



# INSPIRING YOUNG WRITERS

MAYABEE ARANNYA

In an effort to get the creative juices flowing and spark an interest in writing in students of English medium schools across Dhaka city, The Daily Star (TDS) and United International University (UIU) have initiated the project, "Imagine - Write Creatively" and its latest workshop was held at Maple Leaf International School, Dhanmondi, on November 7, 2015.

With over a total of 300 participants in two sessions, Shiwa Forkan, freelance trainer, representing TDS; and Sharmin Sultana, Assistant Professor and Coordinator, English Language Institute, UIU, conducted the workshop.

They started things off with fun games to break the ice and create an environment where the students would be comfortable in sharing their ideas.

The prime focus of the workshop was fiction and discussed three main features that make up any good story: unique characters, an intriguing setting, and an interesting plot.

The first step was characterisation. Five key elements need to be considered before creating any character: the way they act, talk, think, feel, and look. To view characterisation from a different perspective, the students were shown pictures of different people and asked what they thought the character's personality could be like and how the people around the character perceived him/her.

The students were then asked to choose

and describe a character from an issue of SHOUT, and their peers would have to guess the character from their description. Some of the young minds were creative enough to have chosen a pair of feet as their character.

Next came the setting. They were shown



pictures of different places and asked to think of a story that could occur at the locations. Surprisingly, the younger students of class five came up with more fascinating ideas than their seniors, with one of them thinking of murder while looking at a picture of a classroom.

The workshop was so enjoyable that students were gushing about how much fun they were having. Sakia Mazid, a fifth

grader, said, "I didn't think learning could be this fun. I wish we did things like this in class!"

The students were then asked to write down five sentences to describe a place but instead of giving away the name of the place, they had to call it "Coffee pot." This

that. Very interesting topics came out of this, with one of them imagining a cop falling into a drain while chasing a thief, all from touching body lotion.

At the end of the workshop, the students were given chits with characters, settings, and plots written down and asked to create stories which they could later on send to SHOUT.

The workshop received excellent feedback from all of the teachers present. Parvin Sattar, English language teacher of class five, shared, "In class, whenever the students are asked to write sentences on their own, they get confused. I believe this workshop has given them the courage to start thinking for themselves and write things on their own."

When asked about how this workshop differed from the rest, Shiwa Forkan replied, "Every school surprises me and this was definitely different since the first session had all girls and the stories had a nice feminine touch to them."

By the end, the students were buzzing with inspiration. Saqia Muhammad Talukder, a sixth grader, said, "This has inspired me to go home and write a story of my own!" Her classmate, Maisha Sadia Ahmed, added, "Maybe we will send our stories to SHOUT. I would love it if they got published."

*Mayabee Arannya is a confused soul still searching for a purpose. Give her advice on life at [facebook.com/mayabee.arannya](https://www.facebook.com/mayabee.arannya)*



PHOTOS: DARSHAN CHAKMA

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Spring 2016

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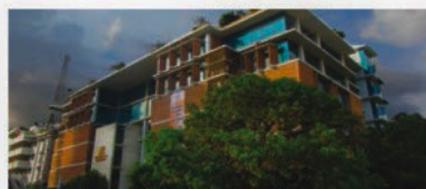
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