



CREATIVE INFLUENCE: Cairns State High School students with author AJ (Amanda) Betts.

Author reveals how inspiration can come from many sources

By Poppy Mackenzie, Year 8, Cairns State High School

AWARD-WINNING author AJ (Amanda) Betts visited Cairns State High School on May 19 and shared her knowledge of creative writing with 30 lucky Year 7, 8 and 9 students.

I was privileged to be among this select few.

Over the day we learnt many skills that we will use to improve our creative writing throughout the years.

Amanda taught us lots of new tips and tricks over the day that will aid us in becoming better writers.

We were taught about how ideas can be inspired by random things, like a picture or a muffin, and how they can also come from real-life events or problems.

Together, we brainstormed topics to write about and we wrote and shared our stories on the topic afterwards.

Amanda also told us to consider that in new places in books, there are new sounds

and smells. She talked about her novels and the stories behind them, especially her novel *Zac and Mia*, and we even received a peek into her new books to be published in 2018.

The day was one of the best days of my life.

Amanda was extremely kind and intelligent and she was a pleasure to talk to.

I learnt the inspiration for stories comes from anywhere; a tree, a stuffed animal or an interesting person.

I also learnt that to write a story, sounds and smells help with describing new encounters with people and places.

I'm so grateful for my teacher-librarian and AJ Betts for organising this workshop and I know we would all have her back any day.

Now that I've got all this information, it is time to write a book!