



Writing

Below are three writing activities for you to do this week. Make sure you write at least a page for each piece.

This week is all about: A story!

My mate Martin

by Gordon Lamont

Not everyone has a real live alien for a friend. Yes, that's what I said, and I mean someone from outer space. His name's Martin. Actually, that's not really his name. The closest I can get to his real name is Marahatrararatin (MAR AHAT TRA RAR ATIN), so you can see why I shorten his name to Martin.

Martin looks just like you or me, except for a secret that only I know: if you pull one of the hairs in the middle of his head, both his ears pop out on long stalks like lolly sticks. Then they go round and round very slowly in opposite directions. Martin uses this trick to find things, passing spaceships, a lost pen and most of all, chocolate éclairs. Martin loves chocolate éclairs. The only trouble is that he doesn't eat them, he just stares at them for about ten minutes, then smells them, then throws them away. Martin's weird but he says everyone on his home planet does that to chocolate éclairs. When I asked him why, he said, 'I don't know why, its just what you do.'

I should explain that I'm the only one who knows about Martin being an alien. Everyone else thinks he's just an ordinary boy who does funny things with chocolate éclairs and has a strange taste in sweets. Did I mention that the sweets he loves to actually eat are not sweets at all -- they're uncooked Brussels sprouts. Now that is weird.

Martin is a good friend, but one day, walking home from school, I got a bit fed up with him being so . . . so different.

'Martin', I said, 'Why can't you be a bit more normal? Why do you have to have ears than spin round on lolly sticks, why do you eat Brussels sprouts instead of sweets and why do you insist on throwing away perfectly good chocolate éclairs?'

Martin didn't say anything, instead he did his ear trick. Out popped the lolly sticks and round went the ears. He seemed to be searching for something. Then he grabbed hold of me and led me over to some bushes. I was just wondering what was going on when I saw it -- his spaceship. In seconds we were inside and on our way.

It must have been a very clever spaceship because in what seemed no time at all we were landing. When I looked out of the window, I saw lots of Martins - all with their ears spinning away. They seemed very pleased to see my friend and he quickly introduced me.

'This is my earth friend, Mahinda', he said.

'Hello Mabbinda', said Martin's friends.

'It's Mahinda', I said, but they couldn't seem to say it right. They stood looking at me. They were waiting for something but I didn't know what.

Eventually Martin said, 'I'm sorry everyone, Mahinda's ears don't have any sticks so he can't greet you properly.' Everyone seemed amazed at this and I heard them saying things like 'How strange', and 'I can't believe it'.

One of Martin's friends offered me a chocolate éclair and of course I was delighted to eat it. There were gasps of amazement and it seemed that no one knew where to look. Finally someone offered me a Brussels sprout. I looked at it in my hand. I knew what I had to do. I couldn't throw it away. They expected me to eat it. I took a deep breath. I opened my mouth wide. I closed my eyes and . . .

A hand grabbed my arm. It was Martin.

'It's all right, my friend', he said. 'You don't have to eat it. You eat sweets, we eat Brussels sprouts. We're different in some ways and in other ways we're the same. We don't have to pretend to like the same things and do things in the same way. When we were on earth you said to me, "Why can't you be a bit more normal?", but here I *am* "normal".'

'I'm sorry, Martin', I said. 'Sorry I got fed up with you being different. I like you just the way you are.'

Then I had an idea that I thought would really please him. It took me a couple of goes to get it right, but in the end I said, 'Forget that I said, "I'm sorry, Martin", what I really meant was, I'm sorry . . .' and here I took a deep breath, 'Marahatrararatin (MAR AHAT TRA RAR ATIN)'.

My friend smiled -- and that seems to be the same wherever you come from.

Activity 1

Read the story, what do you think about it? Who are the characters? Summarise the story in your book:

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Sentence starters:

This story is about...

The main part of this story is...

The moral of the story is...

Activity 2:

How do you think Martin felt when Mahinda said 'why can't you be more normal?' Imagine you are Martin the alien and you write a letter to Mahinda telling him how you feel.

To Mahinda,

I thought I would write a letter to tell you how I feel. I was a little upset when you asked why can't I be more normal? I can't be what I'm not. I like being me and I have fun. Most of all, I enjoy being your friend because you talk to me and you play with me. Most people think I'm a strange and I'm fine with that because everyone is different. You're different, I'm different, the postman down the road is different, our teacher is different. This is what makes us all exciting. We all have different talents, we look different, we walk differently, we have different families and we eat different food.

I hope you enjoyed coming to meet my people. I think it made you realise that you are also different to my people.

Thank you for being kind to me and understanding me, like I do to you.

Martin

Activity 3:

Imagine you had an alien for a friend. What is their name? What would they look like? What special talents do they have?

- Draw a picture of your alien
- Write a description of your alien. Include: name, what they look like, personality, talents, where they live

