

‘As Time Goes By’ 2021

Month	New topic for ‘long termers’ who may have written Alternative topic		Alternative, repeated (R) topic, recommended for newer class members	
Holiday Break	December homework	‘One Moment, This Year’ “Looking back on 2020, what single moment stands out for you? Whether it be loss, love, discovery or disappointment, share your unforgettable moment.”	January Homework /February topic	‘A Love Letter to Travel’ The brief: "Write a love letter to travel about one place in the world that is special to you. It can be a popular tourist destination, or a place that’s largely overlooked. You might inspire someone else to go there one day, or to reconsider their assumptions, or to spark their inquisitiveness about a new piece of the world — all the empowering things that travel brings to our lives.
February 22	Present either of the above or both!	‘One Moment, This Year’ (see above) ‘A Love Letter to Travel’ (see above)	‘Grandparents’ (R)	Describe your relationship with a grandparent using one fond memory. Draw on your senses to recall specific details and reflect on the impact he or she made on your life. It may be the time Gran nearly set the kitchen on fire with the Christmas pudding, or the time your 92-years old Grandpa rode the Octopus with you at Luna Park. It could be a story about your grandmother’s heritage and how she came to Australia. Your story could be about the era your grandfather represents, and the role he played in your upbringing or a special ritual you shared.
March 22	‘Too Hard Basket’	Write about a time when you faced a dilemma which might have to be put into your ‘too hard basket’. Unravel what happened, whether it was a ‘problem solved’, was resolved over time or perhaps remains in your too hard basket today.	‘New in Town’ (R)	‘Have you ever been the new person in town? Or did someone else's arrival have a profound impact on you? Share your story in 500 words.
April 26	‘A memoir which has meant something to me’	Head for your bookshelf, the library or an online bookstore to retrieve a memoir which has meant something to you. When did it enter your life? How did it then, or does it now, relate to your life story? What might have been Louisa Deasey’s key sentence for the book? What universal truth/s does it relate to. <i>Download Bev’s framework for responding to the memoir.</i>	‘Someone who shaped me’ (R) Anzac Day (R)	How did you become who you are? Think about someone who has influenced your life and start writing. ‘Perhaps Anzac Day triggered, or often triggers, particular memories for you, or reminds you of a story you heard as a child. Share this story in 500 words’ or ‘Looking back over your lifetime, write about your memories of Anzac Day and its place in the cultural rituals of your family and the communities in which you have lived, moving from the personal to the political if you wish.’

May 24	'Curved Ball'	'Write about a time in your life when you felt that you were thrown a curved ball. The 'curved ball' may, for example, have been a health/other biological issue, an issue in pursuing your career or business, and more. What happened? What did it mean to you at the time? What does it mean to you now, reflecting back over your life?	'The Year that Made Me' (R)	(A topic drawn from an ABC programs which sets this task when interviewing actual or future Australian living treasures.) Write about a year which made a particular difference in your life's journey. Over to you!
June 28	'A Childhood Memory'	'A Childhood Memory' Some childhood memories stay with us despite the passage of time. Some of these memories involve something which happened which inspired and built on our imagination. Share a story taking us back to one of your earliest memories.	'My Other Life' (R)	Are you a collector of model trains, a swing dance enthusiast or a weekend activist? Share a story about something unusual you get up to outside of work, or a side of yourself that other people don't normally see... Tell us about your unusual passion and how you first got involved in it. How does your 'other self' contrast with the side most people see? What satisfaction does your other life offer you that you don't get from your day-to-day life? How does your passion contribute to you as a whole person?
July 26	'Cringe'	Your eyes squint, your cheeks burn red, your teeth grate. Share a personal cringe-worthy tale of woe that you can't quite forget!	Ideas Piggy Bank (R)	(1) Create/Draw upon an 'Ideas Piggy Bank' in a shoe box containing objects and artefacts that enliven your memories, through scent and feel. Maps, menus, theatre programs, an old report card, vials of perfume, a garment, treasured photographs, a souvenir, an expired passport can sometimes trigger a work rich with detail. (2) Select two items from the piggy bank as creative prompts – what do they mean to you? What were you doing, why; what were you thinking at the time this object related to your life? (250 words for each object)
August 23	'Crash!'	It could be a car crash, it could in fact be any other crash. Write about a crash, from the sudden moment of impact to its impact on your life in 500 words.	'Stock and Land' (R)	Tell us about a significant memory involving farming, agriculture or rural life. You must include mention of at least one animal or crop and one piece of farm equipment. If you haven't lived on a farm, you might like to write about a long-remembered visit to or experience of a farm or agriculture, something referencing rural life, ideally set in the north east. It could even be about memories of a visit to an agricultural show or about backyard chooks in urban settings. Write about something you haven't written about before which you'd like to share with your family and others

September 27	'If only I'd...'	Even though we are advised not to 'if only'... we often do! Write about an 'if only' moment in your life in 500 words, describing the context surrounding it as richly as you can. Choose something which won't make you depressed, something you feel you have 'dealt with', but at the same time something which shares the impact of even a brief moment in your life.	'Right Here, Right Now' (R) (F)	'A time capsule of the present. Write a story about a situation currently unfolding in your life, right here, right now.'
October 28	'This (eg) (Downsizing) (Number 8) Life' (R) (F)	The Australian newspaper's weekend Review considers original submissions of 450 – 500 words for their 'This (...) Life' story each weekend. Our topic for October draws upon this format. (Examples June 27-28 'This (Downsizing) Life' by an 80+ year old about planning to farewell loved home; July 4-8 'This (Number 8) Life' about growing up as 'Number 8' in a family of nine children.	'A test of courage' (R)	<i>'Has your courage ever been tested? Tell us a story of your bravery, or when you should have been brave but couldn't summon the courage.'</i> Has life ever presented you with a situation that forced you to dig deep, to do something that put you at risk? Maybe it was a split-second reaction when you helped someone in harm's way, or something you deliberated over for years, like a love letter. It could be as personal as telling a friend a difficult truth, or as public as protesting against what you believe is wrong. What was at stake, and what strengths did you need to draw upon in the face of pain or grief? What did you learn about yourself from doing something that was frightening?
November 22	'Found'	Use the simple prompt 'Found' to write about something of lasting importance to you which you discovered at some stage of your life. What led up to it, what did you find out, what has it meant to you since? It can be a thing, an idea, a person, the sky's the limit!	'Triggers' (R) (F)	Keep a notebook close by this month in which to note any 'triggers' which led you to reminisce about a time in your lives. You may have been talking to someone, watching television or a film, driving somewhere, reading a book. Choose one to three of these and write about the memories evoked – keeping the total words to 500 – 750 words.
December/January Holiday Break	#1 One Moment, This Year (R) (F)	Looking back on 2021, what single moment stands out for you? Whether it be loss, love, discovery or disappointment, share your unforgettable moment. (ABC Open 500 words January 2014)	#2 'I Was There'... (R)	Have you experienced a significant news, historical or cultural event first-hand? Share your personal piece of history in 500 words.

Don't feel constrained to choose 'New' or 'Alternative' topic – you can choose either or even both!

Don't forget you can always substitute an earlier topic or make up your own if you have writer's block!