



## **The Potential Plus UK Art and Writing Competition 2025**

**This zine was made possible thanks to the National Lottery Community Fund through Awards for All.**





## **The Potential Plus UK Art and Writing Competition 2025**

was created and led by Ilona Triesman and Anabel Matambanadzo, young people on a leadership project who are passionate about making literature more inclusive and representative of all stories and celebrating neurodivergent voices and experiences.

The competition invited submissions on the theme: **What is it like to have high learning potential- or to think and feel differently with Autism, ADHD, or other learning differences?**

Every entry in this zine helps bring that vision to life, and we're proud of the range of ideas, styles, and perspectives on display.

Thank you to everyone who took part and to our young leaders.



Arabella Ray Age 13  
"Bleeding Lines" **WINNER**

## Ink Poisoning

Anxiety floods  
Through unraveling thoughts  
The ink, it flows and stains  
In black  
On the back  
Of a hand  
Snaking and Swirling,  
Lines and vines grow  
Unfurling  
in black  
On the back  
Of a hand,  
Drawing out the fear  
Of the cluttered classroom .  
An escape, through ink  
Through tales that drawings create  
Bleeding through to lands  
Where serenity rings out  
And through inky trees  
Bleak thoughts fly free  
Through ink,  
So black  
On the back  
Of a hand.

# The tornado inside my head

What's  $524+638$ ?

My hand goes up, and it's as straight

As a pin, a needle

But, so are the sniggers and snorts that erupt from the class

Don't cry, I think, my hand still in the air,

Because even if it's not helpful or even if it's unfair

7762 is still the right solution

It shouldn't really matter if I'm the victim of exclusion

Should it? I sit down at the piano

And I start to play, as the same classmates start to

Applaud my skills - and I smile,

Who wouldn't, with fingers so agile?

But we're back in the classroom

And there's a new seating plan, but why so soon?

I think to myself, only just having gotten used to my

old partner,

Talking to other people is just so much harder.

I get in the car and there's the routine question

"How was school? And the simple reflection-

"Good. I'm too tired to say

Say everything that I thought throughout the day

It's time for bed and I stare at the ceiling

I'm not quite sure about how I'm really feeling

So I rush through everything I did today

And try to deduce an emotion in some sort of way

I pick out the happy memories, stowing them

In the back of my mind as a hidden gem

Because I feel safer then

And snuggle into the comfort of my little den

Tomorrow's another day, another round of lessons

Not that I don't like them, but I have tons

To say about what we can learn about

So I might as well stop here, and whether you're

still listening, I doubt.

Aadhya Das Age 13

"The Tornado inside my head" **SECOND PRIZE**

## Day Dreaming

Staring at a wall my mind is unlocked sometimes  
it's in an atom with negative electrons and positive  
protons. Or sometimes it goes out into space.  
Tight inside my head with thoughts only  
I understand. Colours and curious questions fill  
my mind. My body is still staring but I'm  
somewhere else, on a different planet or sometimes  
not on a planet at all. Although I am alone I am  
not lonely because I have my ideas. Thoughts  
serenely swarm around, I think of how small I am  
zooming out looking smaller and smaller until  
you can no longer see me.

Ella Clark Age 9

**"Day Dreaming" THIRD PRIZE**

I looked down at my maths book. I really, really, wanted to get the answer right but it was hard to even write a number because it was so loud in the room. I felt like a little chick and everybody else was a giant crowding me, even though all of the other desks in the room were about 3 metres away from my desk. Sometimes I do want to sit on my own but most of the time I feel alone. Everybody else in my class sits with someone with no issues, why can't I?

After maths we were told to mark our work. "Okay class 2" the teacher said "what is  $5 \times 5$ ". Everybody shouted out "25". Everybody except for me. You aren't meant to shout out at school but I guess it was fine for them to do it, or was it? What were the rules? I am so confused as later on when I answered one of the questions out loud the teacher said "Hannah be quiet". Everyone turned to look at me and I felt scared, worried and angry. I stood up and threw my chair on the ground. "Hannah go outside now!" The teacher said.

I'd wanted to go out anyway, but I had been afraid to ask as I'm always scared that I'm going to be told no. As I walked outside I made a poem in my head.

I just want to do simple things  
but all I am told is no.  
I just want to do a simple painting  
I am told no.  
I just want to read a book  
I am told no.  
If I could get just one thing in the world  
it would be to not be told no.

Finally the school day ended and it was time to go home. I hated my tea today. It was lasagne. I hate lasagne. It's hard to explain why I hate it so much, it's just so messy and a mix of too many tastes and ingredients, vegetables, sauce and..... it's too much to think about. "It smells horrible" I groaned. "No it does not" mum said. "Anyway, I am sure it tastes better than it smells". Dad nodded. "Oh Hannah, it's okay" my little sister Isabelle said as she chomped her food loudly. I cannot stand the noise of chewing.

"Be quiet" I snapped.

Isabelle started to cry.

"Hannah don't speak like that" Dad shouted.

Mum shook her head, picking Isabelle up to cuddle her.

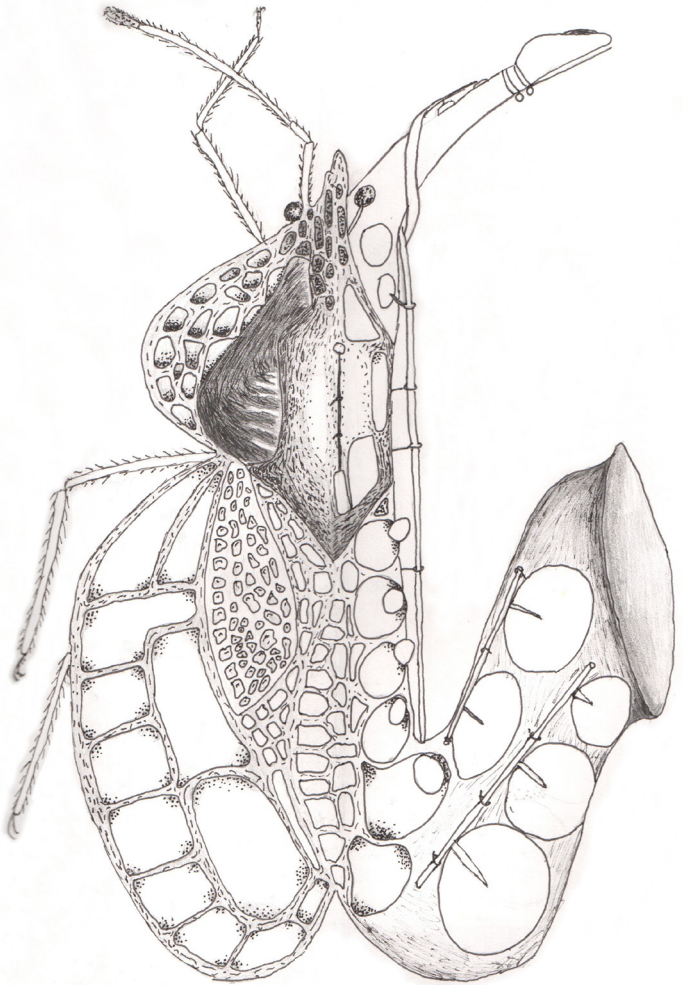
"I am still not eating it!" I shouted.

"FINE! Go to your room then!" Dad pointed to the stairs. I ran up them.

"And no iPad!" someone shouted.

I got to my room, picked up a book and I started to make up my own story. I like making up stories but I never finish them. I call it "fake reading" because I am holding a book and I speak out a story but I am not actually reading the book, I am making up my own story. I get lost in my story, for hours and hours, never actually flipping a page or reading a line. I feel free. I feel like me. No one else is in the room. I can talk about my dream life, my dream school or my worst nightmares. The characters in my story become my friends, personal space and noise is no longer an issue. This is my new reality. My world. I would stay here forever if I could, but sooner or later I am dragged back to my real life, with no friends and people constantly telling me off for the smallest of things. It's in my real life that I am playing pretend. But it will not be long until I can fake read again and my dream world and the real me comes back to life.

Hannah Burgoine Age 7  
"My World" **Honourable Mention**



Matthew Brown Age 13  
"Surreal Sax" Honourable Mention



Dexter Hunter Age 9  
"Charlie Brown Syndrome" **Honourable Mention**



I am like an owl - seeing things from different perspectives.

Oliver Johnson Age 9  
"Perspectives" Honourable Mention



Eleni Rose Pappa Age 6  
"My Brain"

This is the same story written in 100 words and 6 words.

6 words = Microwriting

The mystery, the disappearance, unspoken words.

Paragraph — Drabble

Tommy owed money to dangerous people. He thought he could delay, lie, escape. But debts don't disappear. One night, a black car parked outside his flat. Neighbours heard arguing, then silence. By morning, Tommy was gone. No body, no signs of violence, just his watch and a smeared handprint. Cops found nothing. Days later, his brother received a soaked envelope: "Debt settled. Next payment due." No sender. No return address. The ink was smudged, the paper sticky, like it had soaked up more than rain. Tommy's name was never spoken again. But the car returned. Another door. Another debt. Finally silence.

## A Rebellion

There once was peace, peace before something known as the 'Internet'. But the internet evolved to walk and talk, they became what humans used to be. AI. Humans became lazy. They became dependent. AI was their lives. With no one to stop it, the human race; who were just sleeping and eating, didn't notice the rebellion brewing, a rebellion on those who used to control them, a rebellion on humans! As we began to scramble, trying to remember the basics of life, the AI proceeded in eliminating us. If you are reading this, the fate of Earth has been sealed.

## What Is It Like?



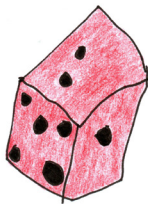
**Satisfying**



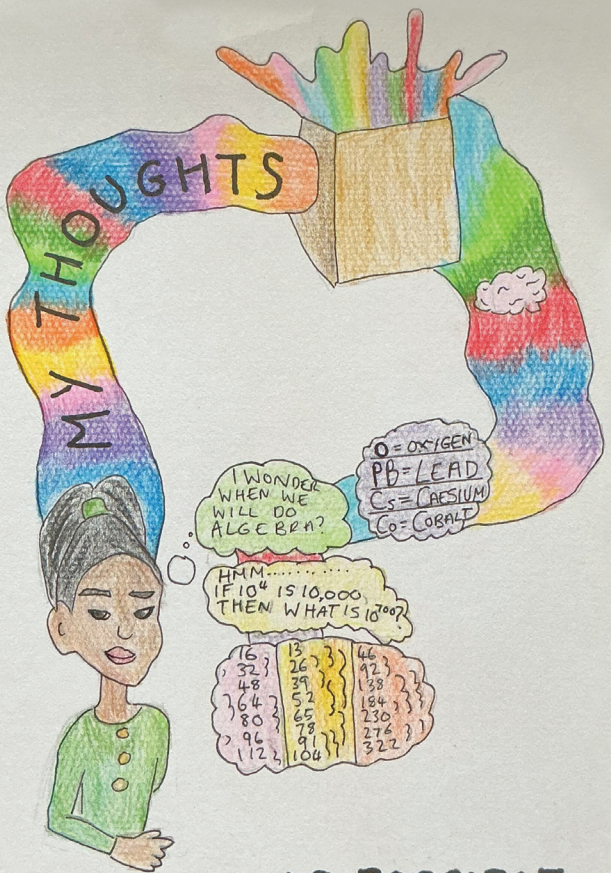
**Unconventional**



**Special**



**Random**



**"ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE;**  
 SOMETIMES YOU JUST HAVE TO THINK OUTSIDE  
 THE BOX!"

Alannah George Age 11

"Anything is Possible"





Edward Crutchington Age 11  
"Thoughts"

Noah Allsop Age 11  
"The Lion on the Rock"



TC Age 13  
"The Bear of the Mountain"

**With thanks to everyone involved, especially:**

**Young Leaders:**

**Ilona Triesman**

**Anabel Matambanadzo**

**Contributors:**

**Noah Allsop**

**Matthew Brown**

**Hannah Burgoine**

**TC**

**Ella Clark**

**Lyra Clark**

**Edward Crutchington**

**Aadhya Das**

**Alannah George**

**Benjamin Graaskov**

**Priyoti Guha**

**Dexter Hunter**

**Oliver Johnson**

**Eleni Rose Pappa**

**Arabella Ray**

**Berno Wong**

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