

‘As Time Goes By’ Topics 2024

Our Aim

To have an interesting and challenging list for ‘old hands’,
 To have an enjoyable list from which to build ‘slices of life’ stories for newer members,
 To have rich and enjoyable choices across the monthly alternatives for both groups if so desired! (And also)
 To have synergy between the topics chosen so that stories shared will blend well together in a two-hour session.

(Remember - you can always substitute an earlier topic or make up your own if you have writer’s block!)

Month	Topic	Details – these topics are for members who have already completed many of the stories in the next columns...They are usually a little more challenging, intense topics...	Alternative topics for newer class members, or those who haven’t written on them in the past	Details – these topics are either stories completed in previous years which worked well, or topics which are very flexible and can be revisited in different ways.
February 19	‘Life Changing’	Was there ever an event in or impacting on your life which became ‘life changing’ for you, an event which you might include as a theme if you wrote a memoir? Tell us about it in 500 words. (eg Claire Bowditch, Death of her loved next-in-age sister from illness as a child)	‘New in Town’	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.
	‘Interesting people I have known....’	In 500 words, tell us about an interesting person or two you have known who you would definitely include in your memoirs. (This could be the beginning of a collection of stories prompted by this theme)	‘I Was There’	Have you experienced a significant news, historical or cultural event first-hand? Share your personal piece of history in 500 words.
March 18	‘Her Story’	<i>It’s International Women’s Month in March – a time to focus on women’s lives and stories. Heather Hartland’s unread story from last year will be shared to begin the session!</i> Reflect on a matriarchal line in your family – either your father’s or your mother’s. Do you come from a line of strong women, creative women, adventurous or (.....) women? ‘Reframe’ their experiences – while women may not have appeared in the media or literature, the story of many women suggests great perseverance,	‘Failure’ Although this is not a ‘skills course’, we have some guidelines for approaching February’s topics ‘Failure’ and ‘Heart Break’ to support new class members.	‘Failure’ ‘Write about a failure you’ve experienced – from the commonplace to the catastrophic – in 500 words’. (April 2017) Resource: ‘Failure’ (ABC Open Planning Sheet) OR

		strength, diligence and more. Alternatively, write a eulogy for one of the women in your family, in which you highlight their strengths and contributions.		
	'Discrimination'	Today social policy strategies focused on inclusion attempt to redress problems of many 'isms', particularly racism, sexism, ageism; many other forms of discrimination. On looking back, how has 'discrimination' played out in your life, impacted on you, your work, your family, a family member? Using questions such as 'who, why, when, where, how, how much, what next' questions, develop a story on this topic to share with the class in 500 words.		'Heartbreak' Tell us about your experience of a broken heart. It could be a light-hearted story of a fling or online date gone wrong, or a deeper story of love. It could relate to a special project, a job you loved, something dear to and valued by you. What were you hoping for, and what went wrong? Was there a positive side to the experience? What did you learn about yourself? Resource: 'Heart Break'
April 15	'The (eg Best, Worst, most memorable, ...) Holiday/s I ever had' ...'	A chance to write about the best, happiest, worst, or most memorable holiday (or holiday period) you ever had. Lead us through the events which shaped your view of the holiday, allowing us to share in your elation or disappointment. (Draws from Bev's friend's story of his 'Worst Holiday Ever'; and James Davey's 'Happy Days' story from 2023).	'Anzac Day'/Easter/Other Traditional topics for April to give new students a chance to write about customs and rituals in their lives "A chance to reminisce about memories of memorial or religious events which have stayed with us over time".	'Anzac Day' Looking back over your lifetime, write about your memories of Anzac Day (or other memorial 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. Samples – on our page; but could also be Remembering with all the senses blog post by army wife Renee <i>OR</i> 'Easter' Looking back over your lifetime, write about your memories of Easter (or other religious event) and its place in the cultural rituals of your family and the communities in which you have lived (Samples from our stories – eg. Molyullah Easter Fair).
May 20	'Time Travelling' 'About looking behind you.... yet being present' ...	Time Travelling #1 'When you look behind you, you see the future in your footprints' (Graham Jensen) <i>OR</i> Time Travelling #2 'You've travelled through time and encounter a younger version of yourself. What life lesson (or lessons) would you share?' (Barry O'Connor)	'Memories Treasure Chest'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create/Draw upon an 'Memories Treasure Chest' in a shoe box, drawer or old case 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. Select two items from the treasure chest 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 each object)

June 17	'My Brilliant Career' and/or 'My Career Went Bung' (Miles Franklin)	Miles Franklin's 'My Brilliant Career' was and its thoughtful sequel. 'My Career Went Bung' closely mirror events in her life. Reflecting back on your life, flesh out the story of (one of) your brilliant career(s), sharing with us the highs, the lows, the struggles, it's meaning to you, and more, <i>OR</i> Reflect back on a time when 'My Career Went Bung'. Set the scene by sharing with us the nature of your career before it 'went bung', what appeared to have happened, why, what it meant to you, and whether perhaps other doors opened up to you as a result.	'Rebellion'	An act of rebellion! Have you ever challenged authority, defied expectations or fought for your beliefs? Choose a single, defining act of rebellion in your life & tell us about it.
July 15	'My Gap Year'	Write about a time when you took, or circumstances meant that you took, time out from your 'regular' life or veered off an intended path for a year or so. What happened? What did you learn from doing so? <i>(Member's Choice Topic – Bev Morton 2022)</i>	'My (....)'	As we go through life the beginnings and endings of 'life stages' can be marked with events. Looking back over your life, think about an event, the stage it marked, and the results, hopefully fruits of this transition. (If you have been in the class for some time, pick a life stage which you haven't written about before).
August 19	'Lost and Found'	'Write about a time you lost something you owned, treasured, or believed in - and the lengths you went to, to get it back. Maybe it was a precious family heirloom you misplaced, an adventurous toddler who wandered out of sight, or perhaps you lost your way in an unfamiliar place. Take us on the search to find your lost thing. How did the loss affect you and those around you? Were you reunited? Was it back to business as usual, or did your life change in ways you could never imagine?'	'Sense of Place'	Write about a community to which you feel you have strong connections in some way, even if you never lived there for a time. What has led to this feeling of connection? How has it expressed itself/do you understand it?

September 16	'Relationships'	Remember and describe a relationship between two people which has been important to you, perhaps in modelling the things you learnt to apply, or learnt to avoid, in relationships. How did the people in the relationship meet, what do you remember about their relationship, what did you learn from it and your relationship with them? <i>OR</i> Reflect on a time when establishing boundaries was important in your life, whether in personal relationships; family relationships, at work or in other settings. Share your story in 500 words.	'Someone Who Shaped Me'	How did you become who you are? Think about someone who has influenced your life and get started!
October 21	'Steep Learning Curve' (Along the lines of previous stories about 'Taking the Plunge' and 'Winging It')	Write about a time in your life when you were on a steep learning curve. Perhaps your life suddenly took a different direction with an unexpected change of job, or other circumstances. How did it feel when you were taking the plunge... did you feel you were 'thrown in at the deep end'. How did you cope? Did you 'wing it', 'fly by the seat of your pants, or were you strategic? Did resilience play a role? How do you feel about the experience on reflection? Member's Choice topic – Carmyl Winkler 2023	'U-Turn' or 'Turning Point'	'U-Turn' A single decision can turn your day - or life - around. Share how a sudden change of direction altered what happened next.
				'Turning Point' A chance to write about a turning point in your life--however large or small!
November 18	'Right Here, Right Now'	'A time capsule of the present. Write a story about a situation currently unfolding in your life, right here, right now.'	'One Moment, This Year' (Annual)	Looking back on 2024 to date, what single moment stands out for you? Whether it be loss, love, discovery or disappointment, share your unforgettable moment.
Optional holiday topics to share in February 2025	'This (.....) Life'	The Australian newspaper's Weekend Review column considers original submissions of 450 – 500 words for their 'This (...) Life' story each weekend. This topic draws upon this format! <i>Examples 'This (Downsizing) Life' by an 80+ year old about planning to farewell loved home; 'This (Number 8) Life' about growing up as 'Number 8' in a family of nine children. Also –see our 'This (...) Life' stories!</i>	'Triggers' (Another a flexible topic – and ideal for a vacation project)	Keep a notebook close by during the break 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 - write about the memories evoked, keeping the total words to 500 – 750 words.