

# Suggestions for approaching the ABC Open 500 word story – ‘Heartbreak’

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## Project Brief

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 loss. What were you hoping for, and what went wrong? Was there a positive side to the experience? What did you learn about yourself?

Using the writing frameworks suggested in the ABC Open handouts ‘Tips for writing your 500 word story’ and ‘Failure’, the following suggestions ABC Open published in 2017 are worth taking on board when writing the topic Heartbreak (and can also be applied to other topics).

## “Dos and Don'ts

### **Do – Write about romantic heartbreak**

We want to read about the letdowns, setbacks and disappointments of romantic love, not life more broadly. It could be a lighthearted story about a teenage crush or a bad date, or a deeper experience of a broken heart.

### **Do – Set the stakes**

Try to remember how you felt at the time – what drew you to the object of your affections, and what were you hoping from the relationship. How did it feel to have your hopes dashed.

### **Do – Reflect on what you learnt**

Try to find something positive in the experience by reflecting on what you learnt about yourself or love in general. Did your experience of heartbreak bring you any wisdom that you carried forward into future relationships?

### **DO – Write in the first person**

And tell us about something that happened to you.

### **DO – Write about a real life story**

This project is non-fiction only, *and though at U3A Benalla we occasionally accept poetry, essays or opinion pieces, the purpose of this activity relates to writing a short ‘slice of life’ memoir in 500 words.*

### **DO- Stick to the word limit**

Tell your story in between 350 and 500 words.

### **DO – Think twice before revealing anything that you may regret or may impact on the privacy of other people**

Change names if necessary. Remember that when you write something online, it is there forever. Consider the feelings of others, avoid defamatory statements and check the ABC Terms and Conditions and Community Guidelines before writing.”

\*This handout is almost word for word taken from the pdf document ‘500 Words: Heartbreak’ published online by ABC Open in 2017. It is not currently accessible on-line (as at 15 February 2024). ABC Open’s ‘500 word’ project resources have continued to provide inspiration and guidance to U3A Benalla’s ‘As Time Goes By’ Memoir Writing Class since 2014.