



**A MAZE OF STORY IS
CURRENTLY SEEKING
ADDITIONAL CLASSROOM
VOLUNTEERS TO HELP US
TAKE OUR PROGRAM TO
MORE SCHOOLS ACROSS
PERTH.**

**PLEASE CONSIDER
VOLUNTEERING YOUR TIME
TO HELP US**

Welcome to A Maze of Story (AM^oS)

What does AM^oS do?

An **AM^oS** team goes into a selected school and runs in-classroom creative writing workshops with children. The principal and/or teachers of the school select which children are to take part in each workshop. The children we ask for are not those who have already been identified as talented writers or smart, they are the children who are struggling, or who don't stand out in class, or who are never selected for anything. These are the children we believe are most likely to benefit from an experience such as is offered by participating in an **AM^oS** workshop.

AM^oS makes a particular effort to attract children from Indigenous and non-English speaking backgrounds because some of these children have significantly lower literacy rates than average, and as a result are less likely to have opportunities to be involved in quality arts programs.

Children from minority backgrounds often find that their historical and cultural stories are not told in the school system. This can lead to disengagement and self-exclusion from available learning opportunities. **AM^oS** aims to be as inclusive as possible, and we value equally contributions from every cultural group.

The *premise* behind AMoS

AM^oS is based on the idea that engaging otherwise disengaged or disenfranchised children in a creative endeavour such as an **AM^oS** workshop will have many benefits. We believe it will:

- develop their use of expressive language
- expand their capacity to think creatively
- improve their ability to communicate their thoughts and feelings
- increase enthusiasm for writing
- boost confidence
- allow them to find their own voice
- foster their empathy for others, and
- contribute to improved life opportunities.

About the *workshops*

Each workshop is lead by a story-weaver, but centres on children working in pairs with a volunteer tutor, who encourages and helps them to write the stories they want to tell. These might be short stories in prose, poems, comic strips, reviews, scripts or newspaper articles.

At the end of each workshop, every child will have produced a tangible piece of work that will be published in some way. Currently each workshop results in an anthology of stories, which **AM^oS** then publishes in book form. The children each get a copy of their book, and a copy is lodged in their school library. In the future, we will be considering other forms of publication.

As a growing organisation, we have a great need for enthusiastic volunteers to help us in many different ways.

We ask that you consider how you might best be able to assist us to deliver our program to schools across Perth, whether that is by becoming a **classroom volunteer** (whether as a story-weaver or as a tutor), helping us with **fundraising activities, liaising with schools, or managing volunteers**. There are many ways in which you could help.

*The more **volunteers** we have, the more children we will be able to reach with our highly **successful** program*

Classroom volunteers

To be a volunteer you do not need any special qualifications – just the following three attributes:

1. An interest in developing children's love of writing,
2. A willingness to commit to a weekly time slot over the duration of the five week program, and
3. A desire to see magic happen!

All classroom volunteers will need to attend a short training program.

You will also need to apply for a Working With Children (WWC) check. If you do not already have a valid clearance, the fee for this will be subsidised by A Maze of Story, so please register as a tutor before you apply for the WWC check.

Two types of classroom volunteer are needed: Story-weavers and Tutors.

Story-weavers

A Story-weaver leads each workshop. As the name suggests, the story-weaver is instrumental in the story-weaving process. They spark the children's imaginations and provide them with the skills and tools they will need in order to weave their own stories, through activities and writing exercises.

Additional requirements to be an effective Story-weaver include the ability to:

- relate to a small group of children,
- fire their imaginations, and
- direct them in their creative endeavours.

The Story-weaver will also be required to liaise with the school, direct the volunteers and deal with any issues that may arise during the workshop.

Tutors

It is the six tutors in each workshop that enable us to provide a level of attention that even the very best teachers cannot provide in the classroom. This focussed attention makes **AM^oS** especially effective, and sets us apart from other creative writing programs.

As a volunteer tutor, your principal role will be to encourage the children you work with to write their stories, by helping them to attain an imaginative state of mind from which a story can be created. Your job will be to praise them for interesting ideas, offer prompts when they are stuck, and to be a sounding board for their thoughts.

You will be passing on your own enthusiasm for reading and telling stories, and showing children that what they think and write is valued. There may be times where you are asked for your assistance with grammar or spelling, but this is a minor part of your role.

You will never have to make up the curriculum or decide what to tutor. You will never be left on your own with the children.

Additional *information*

It is also very important to **AM^oS** that you feel your time is well spent. Once we have become established, we plan to periodically offer professional learning opportunities for our volunteers, such as a class on storytelling by a professional storyteller, or on behaviour management by an experienced educator or psychologist. Attendance at these events will be entirely voluntary. We intend such classes to be part of our commitment to making sure you benefit from your time at **AM^oS**.

We will ask for classroom volunteers' feedback at the end of every workshop, but we want to hear from them along the way too. Your input will help us make our workshops better.

***Other opportunities* for volunteering**

As **AM^oS** grows and develops we will need other volunteers to assist us.

We would be delighted to receive help in a number of areas, such as administration, liaising with schools, recruiting and managing a team of volunteers, assisting with fundraising activities, and many other tasks. Please call us if you are able to assist.

Please consider volunteering with AMoS.