptions people make about them? In what ways do new New Zealanders struggle with the weather, the food, the culture, the education system, and life at school? ("Thumbprints", "Chinese New Zealanders", "My Name Is Rez", "Home")
- What qualities help new New Zealanders adapt to life in a new country? ("Fly Me Up", "Home", "New New Zealanders", "My Name Is Rez", "Thumbprints", "The Polish Refugee Children")

## WRITING

### **Develop ideas**

Use the notes made as a class or use the students' own notes to brainstorm possible scenarios they could use in their stories. Have students select one of these ideas to develop on their own.

Explore a range of short fiction from the *School Journal* that's about a protagonist dealing with change or facing a personal challenge in their living situation, friendships, school life, or home life. Some good examples of stories with this theme include "Bok Choy" by Paul Mason (L3 May 2015), "Kia Māia" by Andre Ngapō (L3 May 2020), "How to Fall" by Whiti Hereaka (L4 May 2017), "The Musician" by Sarah Penwarden (L4 May 2020), and "Benny" by Bernard Beckett (L4 October 2015).

With the students, analyse how different writers use plot, setting, characterisation, and language, noting how they:

- hook the reader in
- convey a sense of time and place
- convey characters' thoughts, observations, and feelings
- create tension, especially through the use of dialogue
- show rather than tell the reader
- resolve the conflict or problem.

### **Creating text**

When students have chosen a scenario, have them think about the problems their characters face and how they deal with them.

- Model a character description. Refer to the characters in the texts already discussed to explore how writers have portrayed them.
- Identify the qualities the characters share that help them deal with unfamiliar events and situations.
- Have the students discuss the content of their story with a partner and how they will hook the reader in, portray their characters, and introduce and resolve conflict.
- Have the students develop an outline of their plot. It may help to share these outlines with a peer and to take in feedback before drafting their story.