



THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS  
AN AVERAGE *teenage* LIFE.

Teacher Resources  
to accompany the collection  
of student work from  
**Sydney Story** FACTORY

# What is *State of Mind*

The aim of the project was to build a collection of the many different voices of teenagers in 2016. The Sydney Story Factory worked with students from a range of backgrounds and life experience. Most students who were involved in the project completed two workshops in which they wrote short and extended pieces of prose and poetry. These pieces were both reflective and outward looking, students explored both who they were and how they perceived and interacted with the world around them. In the following pages you will find outlines of activities completed in the original workshops and suggestions for ways students might engage with the State of Mind collection.

*From Sheila Pham's introduction:*

"Over the course of a year, we made it as far north as Casino and as far west as Bourke. State of Mind is Sydney Story Factory's biggest project to date. Involving 35 schools and more than 750 high school students, it captures a broad range of teenage experience and explores the creative possibilities of true stories.

It was a real privilege for us to glimpse the worlds of so many teenagers. We often started the workshops with the 'I Am' exercise, which was always a winner for both poets and non-poets. Some of the most moving examples were from those still mastering English, yet able to express themselves so eloquently with the vocabulary they had at hand.

We met young people from all walks of life ranging from First Australians to those who had just arrived in the months prior. While some came from families that had lived in the same place for generations, others yearned for the comfort and security of a permanent home because they had spent many of their formative years living in a refugee camp. Given what's been happening in Australia and the world at large, stories about war and displacement were particularly moving. But no less potent were homegrown, heartfelt stories featuring all manner of tribulations and triumphs. It was always a pleasure to also hear about aspirations to venture forth and see the world, which we heard wherever we went."



## Part One: What we did

In this section you will find a selection of the activities completed by students as part of the State of Mind workshops.

### I AM poem

25 - 40min

**Aim:** Students will complete a short poem comprised of short answers to ten prompts.

#### Guide for completing an I Am poem

Each response will be no longer than a one line in length.

Leave a blank line between each response.

Encourage students to focus on the particular details that will make their responses unique. For example, 'Bells Beach on an Easter morning' would be a better answer than 'The beach' to prompt one.

When the questions are complete, add 'I am' to all the blank spaces.

***\*Don't reveal this to students until after they have completed the prompts.\****

A place you like to be...

Something you like to do...

A piece of clothing you like to wear...

A smell that reminds you of something good...

Something you like to eat...

A noise that resonates for you

Something that makes you angry... (all students begin this line with the words...) "The rage when..."

A kind of light...

A shadow...

The three most important things in the world...

**Resources included in this booklet: I Am template**



# STATE of MIND POEM

NAME: .....