

## ‘As Time Goes By’ Topics 2025

*Happy Ten Year Anniversary... We enter our eleventh year in March this year!*

### **Our Aim**

*To have an enjoyable list of topics from which to build ‘slices of life’ stories for new and newer members,*

*To have an interesting list to challenge ‘old hands’, while ‘recalibrating’ their focus on ‘memoir’*

*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 choose from either monthly topic, substitute an earlier topic or make up your own if you have writer’s block!)*

Month	Topics suggested for new/newer class members, or those who haven’t written on them in the past.		Topics suggested for returning members who have already written about the stories in the previous columns...	
<b>February 17</b> – some shared holiday writing projects and some ‘getting to know you’ stories from new members	<b>‘New in Town’</b>	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.	<b>‘This (.....) Life ‘</b>	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>
	<b>‘I Was There’</b>	Have you experienced a significant news, historical or cultural event first-hand? Share your personal piece of history in 500 words.	<b>‘Triggers’</b> (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 lead 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.
			<b>‘Memoir Review’</b>	Review a memoir which intrigued you and share your thoughts with the class; <i>or (new)... review your ATGB stories to date, looking for a common theme!</i>
<b>March 17</b>	<b>‘Failure’</b> Although this is not a ‘skills course’, we have some guidelines for	<b>‘Failure’</b> ‘Write about a failure you’ve experienced – from the commonplace to the catastrophic – in 500 words’. (April 2017) Resource: <b>‘Failure’</b> (ABC Open Planning Sheet)	<b>‘Reflecting on Covid on the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary’ OR</b>	<i>It’s the fifth anniversary of the Co-vid shutdown on 20<sup>th</sup> March. A chance to reflect back on your memories and experiences then from the standpoint of time. A dip into our Newsletter and stories at the time might refresh your memories.</i>

	<p>approaching February's topics <b>'Failure'</b> and <b>'Heart Break'</b> to support new class members.</p>	<p>OR</p> <p><b>'Success!'</b> –turn the guidelines for approaching the Failure story on their head by writing about a treasured success you've experienced – from the commonplace to the (almost...) world shattering, or in your world at least!</p>	<p><b>'Sisters'...</b></p>	<p><i>It's International Women's Month in March, a time to focus on women's lives and stories. Memoirs have been written about 'Sisters'...for example, by Drusilla Modjeska. Write about some sisters in your family, whether your own, your parent's, your children, your grandchildren, in a way which uncovers the strengths, the challenges, the joys of 'sisterhood'...or perhaps a sister's strength, creativity, perseverance, contributions.</i></p>
<p><b>April 21</b> <b>'Peace'</b></p>	<p><b>'Anzac Day'/Easter/Other</b> "A chance to reminisce about memories of memorial or religious events which have stayed with us over time".</p>	<p><b>'Anzac Day'</b> 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 – from our stories <a href="#">'Anzac Day'</a>)</p> <p><b>'Easter'</b> 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 <a href="#">'Easter'</a> stories – eg. Molyullah Easter Fair).</p>	<p><b>'Two wrongs don't make a right...'</b></p>	<p><i>It's 80 years since the ending of WWII, and this month five of our past and current members who remember the end of the war are presenting stories under the theme '1945' at Meet and Mingle on April 16<sup>th</sup>. This month's topic 'Two wrongs don't make a right' is fairly broad, an encouragement to reflect on the impact of conflict on your life, from the ways in which your parents taught you to handle conflict, to family members or your own involvement in conflict during wars, perhaps your roles in mediating or reducing conflict, perhaps your roles in promoting peace. You only have 500 words, so start early, as you may need time to edit!</i></p>
<p><b>May 19</b> <b>Places</b></p>	<p><b>'A Love Letter to Travel'</b></p>	<p>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." .... (You could begin "Dear Madrid,... " etc)</p>	<p><b>'My Happy Place' (or 'An Ode to ....')</b></p>	<p>Describe your happy place, where it is and why it's special to you, in 500 words or less.</p> <p>*This was a topic in Life Matters in late 2023.... "Tell us your story about the place you go in your head when your brain needs a little break, or your heart needs a little break from whatever is occupying you for the rest of the day, it could be an imaginary place, it could be a place you visited once and just fell in love with absolutely, or somewhere you would love to visit and you know it's out there in the world, and you go there in your head, while not having actually been there in person." (Hilary Harper describing the topic on Life Matters) Lots of examples can be found at this link <a href="#">'My Happy Place'</a>.</p>

<b>June 16 Passions</b>	<b>'My Other Life'</b>	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?	<b>'How can I stop from ...'</b>	Write about an activity which has meant a lot to you over the years, which has featured in your life over time and which you always seek out in some form or another. What has it meant to you over time and why?  Based on Carmyl's member's choice topic 'How Can I Stop from Singing' in 2022
	<b>'Memories Treasure Chest'</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create/Draw upon an 'Memories Treasure Chest' in a shoe box, drawer or old case containing objects and artefacts that reflect your passions and 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.</li> <li>• 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)</li> </ul>		
<b>July 21 Changes over Time</b>	<b>'A Smorgasborg of Firsts and lasts' to choose from...'</b>	'My first (or last).... (car, boyfriend, job, broken heart, pet ....) – it's up to you! Tell us about one or two 'firsts' or 'lasts' in a total of 500 words, remembering to incorporate their impact on you and perhaps also how you think they changed you in some way over time... . <i>Tell us about your experience of a broken heart. It could be a light-hearted story (eg. For 'broken heart' of a fling or blind date gone wrong), or a deeper story. What were you hoping for, and what (if anything), went wrong? Was there a positive side to the experience? What did you learn about yourself?</i>	<b>'Communication'...or other changes over time...</b>	We've all lived rather a long time, a time in which much change has occurred. Drawing inspiration from Carmyl's story 'Communication', reflect upon about a changes in communication or in a particular area of interest or importance to you, describing your observations and experiences of these changes and their impact on you over time.
<b>August 18 Life Changing</b>	<b>'Advice'</b>	Tell us about one piece of advice that's stuck with you, perhaps even been life changing in some way. It could be a famous quote or proverb, something your mum told you, or helpful words from a stranger. Did you follow the advice, or wished you had? Did it help or lead you astray?	<b>'Emergence'</b>	<i>'Emergence'</i> . Interpret this theme as you choose, whether it's a story of emerging fully into your true self, or an event arising in the narrative of your life. (Topic adapted from the SBS Emerging Writers Competition Topic 2022)

September 15 <b>Transitions</b>	<b>'Retirement'</b>	Retirement is a transition which can be quite complex, involve a range of losses, may be dreaded, involve celebrations and be looked forward to, indeed all of the above! ... Share the story of your retirement from a role which was important to you at some stage of your life – how did you negotiate it? How did you feel about the transition at the time? How do you feel about it now? ( <i>Don't forget, as with other stories, 'Retirement' stories do not need to be included on the website—people involved may still be alive!</i> ).	<b>'It was time for a change ... ' ...</b> (you only live once!)	<i>'It was time for a change' *</i> Write about a time when you realised you were ready for a change and about how you acted upon it. Perhaps it was a case of realizing that 'you only live once', perhaps a little less overwhelming. A chance to look back and reflect upon your decision at the time and its impact upon you and your family.  (*Inspired by <a href="#">a story on ABC News about a couple deciding to walk away from a farm...</a> )
October 20 <b>Life Challenges</b>	<b>'If only ... '</b>	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.	<b>'This Too Shall Pass'</b>	<i>'This too shall pass'</i> Write about a particularly difficult period of your life, how life went on and perhaps also the lessons you learnt from it...
November 17 <b>A Year in My Life</b>	<b>'The Year That Made Me'*</b>	Write about a year which made a particular difference in your life's journey. Over to you! *A topic drawn from an ABC program which sets this task when interviewing actual or future Australian living treasures.	<b>'One Moment, This Year'</b>	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 2026	<b>'Triggers'</b> (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.	<b>'This (.....) Life '</b>	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 <a href="#">'This (...) Life' stories!</a></i>