

Top Secret Kids Writing Camp

- Top Secret Kids' Writing Camp is a pre-teen program that fosters and encourages participants to write anything from poetry, to novels, to scripts to pop-up books using lots of digital strategies including [Storybird](#) for print and digital books and poems, along with [Microsoft Movie Maker](#) and [Lego Movie Maker App](#) for digitally animated stories.
- This program is run by one programmer who brings writing experience, physical resources, and lots of technology – including iPads to the camp.
- The Writing Camp is a regularly scheduled program which meets one evening a week.
- Students learn techniques in script writing, formatting different types of scripts such as puppet scripts, and theatre scripts. In future, we plan to study how to do radio scripts.
- Once students have completed a series of projects, the library puts on a family night. The students invite friends and family to a performance based on the work they have done.

Storybird <https://storybird.com/>

Storybird is a tool for self-publishing in a digital environment, that provides images and a template for writing stories, an open repository of peer-written, leveled reading resources, and print and publication functionality. It is a freemium product with an option for Educator accounts with a dashboard which allows for the creation of a private environment for a small class where you can; create assignments, interact with participants and have them interact with one another, create linkages between classes in a secure environment, and choose to publish to the general website.

- Using Storybird gives the students the opportunity to use professional artwork, and publish their stories in print.
- For new students, an assignment is issued in order to teach them how to use Storybird and to jumpstart their first experience.
- Students who have used Storybird before are allowed to select whatever artwork they wish and work upon whatever creation they want.
- Once a student publishes a piece that he or she is satisfied with, we order a pdf copy and print it for them.

Note: Guidelines; a) no gobbledygook writing. Though humorous, this was defeating the purpose of learning to write strong stories with a beginning, middle and ending. a) All characters must have names in order to prevent confusion.

Digitally Animated Stories

Using Microsoft Movie Maker, which is free to download, and Corel Painter, a purchased product.

- Students draw line pictures of a story they want to tell.
- The images are scanned and stored as a jpg.
- The students use Painter to colour the images.
- We upload them in to Microsoft Movie Maker to tell a story using text frames.

LEGO Stop Motion Animation is a new addition to Top Secret Kids' Writing Camp. This part of the program requires LEGO and the LEGO Movie Maker App.

- Download the free LEGO Movie Maker App onto I pads.
- Set out Lego and have the students build scenes to stories they want to show.
- Take images of the scenarios to create a movie.
- This allows students to experiment with storytelling using simple filming techniques.

Print

When we aren't using technology we are using paper!

- We use cardstock and images to create simple pop-up picture books.
- We make our own idea books out of recycled book covers, blank paper and fabric. Idea books are used to keep character names, ideas and info about stories the students are working on.