



# NewsWeb Crawler

Our Education, Our Voice Issue



## BRIDGING THE GAP FOR ASPIRING ACADEMICS

By Karina Tang, P5, St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School,  
Lulette Ng, P5, St. Paul's Convent School

The gap between primary and secondary education is well-known to be wide. The requirement to write essays proves to be particularly daunting to some. Essay writing nevertheless is an essential skill for aspiring academics. So what do students and MissyMissy think about essay writing?

The requirement to write essays at secondary school is often seen as one of the reasons why students find the transition to secondary education challenging. To smoothen this transition, there is a growing trend to start teaching essay writing at an earlier stage.

To help smoothen out this transition, Spiderweb Learning held a short course on IELTS Academic Writing in August. Most of the students are still primary school students, so the course offered them a first glimpse of academic writing.

So, what do students think about essay writing?

"I found essay writing quite challenging.

When writing essays, there are some strict rules, including the one discouraging the use of the first person. It is hard not to use the first person in writing. Ware biased at times, but neutrality is important in writing essays.

Academic writing involves a totally different writing style from that used

in writing fiction. There is a whole new set of vocabulary to pick up, together with a range of new sentence structures.

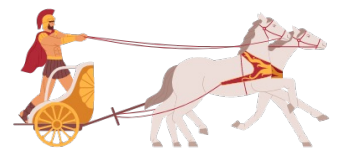
Even though essays are hard to write, learning how to write essays is a fascinating process. We get to learn how not to be biased and how to look deeper into the events unfolding around us."

Lulette, P5, SPCS

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# ACADEMIC

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“When I think of essays, the requirement for a new set of vocabulary immediately comes to mind. In MissyMissy’s IELTS writing class, I struggled with the vocabulary needed to excel.

Formal writing is also new to me, and I haven't yet mastered the skill to make my writing more formal.

Though it is challenging, I enjoy staying informed about current affairs and expressing my opinions through essays.”

Karina, P.5, SPCC

Essay writing is indeed challenging, mainly because it is a genre that is completely different from creative writing. Creative writing is just that – using your creative imagination to write. Essay writing is more about critical thinking. Before coming up with a viewpoint on an issue, one is supposed to have done research on, understood, analysed and evaluated the topic before coming up with an opinion. So, saying that a fairy godmother has turned a pumpkin into a carriage is not going to work. You need to find out how that is possible, why it is done and how it is done. If it cannot be explained and supported by facts, then “poof” goes that pumpkin carriage from your essay.

In order to come up with an opinion that you can validate with facts and examples, you will need topical knowledge first. So, reading widely is a prerequisite to successful essay writing. In the process of reading about different topics, students need to pick up topical knowledge, topical vocabulary and other academic vocabulary, as well as some commonly used sentence structures in academic writing.

Introducing students to a broad range of non-fiction passages is important but selection of such passages requires careful planning. Non-fiction books intended for a younger readership are likely to be written in less formal language which is not an

appropriate writing style for academic writing. These books however are useful in getting students to start reading on new topics and are hence good starters’ materials. Non-fiction pieces written for a more mature audience should be introduced once the student has become interested in the topic so that they can pick up the required academic vocabulary and writing style.

Bridging the gap might seem like a Herculean task, but once children reach a certain cognitive development stage, they will become naturally inquisitive about the world around them. This process, challenging though it may be, will then become a fascinating and inspiring journey.

## Questions for MissyMissy:

*How do we use new words in essays when we do not understand their meaning even after looking it up in a dictionary?*

Interesting question. I think I will answer that with a question first. What makes you think that the meaning of a word can be fully defined in one single dictionary entry? A lot of academic words are open to different

Interpretations and include a lot of complex theories behind them. If one question only leads to another (a bit like what I just did up there...lol), seeks more answers and more questions. Then, maybe your essay will become even more elaborate?

*What should we practice to improve our essay-writing skills?*

If you are thinking about formal writing style, remember the little game we did in our IELTS course?

Think of something funny and mundane, like “I just pooped and I feel good.” Now, think about how you can make it sound formal. “After excretion, my digestive organs are now rid of toxins and that offers me a refreshing sensation.”



# Roaming with the Romans

## Zoom Session with the Reading Museum

By Athena Penelope Leung ,Y5, Po Leung Kuk Choi Kai Yau School



Level 2 students are reading a book about Roman Britain and we were honoured to have the Reading Museum host a workshop on Roman Britain for the students on 1<sup>st</sup> October.

The Roman Britain workshop was taught by staff of the Reading Museum. At the beginning, students learned about how the Celts and the Romans dressed differently and lived in houses of vastly different architectural style.

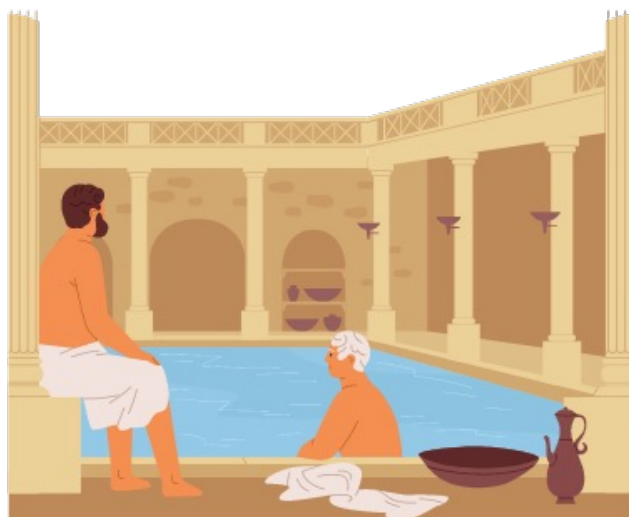
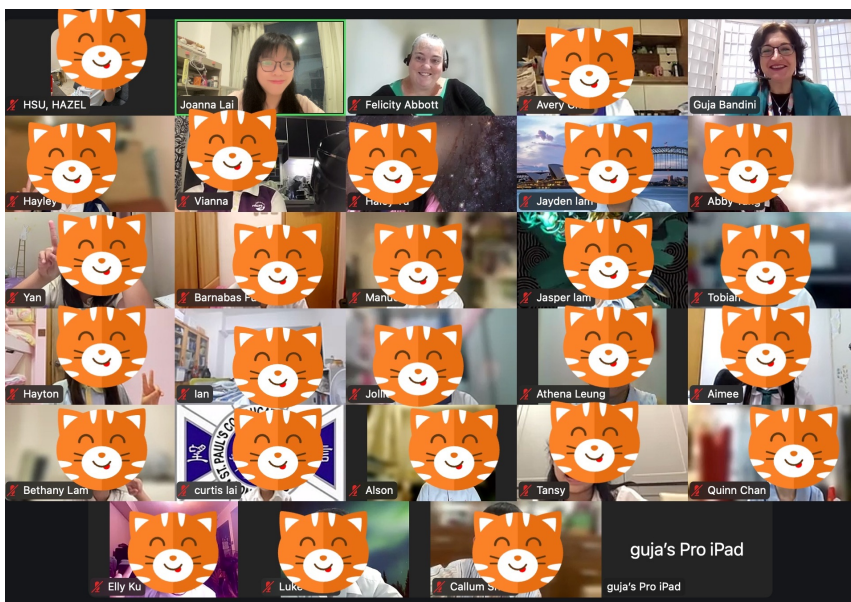
Then, the students also got to watch a video filmed by the Museum. The video showed the ruins of a Roman city called Calleva Atrebatum, which is located in Silchester. Calleva Atrebatum was an impressive Roman province built with a

comprehensive range of infrastructure such as roads, an amphitheatre, city hall, etc.

The workshop was packed with fascinating information about Roman Britain. Students did a matching exercise to learn about

how the same modern apparatus may have looked different in Roman times.

Students found the session both inspiring and fun, and would love to have more workshops hosted by the Reading Museum.





# Darwin's Daring Adventure

## Meeting Lindsay Galvin Online

By Josie Chan, G6, Christian Alliance International School



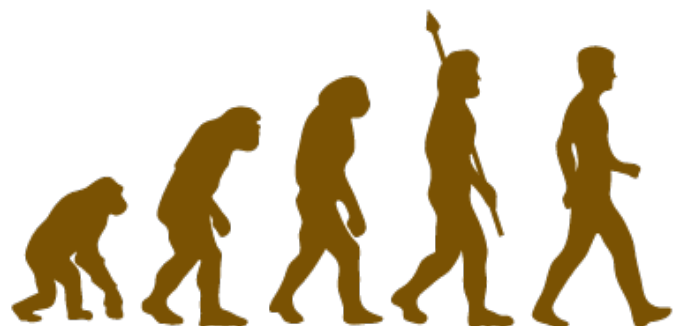
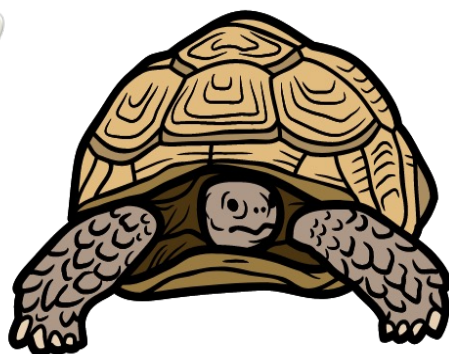
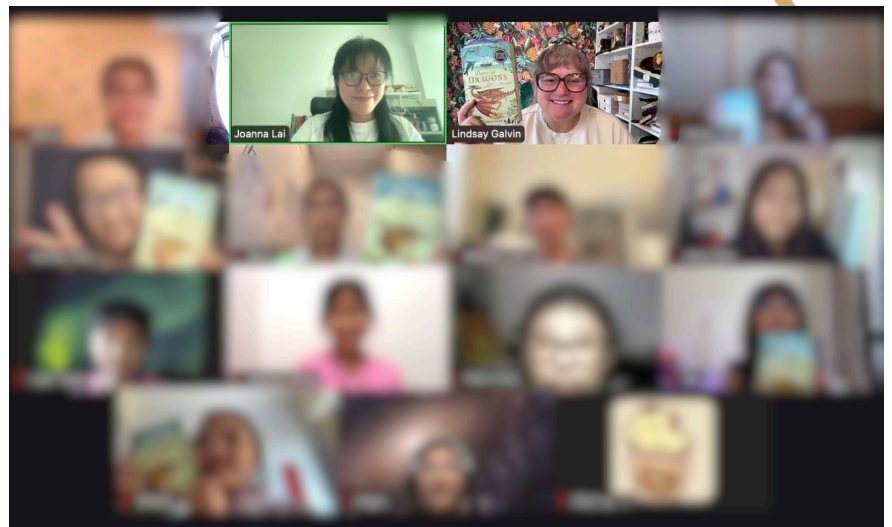
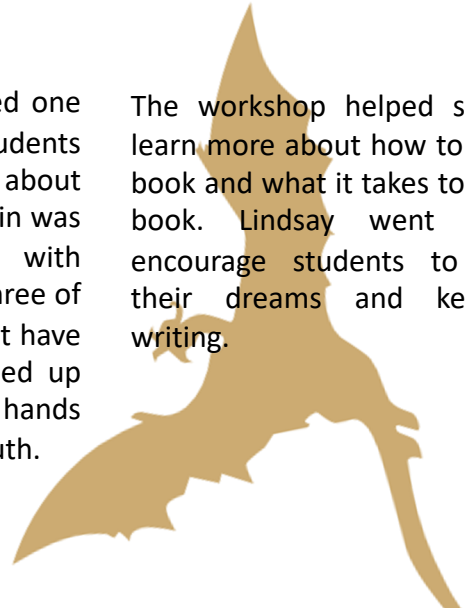
This semester, the theme of Spiderweb Learning's L3 course is Evolution and Inheritance. So, we have been reading *Darwin's Dragons* by Lindsay Galvin. In September, our L3 students got the chance to meet Lindsay on Zoom.

Lindsay Galvin is a best-selling author of children's novels from the UK. Her books are often based on historical events and feature mythical creatures.

During the Zoom meeting, she told the students that it took her a number of visits to different museums to research for *Darwin's Dragons*, which was published in 2020. Her fascination with dragons inspired her to come up with the story.

The session was a fun-filled one with Lindsay telling the students hilarious anecdotes about Darwin's childhood. Darwin was said to be fascinated with beetles. He once caught three of them in one go. He did not have a jar on hand, so he ended up holding one in each of his hands and another one in his mouth.

The workshop helped students learn more about how to write a book and what it takes to write a book. Lindsay went on to encourage students to follow their dreams and keep on writing.





# Non-Fiction Writing Competition

## Is P.E. being included in school assessment a positive change?

By Lulette Ng, P.5, St. Paul's Convent School

Recently, the EDB proposed to adjust the weight of different subjects in primary school assessment. Students were invited to write a balanced argument essay on the proposed changes.

Subjects	Current Weight	Proposed Weight
English, Chinese and Maths	9 points each (total: 27 points)	8 points each (total: 24 points)
Physical Education		2 points
General Studies	6 points	
Science & Humanities		4 points each (total: 8 points)
Visual Arts	3 points	2 points
Music	2 points	2 points

EDB's proposed changes in subject weight for primary school assessment has received mixed reviews among students, parents and educators. According to the proposal, Physical Education will account for 2 points in the assessment while the points for Chinese, English and Maths will all be reduced from 9 to 8 points each. The current General Studies will be split into Science and Humanities with each of them accounting for 4 points in the assessment. The weight of Visual Arts will be reduced from 3 to 2 points.



Some stakeholders welcome the addition of Physical Education in the subject mix as it promotes a more active lifestyle whilst offering a chance for athletic students to get a better score. It is vital that different talents are given due recognition in the education system through the inclusion of a broader spectrum of subjects for assessment.

Others however do not view the proposed changes favourably, arguing that the inclusion of P.E. will be unfair to those students who are physically unfit. The inclusion of P.E. for assessment may also make parents feel pressurised into organizing extra sports lessons for their children whose schedule is already rather tight.

On the whole, the inclusion of P.E. for assessment purpose is a welcome change that offers students a more balanced school life. Our society needs people with different talents and the inclusion of P.E. in the assessment process is very much attuned to the multifaceted talent requirements of the society. It is thus a change in the right direction.







# On Seasons & Life

By MissyMissy

Recently, MissyMissy's haiku submission to a Haiku journal published in the UK has been accepted again. So, a haiku writing competition was held for our students with a contributor's edition of the journal as a prize.

Before we look at the winning entry from our student, here is MissyMissy's poem which is a collection of Haiku comparing the seasons to life.



Are these heaven's tears?  
Touched by the birth of us all...  
It's rainy springtime.

絹かしら  
万物を包む  
春雨だ

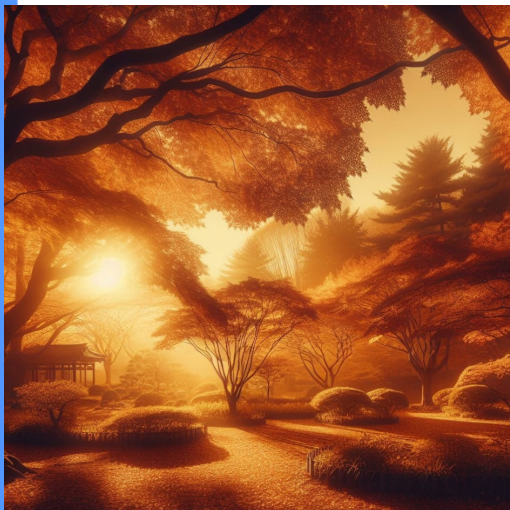
Spiderweb Learning  
by Missy Missy



Are fairies on flight?  
Coming to dazzle us all...  
It's fireflies' night

キラキラや  
煌めく蛍  
夜を灯す

Spiderweb Learning  
by Missy Missy



Is the whole world charred?  
All burnt out just like us all...  
It's golden autumn.

亜麻色や  
木々も一色  
枯れにけり

Spiderweb Learning  
by Missy Missy



Is this heaven's breath?  
Fluffy flakes to chill us all...  
It's snow angels' day.

羽かしら  
ゆらゆら 降りる  
粉雪だ

Spiderweb Learning  
by Missy Missy







# The Sisters of The Seasons

By Lulette Ng, P5, St. Paul's Convent School

Flowers in the field  
The river moving slowly  
Madam Spring has passed by

Thunder is roaring  
The sweat is unbearable  
Summer's been set free

The breeze is perfect  
Not too hot, and not too cold  
Autumn is calling

Miss Winter has come  
Her frosty stare is so cold  
A snow covered world

All the seasons gone  
Each season always fruitful  
They are a true gift



# A Message from MissyMissy



I have been teaching IELTS preparation lessons for at least 10 years now, but it was 3 years ago that I first sat for the exam. I got an overall score of 8.5 at that time. I did not do any preparation for it and went straight in for the exam.

Seeing that IELTS exam results are only valid for 2 years and I love taking exams, I took it again in late August. This time I took the UKVI Academic Module Test.

I did not prepare for it either this time. I got an 8.5 again.

I took the Reading Test again as an OSR test. The score has remained the same.

The photo on the test report form is a real issue for me as my face looks as rounded as a pizza there. So, I will lose some weight first and then retake the exam. I am aiming for a straight 9 result.

Right, time to go on diet and hit the gym!

Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking	Overall Band Score
9.0 C2	8.5 C2	8.5 C2	8.5 C2	8.5

## Meet The Editorial Team

### Editorial Board

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### *Editorial Committee:*

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Josie Chan (G6, Christian Alliance International School)

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Lulette Ng (P5, St. Paul's Convent School)

