

insight



# FRAMEWORK OF IDEAS



WRITING  
ABOUT  
**PERSONAL  
JOURNEYS**

by Lachlan Whitley





# Framework of Ideas

Writing about personal journeys

Lachlan Whitley

**insight**<sup>®</sup>

► innovative ► engaging ► evolving

Copyright © Insight Publications 2023

Insight Publications Pty Ltd  
3/350 Charman Road  
Cheltenham VIC 3192  
Australia  
Tel: +61 3 8571 4950  
Fax: +61 3 8571 0257  
Email: books@insightpublications.com.au

**[www.insightpublications.com.au](http://www.insightpublications.com.au)**

**Reproduction and communication for educational purposes**

The Australian *Copyright Act 1968* (the Act) allows a maximum of one chapter or 10% of this book, whichever is the greater, to be copied by any educational institution for its educational purposes provided that the educational institution (or the body that administers it) has given a remuneration notice to Copyright Agency under the Act.

For details of the Copyright Agency licence for educational institutions contact:

Copyright Agency  
Tel: +61 2 9394 7600  
Fax: +61 2 9394 7601  
[www.copyright.com.au](http://www.copyright.com.au)

**Reproduction and communication for other purposes**

Except as permitted under the Act (for example, any fair dealing for the purposes of study, research, criticism or review) no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior written permission. All inquiries should be made to the publisher at the address above.



A catalogue record for this book is available from the National Library of Australia

*Writing about personal journeys* / Lachlan Whitley

Lachlan Whitley asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of this work.

ISBNs:  
9781922771629 (digital)  
9781922771636 (bundle: print + digital)

Edited by Fiona Wallace  
Proofread by Anica Boulanger-Mashberg  
Cover and internal design by Melisa Paredes  
Typesetting by Marigold Emal

Printed by Markono Print Media Pte Ltd

# CONTENTS

<b>Exploring the key idea</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Exploring ‘The danger of a single story’</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Exploring ‘The red plastic chair is a Vietnamese cultural institution, and my anchor’</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Exploring ‘bidngen’</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Exploring Walter’s speech from <i>The Inheritance</i></b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Creating your own writing about personal journeys</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Sample responses</b>	<b>74</b>

# EXPLORING THE KEY IDEA

Life is a constant string of journeys: the daily commute to and from school; the eagerly anticipated winter holiday to the Victorian High Country; the slow discovery that a friendship has become toxic; the daily prayer that develops one's connection with faith; the auspicious ritual completed before each big football game; the pilgrimage that provides perspective and solace; the awkward dinner party after that cousin made an unfortunate joke.

Reading and constructing texts about personal journeys is an opportunity to learn about ourselves and others. These journeys may provide us with a snapshot of somebody else's world or an opportunity to consider a different point of view. They can also provide us with the ability to discover something new about ourselves.

The mentor texts and supplementary texts in this guide explore a broad range of personal journeys. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie argues for considering perspectives that have been historically marginalised. Amy Duong reflects on the journey she takes to connect with her cultural heritage. Maya Hodge writes a lyrical reflection on land and identity from a First Nations perspective. Matthew López expresses the grief and loss experienced by the queer community during the AIDS crisis.

The purpose of this guide is to explore how these writers convey their personal journeys successfully. This can support you as you discover your own personal journeys through innovative and creative writing.

## Key terms and guiding questions

There are two key terms to consider for this key idea. Firstly, 'personal' expresses that something relates to an individual person, rather than a group. Secondly, 'journey' conveys notions of travel and experience.

The word 'journey' comes from the French *ournée* (day). The original English meaning of 'journey' was a day's travel.

*e.g. Bonne journée is French for 'have a good day'.*

Today 'journey' can refer to a trip from one place to another.

*e.g. Have a safe journey!*

*e.g. It is a one-hour train journey from Melbourne to Geelong.*

It can also be used to refer to a set of experiences.

*e.g. a learning journey*

*e.g. this journey called life*

Throughout this guide, we will seek to explore the following guiding questions. They get to the core of personal journeys, which makes them great prompts for your own creative thinking.

- Whose journey is being explored?
- What is the origin and destination of the journey?
- Why was the journey undertaken?
- What was the consequence or outcome of the journey?
- How did the individual change because of the journey?
- How can others relate to this journey?

## Exploring personal journeys

In the VCE English and English as an Additional Language (EAL) Study Design, VCAA provides this elaboration on writing about personal journeys:

Explorations of 'life' or biographical explorations – telling our stories, telling others' stories, the problem of telling stories, appropriation of stories, who tells the stories and our history, missing stories, marginalised and elevated stories. Students could explore personal milestones, the effects of key events on their lives, or explore these ideas through the eyes of others.

Students who have migrated can explore their stories of movement and disruption. They can explore the expectations of change, and the language of a new place and culture.

In this section we will look at some of these connected ideas in more detail.

### Explorations of life

Biographical writing explores how individuals live their lives. You may be familiar with biographies, autobiographies and memoirs. Beyond these longer-form texts, there are many text types in which people write about life, including diaries and social media posts. The element that these texts have in common is a focus on people – whether that be their motivations, experiences, key relationships, challenges or achievements, or a combination of these, is dependent on the writer's purpose.

The history of biographical writing dates to ancient times. Hieroglyphics inscribed on the tomb walls of high officials in ancient Egypt have been considered the earliest form of biographical writing. These records were focused on the individual's achievements and portrayed how they provided

positive, lasting value to the world. With the rise of Christianity in Europe, writers began to focus on the virtues of saints and other religious figures. These biographies were highly centred on how the lives of their subjects revealed a moral message.

From the eighteenth century, biographical writing became a distinct literary genre. During this time, biographies explored the lives of notable individuals in fields including politics, literature and science. Today this literary genre has expanded even further to include incredibly diverse stories and ways of telling stories. Contemporary biographies often explore the complex interplay of personal, social and cultural factors that shape an individual's life.

## **Marginalised perspectives**

Marginalisation describes the practice of elevating the stories of those with power and silencing or sidelining the stories of those with less power. The personal journeys that have been published and memorialised in our history have been dominated by those with power. In particular, these have often been white men who are wealthy. Even some non-white men's journeys have been whitewashed. For example, the personal journey undertaken by the religious figure of Jesus is one of the most culturally important stories in the world. However, despite being a man who was born and raised in the Middle East, he is normally depicted as light-skinned. It is worth noting that many of the internationally famous images of Jesus come from Europe, where it is statistically more common to have light skin and blue eyes.

The perspectives of women, First Nations Australians, people of colour, queer people, people with a disability and those of many more groups have been historically pushed into the margins. One way that this is manifested is through stories where people from marginalised groups are not the main characters. Furthermore, where they are included, they might adhere to offensive stereotypes. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's speech on 'The danger of a single story' advocates for elevating more diverse perspectives. She does this through exploring her own personal experiences of feeling limited by a lack of diversity, and being the one to limit others due to narrow understandings.

Today it is easier to find the personal accounts of all kinds of people from around the world. Indeed, through the reach of social media, you are likely to have an insight into the lives of an extensive number of people, ranging from celebrities to your neighbour's grandmother.

With the benefit of our rich and diverse modern media landscape, many people hold high expectations for people's behaviour and the stories that they tell. This is linked to the social value of maintaining respect for all people, particularly those from marginalised backgrounds.

Here are some strategies for exploring personal journeys respectfully.

- **Be self-aware:** It is important to reflect on your own background and biases. These shape the way you view yourself and other people.
- **Acknowledge (or avoid) stereotypes:** You may wish to engage with the concept of stereotypes in your writing. This can be a powerful idea. However, be careful not to blindly perpetuate stereotypes.
- **Value your journey:** Regardless of your background, your voice is important.

## Personal milestones

When people share their personal journeys, they often focus on milestones and key events that have shaped them. These foundational experiences may be unique and dramatic. Alternatively, they might be common enough that the reader is likely to have also experienced them.

There is a broad range of personal milestones that you can expect to encounter.

- **Birth and early childhood:** This time period can provide contextual information about the subject of a text.
- **Important life events:** Birthdays, marriages, cultural celebrations and other important events can provide an interesting background to highlight the connections between people.
- **Educational experiences:** Learning environments can be either the best or the worst places for people. While many people thrive at school, it can also be a place where some struggle academically and socially.
- **New experiences:** Camps, holidays and excursions take people outside their everyday lives and situate them in unfamiliar environments. This can present challenges and opportunities for growth.
- **Challenges:** While it might be tempting to write about an accomplishment or success, it is often more interesting to reflect on setbacks and failures. Think about your favourite texts. While there might be an element of success, the majority of the text probably focuses on adversity.
- **Loss:** The death of a loved one or even a famous person can trigger complex feelings of grief and reflection. Amy Duong explores the impact that the death of her aunt has on her and on her relationship with her mother.

## Reflect on your personal milestones

In this activity, you will reflect on your own personal milestones and how these have impacted you.

- 1 Recount where you were born and where you spent your early childhood. What can this place, or these places, help explain about you?
- 2 Identify three key family gatherings from your life so far. What was your role on these occasions? Has this role changed over time?
- 3 Describe a time when you felt comfortable and a time you felt uncomfortable at school. Why did you feel this way?
- 4 Reflect on an experience that happened in an unfamiliar place. What additional challenges did this location force you to encounter?
- 5 Recall a time when you were not successful. How did you learn from this experience?
- 6 Consider the death of someone you knew personally or through their status as a celebrity. How did this event change your perspective on life?

## Migration, movement and disruption

Migration refers to the movement of people from one place to another, and it can be driven by various factors such as economic opportunities, escaping conflict, reuniting with family or pursuing new experiences. As of 2022, 30 per cent of Victorians were born overseas and nearly 50 per cent were either born overseas or have a parent who was born overseas.

Top 4 countries of birth (outside Australia)	Top 4 languages spoken at home (after English)
India (4%)	Mandarin Chinese (3.4%)
England (2.7%)	Vietnamese (1.8%)
China (2.6%)	Greek (1.6%)
New Zealand (1.5%)	Punjabi (1.6%)



Scan the code or click [here](#) to see the latest census data about the diversity and ethnicity characteristics of Victorians.

While migration can be a voluntary decision, it can also be motivated by a need to leave. This is the case for refugees fleeing war-torn regions or those

displaced due to natural disasters and the climate crisis. For these individuals, movement and disruption can have a big impact on their journey. They may also be living with the trauma interwoven with their migration.

Arriving in a new country for the first time can pose a variety of unique challenges. The person has left behind familiar places, people and processes, and may now be faced with different languages, cultural expectations and communities. Furthermore, not everyone welcomes those who are newly arrived, which is why many migrants face discrimination and isolation. These challenges can be both physically and emotionally demanding. Thankfully, Victoria is an increasingly multicultural and welcoming place.

## Using the mentor texts

The selected mentor texts for Writing about personal journeys are varied, to give you a broad understanding of the idea and a range of technical and language tools to use in your own writing. It's important to remember that the focus of this area of study is *your* writing: the mentor texts are there to inspire you and provide examples.

Keep in mind the following dos and don'ts when studying your mentor texts.

### **Dos:**

- Do read the mentor texts closely and carefully. Take note of the language, structure and techniques used by the authors.
- Do analyse how the authors use the idea of personal journeys in their writing. Think about how they incorporate it into their themes, characters and plots, but also how the language and style contribute to their exploration of the idea.
- Do use the mentor texts as inspiration for your own writing. Think about how you can adapt and apply the techniques and ideas you have learned to your own work.

### **Don'ts:**

- Don't copy the mentor texts word for word. Plagiarism is unacceptable and can result in serious consequences.
- Don't rely too heavily on the mentor texts. While they can be helpful models, they are not a substitute for your own creativity and originality.



- • Don't limit yourself to the mentor texts. Explore other sources of inspiration and develop your own unique ideas and writing style.
- Don't *respond* to the mentor texts. There is no need to explain how another author has approached the idea.

## Mentor texts

In order to get the most out of the mentor texts, be open-minded about your preferred style of writing. You may think that you only like fiction or only like nonfiction, but you should be prepared to experiment with different styles and forms. The mentor texts set for study provide a variety of models and examples for you to draw on. The four set texts are summarised in the table below.

Author	Title	Form	Useful for
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie	'The danger of a single story'	Speech	Exploring cultural identity, relationships to literature and the broader media landscape, overcoming prejudice and the need for societal shift
Amy Duong	'The red plastic chair is a Vietnamese cultural institution, and my anchor'	Personal reflection	Exploring community belonging, generational gaps, immigration to Australia and the rituals that follow a death
Maya Hodge	'bidngen'	Memoir text	Exploring growing up, reflecting on one's ancestral line, encountering experiences of discrimination and connections between the modern world and the Dreamtime
Matthew López	Walter's speech, extracted from <i>The Inheritance</i>	Monologue	Exploring romantic journeys, community struggles, the role of property and the power of sharing stories (particularly across generations)

Each of these mentor texts will be covered in detail later in this book.

## Supplementary texts

Beyond the mentor texts, your teacher may provide supplementary texts. These may be used as additional examples of quality writing. They may also be used as prompts to spark your thinking about personal journeys. Note that in addition to the three mentor texts that you study, you may choose to explore the fourth mentor text as a supplementary text.

You are also encouraged to source and share your own supplementary texts. Think of texts broadly. They could be extracts from novels, films or television series, but they could also be billboard advertisements, TikTok videos, a letter or report you received from your school or a song that you listen to on repeat.

Novels and short stories	
<i>Cold Enough for Snow</i> by Jessica Au	· Explores a mother–daughter · bond and cultural connection · during a trip to Japan
<i>Heat and Light</i> by Ellen van Neerven	· Explores family histories, · Aboriginal identity and · belonging in a range of short · stories that vary in style and · form
Film and television	
<i>Hannah Gadsby: Nanette</i> by Hannah Gadsby	· Explores sexuality and · Australia’s relationship with · self-deprecating humour
<i>The Family Law</i> adapted for television by Benjamin Law	· Explores growing up Asian– · Australian in Queensland
<i>The Castle</i> , directed by Rob Sitch	· Explores corporate greed and · personal liberty
Artworks, architecture and museums	
Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre at Melbourne Museum	· Explores the first journeys in · these lands, which predate · colonisation by over 60 000 · years
 Scan the code or click <a href="#">here</a> to visit the centre’s website.	·





<p><i>The Pioneer</i> by Frederick McCubbin</p>  <p>Scan the code or click <a href="#">here</a> to view the painting.</p>	<p>Explores, in a triptych painting, a family building their life in the Australian bush</p>
<p><i>Collins St, 5p.m.</i> by John Brack</p>  <p>Scan the code or click <a href="#">here</a> to view the painting.</p>	<p>Explores the daily commute of office workers in mid-century Melbourne</p>
<p>Immigration Museum in Melbourne</p>  <p>Scan the code or click <a href="#">here</a> to visit the museum’s website.</p>	<p>Explores the diverse stories of those who have immigrated to Australia</p>
<p>Barak Building by ARM Architecture</p>  <p>Scan the code or click <a href="#">here</a> to see the building.</p>	<p>Explores modern Melbourne’s steps towards reconciliation, and has been met with criticism</p>
<p><b>Poetry and songs</b></p>	
<p>‘Dear Australia, I love you but ...’ by Candy Bowers</p>	<p>Explores the poet’s complicated relationship with Australia</p>
<p><i>Home Body</i> by Rupi Kaur</p>  <p>Scan the code or click <a href="#">here</a> to read Kaur’s poetry on Instagram.</p>	<p>Explores home, belonging and self-discovery</p>
<p>‘My Island Home’ by Christine Anu</p>  <p>Scan the code or click <a href="#">here</a> to listen to the song.</p>	<p>Explores the singer–songwriter’s connection to the Torres Strait Islands in a cover of Neil Murray’s original track</p>
<p>‘TRAGIC’ by The Kid LAROI</p>  <p>Scan the code or click <a href="#">here</a> to listen to the song.</p>	<p>Explores mental health, fame and resilience</p>

**Digital media**

'Humans of New York' on Facebook



Scan the code or click [here](#) to view the website.

Explores everyday experiences of people in New York City

'The Good Life' podcast, hosted by Andrew Leigh



Scan the code or click [here](#) to access the podcast.

Explores living a happy, healthy and ethical life

# EXPLORING ‘THE DANGER OF A SINGLE STORY’

This section explores the first mentor text for Writing about personal journeys: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s TED talk, ‘The danger of a single story’.

Presented to a live audience in Oxford and watched by millions through the TED platform, Adichie’s speech argues for more diverse storytelling.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to listen to the speech.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to read a transcript of the speech.

## Background, context and audience

Shortly after publishing her collection of short stories *The Thing Around Your Neck*, Adichie presented her speech ‘The danger of a single story’ at *TEDGlobal* in Oxford. The theme of the conference was ‘The substance of things not seen’. TED (Technology, Entertainment and Design) is a not-for-profit organisation whose slogan is ‘ideas worth spreading’. There is a good chance that you have already watched some TED talks during your schooling.

Adichie’s speech was not given top billing at the conference. The principal positions were reserved for the likes of the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (at that time) Gordon Brown; philosopher and author Alain de Botton; and actor and author Stephen Fry. Indeed, Adichie was the final speaker on the third day of the conference. Unlike the other sessions, her session was not given a thematic title and was instead titled ‘Bonus session’.

Yet with over 33 million views (at the time of writing), it is one of the most viewed TED talks ever presented. The enormous popularity of her speech reflects its relevance, power and connection with millions of people around the world.

## About the author

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was born in 1977 in Enugu, Nigeria, and grew up in Nsukka where her parents worked as university employees. She is the fifth of six children and was raised in a middle-class Igbo family. Her parents encouraged her love of reading and writing from a young age, and she started writing stories at the age of seven.

Adichie's early life was marked by the aftermath of the Nigerian Civil War, also known as the Nigerian–Biafran War, which lasted from 1967 to 1970. This conflict had a profound impact on her and her family, and it later served as a backdrop for her second novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

She attended the University of Nigeria where she studied medicine and pharmacy, but after a year and a half moved to the United States to pursue studies in the arts. She has completed a Bachelor's Degree in Communication and Political Science at Eastern Connecticut State University, a Master's Degree in Creative Writing at Johns Hopkins University, and a Master's Degree in African History from Yale University.

Adichie's novels have received great literary acclaim, such as with *Purple Hibiscus* and *Americanah*, and she has published an extensive array of essays in newspapers, magazines and journals. In addition to her fictional and nonfictional works, she has achieved fame from her TED talks 'The danger of a single story' and 'We should all be feminists'. The latter was adapted by Adichie into a written essay, which was given to every 16-year-old in Sweden in 2015. It was also sampled by Beyoncé in her song '\*\*\*Flawless'.

Today, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a voice of international significance in literature and social justice. She uses her platform to address issues such as feminism, racism and cultural identity.

## Synopsis

Adichie begins her speech by introducing herself, the structure of her talk and her topic: the danger of a single story.

Her first argument is 'how impressionable and vulnerable we are in the face of a story, particularly as children'. She illustrates this problem with a personal anecdote about growing up with limited representations of people in the stories that she read as a child. They only depicted British and American characters, and so Adichie began to believe that this is what all books had to include. For her, the solution was exposure to a range of African books, which 'saved [her] from having a single story of what books [were]'.

She develops her argument with two more examples. In the first, she reflects on a time when she visited the home of her family's live-in domestic help, Fide, and was 'startled' to see that they were more than just poor people: 'Their poverty was [Adichie's] single story of them'. She compares this example with a time when her American roommate was 'shocked' by her English proficiency and love of Mariah Carey: 'She had felt sorry for me even before she saw me.'

Adichie develops her focus on the lack of representation of African stories by arguing that much of the developed world considers Africa to be 'a place of negatives, of difference, of darkness'. She dates this back to the origins of Western literature through a reference to a London merchant who described Africans as 'beasts who have no houses'.

Her next point is that if you 'show a people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again', then 'that is what they become'. This applies to her examples, which reflect people's limited views and expectations of Africa. However, she also acknowledges that she is 'just as guilty' by relating a trip to Mexico where she had been surprised to realise that Mexican people were more than just 'the abject immigrant' portrayed via the media.

She reflects that these single stories are the products of power. This power is defined as being able to 'tell the story of another person' and make it the 'definitive story of that person'. To illustrate this, she points out that despite having read *American Psycho*, she does not consider that all Americans are 'serial murderers'. This is because she had been exposed to 'many stories of America', not just a single story. Weaving in further examples from her upbringing in Nigeria, Adichie reiterates that single stories are not necessarily 'untrue', they are instead 'incomplete'.

She moves on to establish that the consequence of limiting people to a single story is that they are robbed of their 'dignity'. The next part of her speech sets out to give back some dignity to the people of Nigeria by illustrating some of the incredible ideas and work that are happening in her home country 'despite the government'.

To conclude, she reiterates how much diverse stories matter: 'when we reject the single story, when we realise that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise'.

## Text annotations

Adichie is a published author with multiple university accreditations and academic appointments. She draws on this wealth of knowledge to develop

literary and historical references in her speech. These complement the personal stories that account for the bulk of the speech.

The following table includes elaborations on some of the references made by Adichie in her speech.

Reference	Elaboration
Chinua Achebe	Achebe was a Nigerian novelist and poet. He is widely regarded as one of the most important figures in African literature. His most famous novel is <i>Things Fall Apart</i> .
Camara Laye	Laye was a Guinean writer known for his novel <i>The African Child</i> , which is considered a classic of African literature.
Mariah Carey	Carey is a popular American singer–songwriter and music producer. She is known for her incredible vocal range, and is one of the best-selling music artists of all time.
John Lok	Lok sailed to present-day Ghana, taking five Africans back to England to train as interpreters. He is not to be confused with the British philosopher John Locke.
Joseph Rudyard Kipling	Kipling was a British author, poet and journalist. He is best known for his imperialist-themed works, including <i>The Jungle Book</i> . His writing has been criticised for perpetuating racial stereotypes.
Igbo	The Igbo community is the third largest ethnic group in Nigeria, with a rich cultural heritage and history. Igbo is the principal language of the Igbo people, and is made up of many different dialects. Both Adichie and Achebe have an Igbo background.
Mourid Barghouti	Barghouti was a prominent Palestinian poet and writer. His writings explore the Palestinian experience, which is complex due to Palestine's ongoing recognition disputes with Israel and the broader international community.
<i>American Psycho</i>	Written by Bret Easton Ellis, <i>American Psycho</i> is a famous work of postmodern fiction. It tells the story of Patrick Bateman, who leads a double life as a serial killer and a successful investment banker.
Anne Tyler, John Updike, John Steinbeck and Mary Gaitskill	These four authors are all white Americans who write about American culture and society. John Steinbeck, for example, is famous for his depictions of the Great Depression in America.





Alice Walker

Walker is an American author and poet who is best known for her novel *The Colour Purple*. She was the first African-American woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.

## Exploring personal journeys

In 'The danger of a single story', Adichie argues for increasing exploration of personal journeys and, in particular, for the elevation of more diverse stories. She does this by sharing her own stories to support her line of argument.

- **Cultural identity:** Adichie shares how her identity developed to encompass feeling 'African', rather than just 'Nigerian'.
- **Relationship to literature:** As a young girl she did not see herself in literature due to a lack of representation of people like her. But as she grew up, she found and consumed African literature, going on to write and publish her own.
- **Overcoming prejudice:** Adichie reflects on her own personal prejudices that she has confronted – including towards Fide and inhabitants of Mexico – and she also challenges those who have demonstrated prejudiced views towards her and others.

The **purpose** of the speech is to explain and reflect on the danger of limiting people to a 'single story', and to argue for a more diverse media landscape. Adichie's speech is a hybrid text that draws on multiple approaches to convey her message.

## The text's form

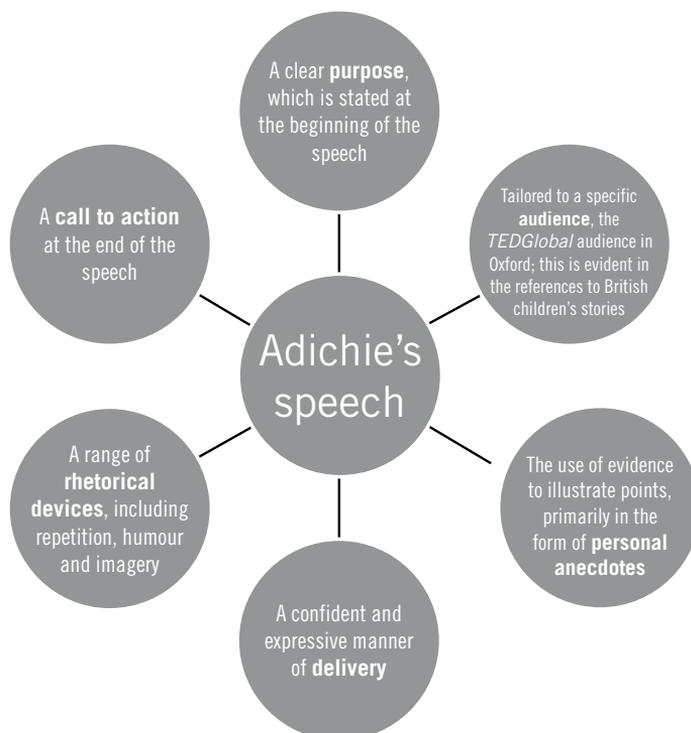
'The danger of a single story' is a **speech**. Speeches can be quite a structured text form. They typically include an introduction, a body and a conclusion. The introduction is where the speaker captures the audience's attention, establishes credibility and provides an overview of what will be discussed. The body of the speech is where the speaker provides the main content, typically organised into several points or sections, each with its own supporting evidence and examples. Finally, the conclusion is where the speaker reiterates their key message or purpose, and provides a call to action or a concluding thought. However, when you construct a speech, you do have flexibility to be more creative and unique.

Writing a speech can provide you with an opportunity to consider how speakers engage with their audiences directly, as there is typically an in-person audience. A speech is also a useful form if you are intending to argue for a change that you are passionate about. Consider some famous speeches and how they convey the speaker's passion.

- **Oprah Winfrey:** When she received the Cecil B. DeMille Award at the 2018 Golden Globes, Winfrey argued for the importance of the #MeToo movement in raising global awareness of sexual abuse and harassment in society.
- **Julia Gillard:** Former Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard delivered her misogyny speech in 2012 to the Australian Parliament, calling for greater gender equality in politics and Australian society.
- **Martin Luther King Jr:** During the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, civil rights activist Martin Luther King Jr delivered his memorable 'I have a dream' speech for equality.

Adichie uses a range of rhetorical devices to express her passion and argue her point. These strategies are discussed at length in a later part of this section.

Key features of this speech include the following.



## Craft an impassioned speech

---

Speaking on a topic that you are passionate about can be a joy, particularly when you find an audience who is open to hearing your views. This activity will get you started with an impassioned speech.

- 1 Determine the objective of your speech, e.g. to revitalise the Acland Street (St Kilda) shopping precinct.
- 2 Analyse your audience to tailor your message effectively, e.g. residents of St Kilda may be feeling fed up with the antisocial behaviour around Acland Street.
- 3 Create a clear and compelling message that resonates with your audience and supports your purpose, e.g. Acland Street Plaza should be removed and through traffic reinstated.
- 4 Organise your speech into an introduction, main body and conclusion.

## The text's features

There are several text features in 'The danger of a single story' that can inspire your own writing. A sample of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's writing structures and features are identified below.

### Rhetorical devices

Rhetorical devices are used to enhance the effectiveness and impact of communication. They are employed to create an emotional connection with the audience, to persuade them to accept a particular viewpoint and to make the message more memorable. Using rhetorical devices, speakers can influence the attitudes and behaviours of their audience and work towards achieving their purpose. Specific devices used by Adichie include rhetorical questions, repetition and quotations.

### Anecdotes

There are anecdotes interwoven throughout the speech, and this is signposted at the beginning: 'I would like to tell you a few personal stories'. Anecdotes are personal stories or experiences that serve to illustrate a point or convey a message. In Adichie's speech, the anecdotes are intended to make the content more engaging and relatable for the audience.

## Illustrate points with anecdotes

Listen to Adichie's speech, and match the following anecdotes to the points she is making.

Anecdotes	Points
Finding African literature, including the writing of Chinua Achebe	The single story is not necessarily 'untrue', instead it is 'incomplete'.
The American roommate who pities Adichie and asks her where she learned English	Adichie acknowledges her own experiences of believing the 'single story' about others.
Reading and writing about 'white and blue-eyed' characters as a child	There is hope that we can be 'saved' from having a single story.
Adichie's close friend 'Okoloma' who died in a plane crash	We are impressionable in the face of a story.
Visiting Mexico and being surprised to see that the people were not just the 'abject immigrant' depicted in the media	Many people have a single story of African people that leaves 'no possibility' of finding connection with them as 'human equals'.

## Direct statements

As she is developing her line of argument, Adichie makes several direct statements of opinion throughout her speech. These direct statements, or thesis statements, serve to emphasise and clarify her arguments. The statements are particularly effective because they are not overly frequent – they occur on only six occasions in the speech, each creating a strong impact on the audience.

- 'So that is how to create a single story, show a people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become.'
- 'Power is the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person.'



- 
- ‘The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.’
  - ‘The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasises how we are different rather than how we are similar.’
  - ‘Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanise. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.’
  - ‘... when we reject the single story, when we realise that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise.’

While these statements serve the purpose of a topic sentence, you will note that Adichie does not necessarily structure her speech through the consistent application of a direct statement followed by supporting examples. Instead, she weaves her points through the speech as they apply. This makes her speech sound more authentic and natural. Longer examples are given their space, while shorter examples are not overwrought.

## Humour

The use of humour can be an important strategy, particularly when you are trying to influence an audience. Humour can be a useful tool because it can make your writing more engaging, memorable and relatable. It can be used to break up serious or heavy topics, making them more palatable and easier to digest. It can also be used to build rapport and connect with your audience, by showing a more human side of yourself.

Humour can be created through witty observations, irony and planned jokes, among other strategies. Adichie primarily relies on witty observations and irony for the humour that she develops in her speech. Thanks to the recorded version of the TED talk, you can identify when Adichie is making a joke as these moments are accompanied by audience laughter. Let’s consider the following quotations for their humour.

- ‘All my characters were white and blue-eyed, they played in the snow, they ate apples ...’
- ‘Never mind that I had no idea what ginger beer was.’
- ‘[The American roommate] was consequently very disappointed when I produced my tape of Mariah Carey.’
- ‘... there was an announcement on the Virgin flight about the charity work in “India, Africa and other countries.”’

- '... it was such a shame that young Americans were serial murderers.'
- [quoting the messenger from the TV station in Lagos] 'I really liked your novel. I didn't like the ending. Now, you must write a sequel, and this is what will happen ...'

You will note that these six moments of laughter are dotted throughout the speech, allowing Adichie to alleviate the tension in the room by offering the audience an opportunity to laugh. As a writer, this is a useful strategy to develop and maintain your audience's interest.

## Tone

Tone describes the attitude or feeling of a text. In a spoken text, you can hear the speaker's tone through their delivery. However, the content and vocabulary are also critical in developing tone.

Conveying the right tone can make a big difference to any communication. Consider the difficulty that you might have faced in the past when someone misunderstood your text message. Perhaps you forgot to include an emoji, and someone thought you were being serious when you were actually joking.

Compare the following text messages.

Sorry, I'm not coming tonight 😊

I'm totally not coming tonight 😊

There's no way I'm coming tonight 😊

On a larger scale, Adichie develops and shifts the tone throughout her speech. Consider how the following tonal words might be used to describe sections of her speech.

Tone	Language description	Creates
Sincere	Honest and genuine, without pretence	Authenticity
Ironic	Implying a contrast between what is stated and what is meant	A feeling of subtle criticism
Sombre	Serious, sad or solemn	A muted emotional intensity
Inspirational	Positive	A sense of motivation, encouragement and upliftment

One word that can describe Adichie's overall approach is generous. She develops this approach by avoiding criticisms of (living) people and acknowledging her own faults. Imagine if Adichie had included a lengthy example where she singled out a particular celebrity or politician for their perpetuation of stereotypes. This might have been effective for some people. However, she chose not to do this, and in the process, she broadened her message's appeal to a wider audience. This is because she does not alienate anyone.

## Listing

An important strategy that Adichie employs in her speech is to list a series of examples. Sometimes this is also emphasised through the repetition of a phrase. Listing examples can be an effective strategy to enhance the clarity of your point, reinforce your ideas and demonstrate a broader range of experiences for the audience to connect with.

Consider the following examples from Adichie's speech.

- 'In this single story, there was no possibility of Africans being similar to her in any way, no possibility of feelings more complex than pity, no possibility of a connection as human equals.'
- 'If I had not grown up in Nigeria, and if all I knew about Africa were from popular images, I too would think that Africa was a place of beautiful landscapes, beautiful animals, and incomprehensible people, fighting senseless wars, dying of poverty and AIDS, unable to speak for themselves, and waiting to be saved by a kind, white foreigner.'
- 'There were endless stories of Mexicans as people who were fleeing the healthcare system, sneaking across the border, being arrested at the border ...'.

These lists serve to make the content more relatable to the audience. Making your content relatable is an important factor in capturing your audience's attention and interest. Lists can also serve to keep the arguments more general in nature. This means that the speaker is maximising the number of people in their audience who can consider their own personal connection to the topic.

## Develop lists to illustrate your points

In this activity, you will develop some lists that are relevant to one of your pieces of writing. These lists can help to illustrate your points by demonstrating a broad range of experiences.

Topic for list	1	2	3
Example from Adichie's speech about a singular perception of Africa.	'beautiful landscapes'	'beautiful animals'	'incomprehensible people'
Places: List places (or descriptions of places) that apply to your topic; for example, places where you feel safe at school.			
Times: List times that apply to your topic; for example, times of the day when you feel most productive.			
Conditions: List conditions that might apply to your topic; for example, the conditions of entry to a venue.			

# EXPLORING ‘THE RED PLASTIC CHAIR IS A VIETNAMESE CULTURAL INSTITUTION, AND MY ANCHOR’

This section explores the second mentor text for Writing about personal journeys: ‘The red plastic chair is a Vietnamese cultural institution, and my anchor’ by Amy Duong. It recounts the author’s experience reconnecting with her mother and her culture following the death of her aunty.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to read Duong’s memoir.

## Background, context and audience

Duong’s personal reflection was entered into the inaugural SBS Emerging Writers’ Competition in 2020. This competition provides emerging writers with the opportunity to have their work published on the SBS website and to receive prize money to ‘further their storytelling future’. In 2020, the emerging writers were asked to share stories of growing up in diverse Australia. There were over 2000 entries, and they were judged by Melissa Lucashenko and Benjamin Law.

‘The red plastic chair is a Vietnamese cultural institution, and my anchor’ was chosen as one of the ‘highly commended’ entries. It was selected to be published in an anthology of the competition entries, *Roots: Home is Who We Are*, where readers can engage with Duong’s story in a paperback copy. It is also available to readers across the world on the ‘SBS Voices’ webpage.

## About the author

Amy Duong grew up in Melbourne and currently lives in Canberra, working for the government as a data analyst. She writes fiction and creative nonfiction in her free time.

Duong discovered the SBS Emerging Writers’ Competition on Instagram. She didn’t think that she would enter the competition at first, because she

didn't think that she had anything that she wanted to write about. It was through hearing about how Melissa Lucashenko was inspired to write about her background that Duong decided to write about her own childhood, with a focus on the generational gap that exists between herself and her migrant parents. She also credits having more time at home to read and write due to the COVID-19 lockdowns for her decision to enter. Her resulting entry marked the first time that she had entered a writing competition.

Given she has a full-time job, Duong manages her writing commitments by getting up earlier in the morning and writing before she goes to work. With regard to future writing projects, Duong plans to 'wing it' and continue entering writing competitions.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to listen to an interview with Amy Duong in which she talks about her writing experience.

## Synopsis

Duong's personal reflection begins with a description of the titular 'red plastic chair'. She establishes why it is a 'Vietnamese cultural institution' through its wide range of purposes. She also develops humour; for example, explaining that it 'goes with absolutely no one's decor'. Her own connection to this object is 'personal rather than functional', as the sight of one triggers memories from her childhood.

The simple plot that runs through Duong's text focuses on her experiences following the death of her aunty, referred to in Vietnamese as Tua Ee. She introduces this event through an exchange of dialogue with her mother in which Duong repeatedly calls on the '90 Vietnamese words' that she remembers. Her aunty was born in China and fled to Vietnam as a teenager. She was forced to move countries again after Vietnam fell to the communists, which is what led her to Australia.

The characterisation of her aunty reveals a generational gap between her mother and aunty's generation and that of Duong herself. Duong considers the lives of her older relatives 'unknowable', elaborating that 'our generational gap was real and it grew wider with each passing year'. A symptom of this is her eroding fluency in the languages of her relatives: 'When my elders spoke to me in Teochew and Vietnamese, I responded in English.'

When Duong arrives at her recently deceased aunty's house, she recognises the 'rituals' of death, but does not understand them. Instead, this setting serves as the backdrop for her to reflect on her relationship with her mother,

who comes out and offers her ‘the sweetest fruit’. This act of selflessness is ‘the language [they] still had in common’. However, this moment of connection is tempered by the concluding observation that Duong knew she would not remain in this Vietnamese–Australian community forever.

## Text annotations

Duong draws on her experiences growing up as a Vietnamese–Australian in the 1990s. She develops the world of the Vietnamese–Australian community in Melbourne, and the experience of growing up in this time more broadly, through her cultural and historical references.

The following table elaborates on some of the cultural and historical references in the text.

Text reference	Elaboration
Pho ( <i>phở</i> )	Pho soup is a Vietnamese dish typically consisting of a clear broth, rice noodles, herbs and meat or seafood. The term ‘pho’ is believed to have originated from the French word <i>feu</i> , which means fire or heat.
Saigon ( <i>Sài Gòn</i> )	The former name of Ho Chi Minh City, Saigon is the largest city in Vietnam and a bustling metropolis known for its rich history, vibrant culture and delicious street food.
‘Careless Whisper’	‘Careless Whisper’ is a popular song by George Michael, released in 1984, known for its memorable saxophone riff and emotional lyrics about a failed relationship.
Vietnamese immigration to Australia	The Vietnam War had a significant impact on immigration to Australia. It prompted the Australian government to accept refugees and immigrants from Vietnam who faced persecution and hardship due to their association with the South Vietnamese government or their opposition to the communist regime.
Tamagotchi	The tamagotchi is a digital pet that was first introduced in Japan in 1996 and gained worldwide popularity as a handheld toy that allowed users to raise and care for a virtual creature.
<i>Deltora Quest</i>	<i>Deltora Quest</i> is a series of children’s fantasy books written by Australian author Emily Rodda. The books follow three friends as they journey through the magical land of Deltora to defeat the evil Shadow Lord and restore peace to the kingdom.

Teochew  
(language)

Teochew language is a Southern Min dialect spoken by the Teochew people, who primarily live in the eastern coastal region of the Guangdong province in China, as well as in other parts of China, South-East Asia and diasporic communities around the world.

## Exploring personal journeys

'The red plastic chair is a Vietnamese cultural institution, and my anchor' reflects on a range of journeys. The central focus is Duong's cultural background and her changing relationship with the Vietnamese–Australian community. In a broader sense, she speaks to the journeys of those who have migrated to Australia and, more poignantly, the experiences of their children.

Here are some important interpretations of the key idea of personal journeys in Duong's reflective work.

- **Cultural identity:** Duong reflects on her shifting relationship to her Vietnamese heritage. As she grows older, she feels herself moving further and further away. This is captured by her loosening grasp over the Teochew and Vietnamese languages.
- **Generational gap:** As her connection with her cultural heritage lessens, the divide between her and her elders' experiences increases.
- **Immigration to Australia:** The immigration story of Duong's mother's family reflects the hardships that they endured to reach Australia. Additionally, there is a sense that they live with the trauma of these experiences.
- **Death and grief:** Tua Ee's death and its subsequent rituals form the central plot of the memoir text. It is a reminder that death often puts things in perspective, and encourages those left behind to reflect on how they are living their lives.

The overall **purpose** of Duong's text is to reflect on the cultural conflict experienced by children of parents who have migrated to Australia. On one hand, there is a rich cultural tapestry to engage with, symbolised by the 'red plastic chair'. On the other hand, there can be complicated feelings of guilt when the children begin to acculturate to broader Australian life.

## The text's form

'The red plastic chair is a Vietnamese cultural institution, and my anchor' is written in the form of a **personal reflection**. A personal reflection is a writing form that allows the writer to share their thoughts, feelings and experiences in relation to a particular topic or event, and to explore how these have impacted on them. It often involves introspection and self-analysis, and can be used as a tool for personal growth and learning.

This personal reflection is an exploration of Duong's experiences before and after the death of her aunty. It has been crafted to be appealing to a broad Australian audience, with a particular focus on meeting the criteria and impressing the judges of the SBS Emerging Writers' Competition.

Key features of this personal reflection include the following.



## Reflect on your milestones

In this activity you will begin developing a personal reflection on one of your life milestones. Consider the following options and see which one sparks your creativity.

- **Early childhood:** What are your earliest memories? Why do you think these are memories that you have retained? Is there anything humorous or surprising about the memories? Is there anything embarrassing?
- **Educational experiences:** Who have been the most influential people in your education so far? Were they a good or bad influence – why? What lessons did they teach you, either from the official curriculum or just a life lesson?
- **Epic failures:** What do you consider to be your greatest mistakes? What caused these mistakes and what were the consequences? Who could have (or should have) helped you? What did you learn from these mistakes, if anything?

## The text's features

Duong uses a number of text features to convey her ideas. A selection of these writing structures, language features and word choices has been identified below.

### Motif

The motif of the 'red plastic chair' is central to Duong's personal reflection. A motif is a recurring element, image or theme in a work of literature. Motifs may be objects, colours, words or even ideas that appear throughout the work in different contexts. They operate as symbolic or meaningful patterns that help to develop the overall message of the work, often through reinforcing themes and creating a sense of unity and coherence.

Duong uses the red plastic chair to represent her Vietnamese culture. She is clear about this from the outset:

It weighs almost nothing; it represents so much. It is an ambassador of Vietnamese street food; a loyal companion to all good phở. It is culture. It is nostalgia. Sometimes, it is even a makeshift bin.

For Vietnamese families in Australia, the chair is an integral part of community life.

For her personally, the chair is also a link to memories and experiences that she is beginning to forget. It is a bridge back to a time when she was more enmeshed in the Vietnamese community, that is, before she grew up and into the ‘growing divide’ between Vietnamese culture and ‘Australian perfection’.

In addition to its symbolic meaning, the motif of the red plastic chair also serves to make connections throughout the narrative. Here is its thread woven through the story:

- The opening passages of the personal reflection introduce the red plastic chair and its symbolic meaning.
- After Tua Ee dies, Duong’s mother asks Duong to bring a stack of the red plastic chairs to the family gathering.
- They use a red plastic chair to help organise piles of the recently deceased aunty’s clothing.
- Duong recalls a time when she interacted with her aunty, who was sitting on a red plastic chair.
- Duong arrives at the gathering, bringing the stack of plastic chairs with her. She notices other people who are also carrying their own stacks.
- Near the end of the story: ‘The red chair framed [the sweetest fruit] in perfect symmetry.’

Given the short narrative has a number of time jumps, the use of the red plastic chair as a motif adds more logic and coherence to the structure. The references also tend to signpost important moments in the reflection.

## Develop a motif

This activity will help you select an appropriate motif for your writing. For each of the options provided, consider four or five applications in one of your pieces of writing.

Sample motif	1	2	3	4
Red plastic chair	Introduction to the significance of the chairs	Duong’s mother asks her to bring a stack of chairs	Using the chair to hold Tua Ee’s belongings	The chair frames ‘the sweetest fruit’
Colour				
Fruit				
Animal				

## Imagery

Beyond the use of motif, Duong uses a range of strategies to develop the imagery in her writing. She uses metaphors, similes and sensory descriptions to express and emphasise the feelings that underpin her personal reflection.

Regardless of the form of your writing, it is important to use a range of writing strategies to convey emotional weight. The following table explains some of Duong's examples of imagery and their intended effects.

<b>Metaphor</b>	<b>Effect</b>
'No doubt one day these chairs will fill the oceans, but for now they float through my memories weighing almost nothing, but carrying so much.'	This metaphor illustrates the author's loose connection with her Vietnamese culture. The image of the chairs floating suggests that the ties are not robust.
'I knew that I was too late. The ties that bind had come undone.'	Extending from the metaphor above, this example further elucidates the lengthening gap between Duong and her cultural background.
<b>Simile</b>	<b>Effect</b>
'The plastic chair was like a plinth, revealing the contents of a life barely lived.'	This simile emphasises Duong's reflection on her aunty's life. The fact that this 'life barely lived' sits atop the red plastic chair is significant as it represents a future that causes the author sadness and discomfort.
'I unveiled them like a priceless statue at an auction.'	Here the author is expressing the significance of these chairs. It has already been made clear that they are quite cheap, so this simile reminds the reader of their sentimental value.
<b>Sensory description</b>	<b>Effect</b>
'One glimpse of that deep red (is it for luck? Prosperity? Longevity?) and suddenly I am on the streets of Sài Gòn, petrol fumes swirling around me.'	This reference to the smell and perhaps even the sight of a petrol shimmer evokes a clear image of Saigon, which may connect with the reader's experiences of visiting South-East Asia.
'I ran my fingers over the sleeves; I touched the fraying seams. They felt so fragile.'	The description of touch is intended to evoke her aunty's selflessness in choosing to wear down a small pool of clothing, rather than wearing the new outfits she had purchased.

## Use of languages other than English

Including vocabulary from a language other than English that you know well can be a successful writing strategy for a number of reasons. Firstly, it can make your writing more authentic and culturally relevant. This is particularly important when the vocabulary or expression does not have a direct equivalent in English. Drawing on foreign vocabulary can convey a more nuanced and culturally specific meaning that would be difficult to express in English.

Additionally, this writing strategy can help to develop the authenticity and uniqueness of your authorial voice. Not everyone shares your cultural background, so drawing on this in your writing can be an advantage. Australia is a proudly multicultural and multilingual country, and although this high school subject is called 'English', it is really about communication. Making contextual use of languages other than English can highlight the richness of other languages, which is something worth appreciating.

One word of caution is to remember your audience when drawing on languages other than English. Making sparing use of a couple of phrases from another language – as Duong does – can be highly successful. This is because the audience can make sense of the words through contextual clues, both direct and indirect. However, if you overuse foreign vocabulary, it may confuse the reader and prevent them from following your narrative thread.

Consider the following examples of expressions which have no direct or convenient translation in English.

- *Déjà vu* (French): this expression is commonly used in English, but we still use the exact French, including the accents. It captures the uncanny feeling that one has lived through the present situation before.
- *Wabi-sabi* (Japanese 侘寂): refers to the Japanese art of finding beauty in imperfection. For example, remaking a broken pot with golden joiner to highlight where the break once was.
- *Jiā yóu* (Mandarin 加油): a ubiquitous Chinese expression of encouragement and support. It literally translates to 'add oil' (to your fire).

One of the key narrative threads in 'The red plastic chair is a Vietnamese cultural institution, and my anchor' is the exploration of the author's weakening grasp over her family's home languages. Therefore, it is significant that she chooses to include Vietnamese vocabulary, using letters from the Vietnamese alphabet, as well as Teochew. The words that she includes are: phở (noodle soup), Sài Gòn (Ho Chi Minh City) and Tua Ee (oldest maternal aunt).

# EXPLORING ‘BIDNGEN’

This section explores the third mentor text for Writing about personal journeys: ‘bidngen’ by Maya Hodge. This autobiographical short story shifts between the challenges encountered growing up in Mildura and the positive elements of being surrounded by strong representations of First Nations culture.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to read ‘bidngen’.

## Background, context and audience

Like Duong’s reflective work, Hodge’s memoir text was also entered into the SBS Emerging Writers’ Competition. Hodge was among nearly 4000 writers who entered the competition in its second year. In 2021, the competition was judged by Tara June Winch and Behrouz Boochani, and the theme was ‘Between Two Worlds’.

‘bidngen’ was awarded as one of two runners-up in the competition, sharing the title with Arky Michael for his entry, ‘Songbird’. Both these texts were published in an anthology of the best competition entries, titled *Between Two Worlds*. Readers can read Hodge’s story in this paperback anthology or online through the ‘SBS Voices’ webpage.

## About the author

Maya Hodge is a Lardil and Yangkaal woman who grew up in Latje Latje Country / Mildura. She currently lives in Naarm/Melbourne and works as a poet and curator. Hodge was inspired to enter the competition to record her story and the story of her family:

I entered the competition because I’d never really told my story before in a writing format. It was an exploration for me personally, and for the women in my family. I thought it was important to record my story down in that long story of women – for my matriarchal line ... I’ve been trying to reclaim my own language. I was speaking the words of my great-grandmother. That’s what inspired me, my great-grandmother and the amazing Blak writers that I read every day.

This was the first time that Hodge had written in a memoir format, as she normally writes poetry. She found it challenging to write about herself, but it was worth it for the chance to honour her family. In the future, she plans to continue writing more short stories and poetry, in addition to her curatorship.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to read about Maya Hodge's inspirations for the SBS Emerging Writers' Competition, along with those of the other 2021 winners.

## Synopsis

Hodge's memoir text is structured around her relationship with her matriarchal line and the Lardil language of her ancestors. She uses subheadings to introduce concepts in the Lardil language as a structural feature.

- **jarde:** Hodge begins with a reference to the Rainbow Serpent ('Thuwathu') Dreamtime story. This introduces a thread of references to Dreamtime stories.
- **Latje Latje Country:** The next section establishes the setting in which Hodge grew up, Mildura. She contrasts the beautiful natural features with the poverty and racism evident there.
- **bidngen:** The titular 'bidngen' section characterises Hodge's great-grandmother and grandmother. The depictions are quite different, with her great-grandmother being 'the last tie to Gununa, her Ancestral land' and her grandmother described as 'laying in her hospital bed'.
- **burdal:** Hodge explores her relationship with music and the violin.
- **kangka reman:** Elaborating on her interests, Hodge recounts her love of reading and writing as a child.
- **thuwara:** Here Hodge introduces the other side of her family who live near Melbourne ('Wurundjeri mountainsides'), particularly focusing on her relationship with her Nanna.
- **ngaltha:** This short anecdote expresses her feelings of anger after her 'first individual experience of racism' while she was working at a cafe.
- **warrka:** The final section of the memoir text delves into Hodge's complicated relationship with her memories; some are 'still locked behind the locked doors of her fading mind, for reasons she can't really explain'. She concludes with a reflection that writing has been a useful tool for her to consider her connections with her ancestral home.

## Text annotations

Hodge had primarily written poetry before penning 'bidngen', so there are many layered references in her vocabulary and expressions. In particular, she makes extensive use of Lardil language in her writing.

The following table includes elaborations on some of the references made by Hodge in her memoir text.

Text reference	Elaboration
Lardil (language)	Lardil is an Australian language spoken by the Lardil people of Mornington Island, which is in the Gulf of Carpentaria in Queensland. According to the 2021 Census, it has approximately 301 speakers.
Thuwathu	The Rainbow Serpent is a central figure in the creation stories of many Australian First Nations cultures. The serpent's association with water links it to fertility and abundance, and its ability to shed its skin and emerge anew makes it a symbol of transformation and rebirth.
Dreamtime	The Dreamtime is a term used by First Nations Australians to describe the period of creation and the spiritual world that existed before and beyond the material world.
Latje Latje Country/Mildura	Mildura is a regional city located in the far north-west of Victoria, Australia, which has a diverse cultural heritage. Mildura is known for its sunny climate, scenic location on the Murray River and thriving agricultural industry, particularly in citrus fruits and almonds.
Nulla nulla	The nulla nulla is a traditional First Nations Australian hunting and fighting tool, also known as a war club. It was typically made from a hardwood tree branch or root and used for hunting animals or as a weapon in conflicts.
Racism towards First Nations Australians	Stereotypes about First Nations Australians have their roots in colonialism. When European settlers arrived, they created a society that systematically marginalised and oppressed First Nations Australians.

## Exploring personal journeys

'bidngen' reflects on personal journeys on multiple levels. At its heart, it explores the author's own journeys growing up, engaging with her ancestral history and connection to land. On another level, there are direct references to the Dreamtime that emphasise the author's engagement with her cultural identity.

Here are some key interpretations of personal journeys in Hodge's memoir text.

- **Growing up:** Hodge reflects on her experiences growing up in Mildura and Melbourne, with a focus on some of the hardships that she and her family went through due to their economic circumstances and the discrimination they faced in their community.
- **Ancestral line:** One of the key motivations for Hodge to write this text was her interest in exploring her matriarchal line. This is a journey through her family tree, following the line of the women. The use of Lardil language is an important element in exploring this journey.
- **Discrimination:** Confronting racism is a constant source of tension in Hodge's personal reflections. These experiences serve to demonstrate the additional challenges that she has been forced to encounter due to the unresolved racial tensions that have existed in Australia since colonisation.
- **Dreamtime:** Throughout the text there are references to the Dreamtime interwoven with the biographical recounts. These references draw connections between the modern world and the journeys of those who have gone before us on these lands for tens of thousands of years.

Hodge's overall **purpose** is to reflect on her identity as a Lardil and Yangkaal woman, and how this connects to her ancestral line. She wants to express her connection with place and land, and how this motivates her writing. The structural use of Lardil language demonstrates that maintaining a connection with her linguistic heritage is important for Hodge.

## The text's form

'bidngen' is a **memoir text** that recounts biographical details from Hodge's life. A memoir text tells the story of a person's life, often focusing on significant events or experiences that have shaped their identity or world view. Unlike an autobiography, which typically covers the author's entire life in chronological order, memoirs tend to be more focused and selective in their scope. Memoir

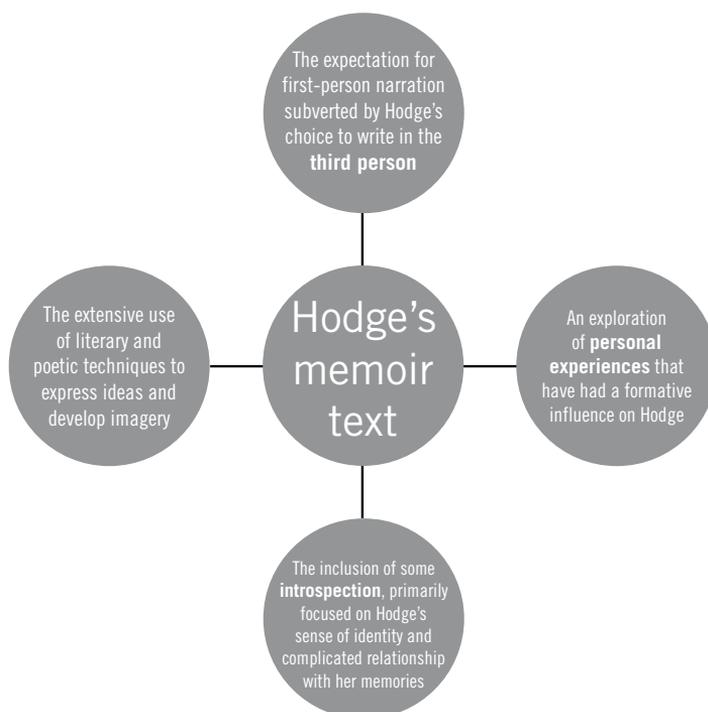
texts can provide valuable insights into individual experiences and perspectives, as well as into the social, cultural and historical contexts in which those experiences occurred.

The structure of 'bidngen' is nonlinear and not plot-driven. Instead, it features a series of snapshots from Hodge's childhood separated by subheadings that feature Lardil vocabulary. These experiences appear to follow a somewhat chronological order; however, this is not made explicit in the writing. Instead, the structure is more focused on following a thematic thread. It explores the author's journey in connecting with her matriarchal line and reflecting on her connection to place.

While memoir texts are normally written in a first-person voice, Hodge chooses to write in the third person, using she/her pronouns. This creates distance between herself as a writer and her experiences as the subject, and also provides the opportunity for more objective self-reflection. This stylistic choice is a reminder that you have the ability to be flexible in your approach to writing a memoir text.

Writing a memoir text can provide you with an opportunity to express your life creatively and share the insights that you have gained from your personal experiences. This text form can be particularly liberating for writers who have been traditionally marginalised or silenced, as it allows you to assert your own agency and perspective.

Key features of this memoir text include the following.



## Craft a creative memoir text

---

When we try to remember an event from the past, we are often unsure about the small details. Fortunately, writers have artistic licence to add a bit of creativity to flesh out these details. An important consideration is aiming to maintain the integrity of the memory.

- 1 Select a memory or series of memories that you want to explore in your writing. You might like to build on an idea that you developed in response to the 'Reflect on your milestones' activity in the previous section.
- 2 Conduct thorough research and collect information from credible sources (including interviews) to support your narrative and add depth to your piece.
- 3 Organise your piece into a clear and logical structure, with a compelling opening, a middle that explores your topic, and a strong conclusion which reflects on your purpose.
- 4 Incorporate creative elements such as vivid descriptions, dialogue and poetic language to bring your memoir text to life and make it engaging for the reader.

## The text's features

A number of text features in 'bidngen' could inspire your writing. A sample of Maya Hodge's writing structures and language features are identified below.

### Setting

Hodge's memoir text is set in places that are referred to by their First Nations titles. For example, 'Latje Latje Country' corresponds to Mildura and 'Wurundjeri mountainsides' corresponds to an area in the Melbourne region.

Connection to place is an idea explored by Hodge in her writing. Her ancestral home is Gununa, in the lands of the Lardil people. However, she grew up in Latje Latje Country. At the time of writing this memoir text, she is situated on Wurundjeri land. She expresses how she feels drawn back to the places where she and her ancestors have come from. For example, she concludes with the thought of 'returning back to the scrub and the river of Latje Latje Country where home beats as steadily as her bulja (heart)'. This reflects the enduring connection that many people hold to the places where they have lived or places that are important to their family.

Additionally, Hodge paints vivid pictures of landscapes more broadly, including the creation of places in the Dreamtime. In particular, she refers to Thuwathu (Rainbow Serpent) who 'created vast valleys, winding waterways and scattered landscapes'.

Here are a couple of key passages where Hodge develops the setting in 'bidngen'.

Passage exploring setting	Explanation
'A little Lardil girl and her brother grow up along the winding river on Latje Latje Country and underneath the canopies of dust-coated eucalyptus ... they fish on the soft green slow-moving river, underneath the cool shade of the old gums they sit with aunties and uncles and breathe in the hot dirt smell.'	This introduction to Hodge's upbringing in Mildura expresses the beauty of the Australian landscape. She describes the 'eucalyptus', 'old gums' and 'hot dirt smell'. This final description develops the sense of heat in this place, in addition to 'dust-coated' and the need for 'cool shade' under the trees.
'They grow up faster than most kids do in a town festering in generational racism and drugs.'	Hodge introduces some of the social features of Mildura, including 'generational racism and drugs'. This introduces one of the key challenges faced by Hodge and her family.
'The girl walks home from highschool in the stagnant heat on a fifty degree day, with her violin strapped to her sweat-soaked back. Fatigue dripped between her brows and her shoulder blades, watching as her peers drove home in air-conditioned cars.'	This passage also touches on the pervasive heat which infiltrated Hodge's upbringing: 'fifty degree day' and 'sweat-soaked'. This is contrasted to the injustice of watching her more privileged classmates who are able to escape the heat.
'She dragged her feet on hot concrete as she walked the long way home to the crumbling house. Her footsteps in time like waves against the shoreline.'	The reference to 'waves against the shoreline' links to a motif in this text: the recurrence of bodies of water. Within this hellish landscape, Hodge associates her journey home with the ocean tide.

## Motif

Descriptions of water and waterways act as a motif in Hodge's memoir text. Water holds deep cultural significance for many First Nations Australians,

who consider it a sacred and living entity. They believe that water has its own spirit and that it is connected to the land and to their own identity. For many First Nations Australians, water is seen as a life-giving force and a source of cultural knowledge, connection and transfer.

Applying this understanding to 'bidngen' can reveal its significance at multiple points in the memoir text:

- 'Thuwathu created vast valleys, winding waterways ...'
- 'A little Lardil girl and her brother grow up along the winding river on Latje Latje Country ...'
- 'She plays to the angry ocean tides and the waterways to soothe them ...'
- 'Her footsteps in time like waves against the shoreline.'
- 'This young woman writes along the snaking spine of the Maribyrrong and thinks of how waterways always return home; to salt and sea.'

## Contrasts

In response to the theme 'Between Two Worlds', Hodge makes frequent use of contrasts in her memoir text. Writers use contrasts to create interest, tension and depth in a story. By presenting two or more opposing elements, writers can emphasise differences and highlight the ideas they are exploring.

In her text, Hodge contrasts the elements of Western society with descriptions of nature. This is evident in the following quote: 'They grow up faster than most kids do in a town festering in generational racism and drugs. But on good days, they fish on the soft green slow-moving river'. She also contrasts the negative elements of her upbringing, such as growing up 'in a crumbling house with holes in the floors and busted leaking pipes', with positive reflections, such as 'despite this, they stitched the house together with love'.

By providing contrasting descriptions, Hodge is able to develop more nuance in her writing. She encourages her readers to question assumptions that they may have about her upbringing. For example, a reader might see the reference to 'racism and drugs' and decide that this aligns with their preconceptions about growing up in a regional community. However, the contrast with the positive memory of going fishing subverts an expectation that her childhood was a series of negative experiences.

## Poetic elements

Authors often use poetic language in memoir texts to convey emotions, memories and experiences in vivid and meaningful ways. By using poetic language, writers can create a deeper connection with the reader and evoke a more visceral response to their story. Poetic language can also add a layer of beauty and depth to the text, creating an impactful reading experience.

As a poet, Hodge makes extensive use of poetic elements to enrich the descriptions and imagery in her memoir text. She uses metaphors, similes and alliteration to illuminate complex emotions and experiences, making them more accessible to the reader.

Metaphor	Effect
'... they stitched the house together with love.'	This metaphor expresses the family effort required to maintain their relationships and keep life on track despite hardships.
'The memories are still locked behind the locked doors of her fading mind ...'	Hodge is reflecting on the still unresolved trauma that she experienced as a child. Given she states that she has not unlocked the 'memories' from her past, it is unsurprising that they remain a mystery for the reader as well.
Simile	Effect
'... her curly hair lay like a halo upon her pillow.'	The author uses this simile to describe the memory of her grandmother as she lay in a hospital bed. The reference to a 'halo' implies that she was a good woman, and perhaps suggests the belief that she had a good afterlife waiting for her.
'Her footsteps in time like waves against the shoreline.'	Hodge associates herself with the tide, reinforcing the use of waterways as a motif. This reflects her connection to her culture, particularly its ability to withstand repeated challenges.





Alliteration	Effect
'... vast valleys, winding waterways ...'	This opening use of alliteration develops a mystical mood when Hodge relates the story of Thuwathu from the Dreamtime.
'This little <b>g</b> irl <b>g</b> rew up in a <b>h</b> ouse that <b>h</b> eld <b>h</b> eavy <b>m</b> elancholic <b>m</b> emories, leaving the girl with invisible scars <b>b</b> eneath her <b>b</b> rown skin.'	This sentence makes frequent use of alliteration. It gives the sentence musicality, creating a sense of a children's storybook for the reader.

## Develop poetic language

It can be difficult to know where and when to add poetic language to your writing. Use the following suggestions to generate more descriptive writing.

<p><b>Emotions:</b> Create a metaphor to enhance the emotional weight of your writing in a significant scene. The best metaphors are those whose imagery feels relevant to the writing.</p>	<p><b>Ideas:</b> Consider the key ideas and themes in your text. Brainstorm images that can be associated with these ideas and thread these descriptions through your writing.</p>
<p><b>Sensory details:</b> Identify a setting that you want to develop. Reflect on the sights, smells, tastes, sounds and textures you might experience if you were in this environment, and add the most impactful of these to your work.</p>	<p><b>Important events and points:</b> Select the climax or central idea in your text. Consider how you can emphasise its importance through a series of poetic language devices: metaphors, similes and alliteration.</p>

# EXPLORING WALTER'S SPEECH FROM *THE INHERITANCE*

This section explores the final mentor text for Writing about personal journeys: Walter's speech from *The Inheritance* by Matthew López. Set in New York City three decades after the height of the AIDS epidemic, *The Inheritance* grapples with the ongoing impact of the virus on the queer community.

Matthew López's play explores relationships and connections across age groups, 'asking what one generation's responsibilities may be to the next'. Walter's speech is a monologue which has been extracted from Part 1, Act 1, Scene 5.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to view the monologue.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to read a transcript of the monologue.

## Background, context and audience

*The Inheritance* was originally commissioned by Hartford Stage, an American theatre in Connecticut. The world premiere was performed in March 2018 in London at the Young Vic, which is known for nurturing young and emerging theatre talent. The production was divided into two parts, which were performed over two nights.

López's play was transferred to the Noël Coward Theatre in the West End of London, beginning performances in September 2018. The West End of London is a world-renowned theatre district, which attracts a broad audience comprising locals as well as domestic and international tourists. Performances only make it to the West End with a great deal of financial support and a good business case for attendance.

A revised version of the play opened at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre in the Broadway district of New York City, beginning performances in November 2019. Like London's West End, Broadway theatres attract audience members

from all over the world. The play continued into 2020 until its schedule was interrupted by theatre closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A version of the extracted speech was recorded during the COVID-19 pandemic by 33 friends, colleagues and acquaintances of the author of *The Inheritance*. This version is available on YouTube under the title 'The Walter Project'. It was produced in collaboration with The AIDS Memorial to commemorate World AIDS Day. HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is a virus that attacks the body's immune system. If HIV is not treated, it can lead to AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). There is currently no effective cure. Once people get HIV, they have it for life. Today there is effective treatment which means that people with HIV can live regular lives.

## About the author

Matthew López is an American playwright known for his critically acclaimed and award-winning works for the stage. He was born in Panama City, Florida, and grew up in the Florida Panhandle. López received his Bachelor of Arts from the University of South Florida, where he majored in theatre performance.

López's breakthrough play, *The Whipping Man*, premiered off Broadway in 2011 and received widespread recognition for its unique exploration of race, religion and identity in the aftermath of the Civil War. The play was a critical success and has been produced in theatres across the United States, earning numerous awards and nominations.

In 2018, López's epic two-part play *The Inheritance* premiered. The play explores the lives of gay men in New York City a generation after the AIDS epidemic and received widespread acclaim for its poignant storytelling and powerful themes of love, loss and legacy. López himself is an openly gay playwright who has spoken about his personal connection to the material in *The Inheritance*. He has stated that he wanted to pay tribute to the queer activists who fought for queer rights and visibility during the AIDS crisis, and to honour the lives lost to the epidemic. López also wanted to examine the complexities of being a gay man in contemporary society.

López has been recognised with prestigious awards for his contributions to theatre, including the 2019 Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Play (London) and the 2020 Tony Award for Best Play (New York) for *The Inheritance*, and has been hailed as one of the leading voices in contemporary American theatre. His plays often tackle complex social issues with emotional depth, compassion and a keen sense of humanity.

## Synopsis

Eric and Toby live in a rent-controlled apartment in the same building as Walter and Henry. At Thanksgiving in 2016, Eric and Walter find themselves without their partners for the holiday. So they have dinner together. Eric is an inquisitive man and during their dinner he asks Walter to tell him about his relationship with Henry. This prompts Walter to deliver the speech that we are studying.

Walter begins with a short biography of his lover, Henry Wilcox. Before he met Walter, Henry married a woman and had two sons. He was a hard worker and his success in business led him to move his family to New York City. While his business success continued, he was also drawn into the temptation of pursuing his sexual urges. Eventually this led him to meet Walter and the two began a romance.

While Henry was living his life as a closeted gay man, Walter moved to New York to live more openly. The conflict between their attitudes to both their own sexuality and their community remains a point of contention. It motivates their actions and attitudes.

Shortly after getting together, rumours of a new virus which affected gay men began to circulate. In response, Walter and Henry 'clung to each other for safety, for comfort, as the city burned'. After watching the AIDS epidemic ravage their friendship circle, the couple decided to escape the city and move to the countryside.

They bought a 'rambling old farmhouse' built in the late eighteenth century in the middle of nowhere. In front of this house was 'an enormous cherry tree', which superstition suggested 'cures all ailments'. This place became a haven for the couple, away from death, disease and a growing social stigma for the gay community.

After spending a year with Walter avoiding the outside world, Henry began travelling to London for work. Walter grew restless and returned to New York City, quickly bumping into an old friend, Peter West, who was infected with the virus. Peter was homeless and suffering so Walter brought him home to the farmhouse and cared for him while he died.

Henry returned to discover that Walter had brought the virus into their home. Full of rage and fear, he left and refused to contact Walter for several months. Eventually, he transferred ownership of the house into Walter's name.

While Henry wanted to 'shut the world out', Walter decided to 'fling the doors open and to invite it in'. He continued to welcome 'friends ... acquaintances and eventually ... strangers' into the country home. There he

cared for them when they had nowhere else to go: ‘One by one they came to my house, and one by one they died there.’

Later on in the play, after the monologue, Walter’s ‘rambling old farmhouse’ becomes the central point of tension. Walter dies and his dying wish is to bequeath the house to Eric. He does this on a paper note. This inheritance of the house comes to symbolise the trauma caused by the AIDS epidemic: a trauma inherited by the next generation of the queer community.

## Text annotations

Matthew López was inspired by EM Forster’s novel *Howards End* in his creation of *The Inheritance*. The central plot device, the inheritance of the country house, is taken directly from Forster’s novel. López’s play also refers to the inspiration directly through the inclusion of the character EM Forster, referred to as ‘Morgan’, who narrates the play and grapples with his own questions about the legacy of his body of writing.

There are additional literary allusions and historical references within the monologue itself. López uses these references to explore and emphasise key moments and develop the context for the story. The following table identifies and explains the historical and cultural references in Walter’s speech.

Text reference	Elaboration
Aaron Copland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Aaron Copland (1900–1990) was an American composer</li> <li>· known for his distinctive and iconic symphonic works</li> <li>· that often evoke the landscapes, traditions and spirit of America.</li> </ul>
Episcopalianism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The Episcopal Church is based in the United States of America and is a member of the worldwide Anglican communion.</li> </ul>
Wilcox family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Henry’s family name is a direct link to <i>Howards End</i>. The Wilcox family in Forster’s novel are the wealthy landowners who cling to their social class in a time of change.</li> </ul>
28 June 1969	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· This is the date marking the beginning of the Stonewall Inn riots: a series of spontaneous, violent protests by the LGBTQIA+ community in response to a police raid at the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York City.</li> </ul>
East Side Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The East Side Club is a famous sauna in New York City. It is a location where men go to have sex with men.</li> </ul>
Christopher Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· The heart of the gay scene in Greenwich Village in New York City.</li> </ul>

AIDS epidemic in America	The response to the AIDS epidemic in America was marked by fear, stigma and inaction. The president at the time, Ronald Reagan, was seen as initially downplaying the severity of the epidemic, which delayed a comprehensive response.
George Washington and cherry trees	George Washington (1732–99) was the first president of the United States. When he was a boy, he was given a hatchet, which he then used to cut down a cherry tree. His father confronted him, and he confessed, stating 'I cannot tell a lie'. Ironically, the veracity of this story is questionable.
The enormous cherry tree	This is another direct reference to <i>Howards End</i> , as there is a wych-elm that grows beside the Howards End estate. As in Forster's novel, López uses the tree as a symbol of stability amid conflict and change.
The pig's teeth	The belief that there is a set of pig's teeth embedded in the cherry tree's trunk is also a reference to the wych-elm in <i>Howards End</i> . In both texts, there is a superstition that biting into the bark of the tree 'cures all ailments'.

## Develop literary and historical references

Referring to other texts, stories and historical moments can enrich your writing by adding complexity and layers of depth. Such references can also provide important context and world-building for your audience. Most importantly, the inclusion of nuanced referencing can showcase and highlight your text knowledge and interests.

Refer to the examples from Walter's speech and consider how you can employ the same strategy.

Reference	Example	Your turn
Simile	'As American as an Aaron Copland symphony'	As _____ as _____. <i>e.g. As Melburnian as a Brunswick barista.</i>
Literary allusion	References to <i>Howards End</i>	Identify a book, film, TV series or other text that you love, and consider how you can adapt its journeys in your own writing.





Significant historical date	'The events of June 1969'	Identify an important historical event related to your topic. Alternatively, build a story from a historical event that is important to you.
Significant historical era or event	The AIDS epidemic	Consider a historical era that could provide a backdrop to your writing.
Folk story	'An enormous cherry tree that has been there since the time George Washington was out terrorising them'	Refer to a local folk story or legend that can provide further background for the setting or a character.

## Exploring personal journeys

Walter's speech recounts a range of journeys. He is telling both his own story and the history of his community. Furthermore, there is also the journey enacted through the telling and receiving of the story.

There are multiple ways to interpret the concept of personal journeys in this extract from the play.

- **Romantic journey:** Walter is sharing the story of his relationship with Henry, including the struggles of maintaining romance as a same-sex couple in 1980s America.
- **Community struggle:** The story provides examples of the experiences of those who suffered, and in some cases died, from complications caused by AIDS.
- **The role of property:** The setting of the farmhouse also undergoes a journey, as it transforms from a place of escape into a hospice for Walter's friends who are dying.
- **The power of sharing stories:** This story also forms a part of a broader narrative. Walter's monologue marks the beginning of Walter and Eric's cross-generational friendship which leads to the bequeathment of the house later on in the play.

Overall, the **purpose** is to express the devastating impact of the AIDS epidemic on a generation of gay men, and how this trauma continues to reverberate through subsequent generations. While it is a journey full of fear and despair, at its heart lies the hope that those who remain can learn from the mistakes of the past.

## The text's form

*The Inheritance* is a fictional play and Walter's speech is a **monologue** which has been extracted from the full text. A monologue is a powerful and versatile storytelling tool that allows a character to express their inner thoughts, feelings and motivations. As a writer, you have the opportunity to delve deep into the heart of a character and reveal their unique perspective on a situation or issue. Monologues can be delivered as speeches, soliloquies or internal reflections. They can be used to create high-impact scenes, develop a character's backstory or explore their emotional journey.

This monologue is one of the most emotional and poignant parts of the entire play. It is told from the perspective of Walter, an older gay man living in New York, and it features his voice. The monologue is directed to a specific audience: Eric, a younger gay man. 'The Walter Project' recorded version of the monologue features a range of celebrities reading sections of the monologue. However, it was intended to be performed by one actor playing Walter and listened to by another actor playing Eric. Indeed, if you are able to obtain the original script you will note that Eric interrupts the monologue on a few occasions.

Key features of this monologue include the following.



## Craft a character monologue

---

In this activity, you will compose a brief, engaging monologue for a character in less than fifteen minutes.

- 1 Firstly, choose a character from a favourite book or film.
- 2 Identify the character's motivations, making notes about their fears and desires.
- 3 Develop the character's voice. Focus on their unique thoughts, feelings and attitudes.
- 4 Compose a short original monologue (between one and two minutes in length) that showcases the character's perspective on an incident, situation or relationship. Ensure you include the key features of a monologue.
- 5 Share your monologue with a peer for feedback, and discuss how effectively it captures the character's distinct voice and perspective.

Crafting a compelling monologue can be a challenging task, but by following these key tips, you can create a powerful and engaging speech.

- **Choose a strong central idea:** A good monologue should have a clear idea or theme that ties the speech together and gives it purpose. Choose a topic that you are passionate about, and which will resonate with your audience.
- **Use concrete, sensory details:** To create a vivid and engaging monologue, use description to help your audience visualise and experience what you are talking about. Think about sights, sounds, smells, tastes and textures.
- **Create a strong voice:** A monologue should have a powerful, consistent voice that reflects the personality and attitude of the speaker. Think about the language, tone and pacing that will best convey your character's voice and emotions.
- **Use pacing and rhythm to create tension:** Monologues that build tension and release it are often the most engaging. Use pace (indicated by stage directions) and rhythm to create tension and keep your audience engaged throughout your speech.
- **Use repetition and variation:** Repetition can be a powerful tool in creating a memorable and impactful monologue. Use repetition to create a sense of urgency or emphasis, but be sure to vary your language to keep your audience engaged.

- **Edit and refine:** Once you have a draft, take the time to review and polish it. Pay attention to pacing, structure and language, and cut any unnecessary words or ideas. Rehearse your monologue several times to get a sense of how it sounds when spoken aloud.

## The text's features

Matthew López uses a number of text features in *The Inheritance* that can inspire your own writing. A sample of these writing structures, language features and vocabulary choices are identified below.

### Setting

Setting in a monologue is developed through the language and descriptions provided by the character. Since there may not be stage directions or other characters to interact with, the character's words and expressions become crucial in creating a sense of setting. In Walter's speech, a few key settings support Eric's understanding of Walter's personal journeys.

Setting	Evidence in text	Interpretation
America outside New York City	Walter describes his hometown as 'hostile' to him as a gay man. 'Every walk through town felt dangerous, every school day possessed the potential for violence.'	This setting serves as a contrast to the liberty and community that Walter finds when he arrives in New York.
	Henry, however, is able to thrive in his hometown, where he is 'on his way to a life of success and diligence and robust Episcopalianism'.	This reflects that one's experiences and perceptions can shape a description of a setting.
Greenwich Village (gay neighbourhood), New York City	'It was the only place in the world I knew to look for young men like me', says Walter. He is even offered directions to the Stonewall Inn by a 'very friendly pimp'.	Despite being a larger city, where one might expect more crime and violence, the way Walter describes New York City makes it appear like a haven for gay men.
	After the AIDS epidemic begins, 'the city burned around [Walter and Henry]'.	This demonstrates that setting does not necessarily remain static.



<p>→ The country farmhouse</p>	<p>This is the key setting and the focus of the monologue. It is located on an 'aimless country road' and creates 'the illusion of being alone in the world'.</p>	<p>It is the perfect place to escape from the chaos that is carving its way through the queer community in the city.</p>
	<p>The 'enormous cherry tree' turns red through autumn 'as if the tree were on fire'.</p>	<p>The cherry tree serves as a symbol of both the house's place in nature and the stability that it provides in uncertain times.</p>
	<p>After Walter begins bringing the men 'in their last days' to die under the farmhouse's roof, it becomes a hospice.</p>	<p>López uses this setting to show how one's fortune can be shared with others in their times of need.</p>

## Characterisation

Characterisation is the process by which a writer creates and develops a fictional character in an imaginative text. Through characterisation, the writer can give the character a unique voice, personality and backstory, making them feel like a well-rounded, believable person to the audience. What a character says, the way they say it, how they look and dress, their actions and decisions, and how they interact with other characters are just some of the ways that writers might construct characters.

The key characters in this monologue are Walter, Henry and Eric.

- **Walter:** An older gay man who lives in the same building as Eric. At first, he describes himself as 'moony', 'effeminate' and 'delicate'. After arriving in New York and seeking out the Stonewall Inn, Walter found that it had closed and become a Chinese restaurant. Despite his disappointment, he 'knew that [he] had made the right decision'. This reflects his optimism, which eventually blossoms into kindness and compassion. He looks after those who are dying from complications arising from AIDS. As the speaker, he does not dwell on describing his own kindness, but it is implied.
- **Henry:** Walter's life partner is the key focus of the monologue. He is therefore characterised in the greatest detail, with both positive and negative attributes. Walter initially lists a series of biographical details that reveal Henry's character type: the 'star of track and

field' and 'president of the student body association', who 'married Patricia Fitzgerald while still in college'. Walter also reflects on Henry's beauty in the detailed description he provides of him upon their first meeting, when he was 'thunderstruck' by the sight of Henry. These descriptions paint a picture of an attractive and conventional man who fit the societal expectations of the time. The first hint that looks are deceiving is the reference to Henry's 'secret desires and shameful urges'. As the monologue reaches its focus on the AIDS epidemic, Walter is brutally honest in his recollection of Henry's selfish and callous behaviour. Rather than engaging with Walter's caretaking, his 'furious silences roared at [Walter] from across the Atlantic'.

- **Eric:** Although not featured prominently in Walter's speech, Eric is the play's protagonist, a younger gay man. His key characterisation during the extract is as an attentive listener. He is open to hearing about the experiences of the previous generation of gay men, including their trauma from the AIDS epidemic.

## Voice and style

The **voice** of a *character* is a unique representation of their personality, shaped by their background, experiences and desires. **Style**, on the other hand, refers to the author's individual approach to conveying their message. It is the combination of language features such as word choice, syntax (the arrangement of words into sentence structures), figurative language (including metaphors and similes), imagery and pacing.

In creating a monologue, a writer can convey voice and style using various elements, such as the following.

- **Imagery:** Vivid descriptions of sights, sounds, smells, tastes and textures may transport the audience to another place and allow them to develop intimacy with the character.
- **Rhythm and pacing:** The use of pauses, changes in tone and repetition can create a sense of urgency or connection, drawing the audience into the character's thoughts and feelings.
- **Structure:** The use of paragraphs, sections or other organisational tools builds narrative and thematic coherence, helping the audience to follow the speaker's train of thought.
- **Tone:** The character's attitude and emotional state can be conveyed through the use of language, as with sarcasm, irony or playfulness.

López develops Walter’s voice to reveal someone who is wise in their reflections and generous with their time and experiences. Throughout the monologue, Walter is quite introspective, often laughing at himself as a younger man: ‘Imagine me at nineteen years old in the middle of Times Square ... asking strangers for directions to the Stonewall Inn.’ Eric and the audience see his wisdom when he considers the perspectives of others, including Henry’s wife, whom he states suspected more than she let on.

Walter is honest to the point of self-deprecation, but also to the point of criticism. He humbly states that he was ‘never meant to be Henry’s life partner’. Instead, their relationship only eventuated because the AIDS crisis prevented them from finding other lovers. Walter also implies that he holds Henry on a pedestal, as ‘the only man [he] ever needed to be loved by’. But, on the other hand, he can also be brutal in his descriptions of Henry: ‘Henry flew into a rage accusing me of betrayal, of bringing the plague into our home.’

Finally, there is the sense that Walter is somewhat of a historian. He moves through the story chronologically, without jumping backwards and forwards through time. This is very difficult, given the complicated nature of memory. Furthermore, he often uses time markers to orient Eric and the audience throughout the journey.

## Vocabulary

Creative expression and vocabulary are essential tools that writers use to convey meaning and emotion. The choice of words can impact the audience’s understanding of and emotional response to the work.

López’s script uses mostly descriptive language and expression, but the choice of words is intended to create emotional impact. Consider the examples below.

Quote	Explanation
‘And if strapping, ascendant young men with bright futures and beautiful families had secret desires and shameful urges, they hid them from the world, from themselves.’	This sentence captures the contradiction inherent in Henry’s character. The double alliteration, ‘bright futures and beautiful families’, is contrasted with the ‘secret desires and shameful urges’. This evocative image captures the notion of living in the closet – that is, concealing one’s homosexuality.

<p>'I was struck with the realisation that I didn't want to change, and that what I hated wasn't my nature, but rather my circumstances.'</p>	<p>Here López characterises Walter's reflective qualities. The statement of 'realisation' is profound and mature. It reflects a turning point for this character. While it appears simple on the surface, this statement contains a message that is powerful in its universality. It can be generalised to people in many different 'circumstances'.</p>
<p>'I fell hard into Henry's handsomeness, his intelligence, his potential ... no, not his potential – his certainty.'</p>	<p>This is a rare moment in the monologue where Walter is permitted to falter from his relentless storytelling. It tells the audience as much about the playwright as it does about Walter. He is determined to use the most precise language possible to capture his meaning.</p>
<p>'I was the person he was dancing with when the music stopped.'</p>	<p>This metaphor shifts the romantic tone and ushers in the section of the monologue that is set against the backdrop of the AIDS crisis. It is a euphemism that masks the cause and focuses instead on its effect: silencing homosexuality.</p>
<p>'Peter had "the look", the telltale signs that someone was infected.'</p>	<p>The use of inverted commas implies that the actor would emphasise this phrase. It reveals a phrase that may have been common in the community to refer to someone who looked as though they may be infected with HIV.</p>

## Improve monologues with effective vocabulary

In this activity you will add engaging and effective vocabulary to a text you have already written.

- 1 Choose a monologue or creative piece that you have written.
- 2 Read through the piece and highlight the vocabulary or word choices that you feel are particularly effective in conveying meaning or emotion.
- 3 Use a different coloured highlighter to mark any words or phrases that you feel could be improved or replaced to make the writing more impactful.
- 4 Rewrite the piece, keeping the effective vocabulary you highlighted and replacing any weaker words or phrases with more powerful language.





- 5 Read the revised piece aloud to yourself or to a group, paying attention to how the language and rhythm sound, then change any words you still feel lack precision or power.
- 6 Share your revised piece with others and ask for feedback on the language choices you made. Consider how you might use this feedback to further refine your writing and create an even more impactful piece.

# CREATING YOUR OWN WRITING ABOUT PERSONAL JOURNEYS

In this section you will find some ideas to help prompt your own writing on personal journeys.

## Purpose, audience and context

You are free to write in a wide variety of forms in your exploration of personal journeys; however, the core of any piece that you write for this area of study should respond to **purpose**, **audience** and **context**. It is important that you tailor your writing with consideration of these three areas.

### Purpose

**Purpose** refers to the reason or intention behind an author's decision to create a particular piece of writing. The English/EAL Study Design outlines four main purposes that you can select for your writing: to express, to explain, to reflect and to argue. You are able to draw on one or more of these purposes in a single text.

Purpose	Definition	Text types
Express	Writing to express is about conveying emotions, feelings or ideas. It can be a deeply personal process, often capturing an individual's unique voice, thoughts and experiences.	Short stories, scripts, monologues, poems, songs, journal entries, speeches, letters, recounts
Explain	Writing to explain aims to provide information, clarify concepts or describe processes. This type of writing is typically informative and educational, helping readers gain a better understanding of a topic or issue.	Essays, blog posts, feature articles, speeches, podcasts





Reflect	Writing to reflect involves examining and exploring one's own experiences, thoughts or beliefs. This type of writing encourages self-awareness and personal growth, as well as providing insight into the human condition.	Journal entries, letters, speeches, monologues, memoirs, biographies, blog posts, recounts
Argue	Writing to argue involves presenting a point of view, supporting it with evidence and persuading readers to agree with or favourably consider your perspective. This purpose often requires critical thinking, analysis and logical reasoning.	Essays, opinion pieces, blog posts, speeches, podcasts, letters

You can find examples of purpose under the subheading 'Exploring personal journeys' within each mentor text's section.

In some cases, you may find that your writing doesn't fit neatly into one specific purpose. This is where hybrid writing comes in. Hybrid writing blends two or more purposes, resulting in a text that is rich, complex and engaging. For example, you might craft a short story that both expresses personal emotions and argues a particular viewpoint. Or you could create a podcast that explains a topic while also reflecting on your own experiences related to that topic.

As you work on your own creations, don't be afraid to experiment with hybrid writing. It can be a powerful way to explore and express multiple layers of meaning, making your text more dynamic and compelling. Remember, the goal is to create texts that resonate with readers, and hybrid writing can be an excellent tool for achieving that aim.

## Audience

In addition to conveying a purpose, authors target their writing for a specific **audience**. The audience for a piece of writing is the intended person or people who the author is addressing or directing their message towards.

When identifying an audience for your writing, you might like to consider the following categories and examples.

- **Age:** broad spectrum of ages, 12-year-olds, people in their 60s
- **Level of education:** currently at high school, graduated from university
- **Location:** Melbourne, Yackandandah, Phuket

- **Cultural background:** multicultural mix of Australians, Afghan–Australian community
- **Values and beliefs:** freedom, equality, justice
- **Social role:** parents, students, community leaders
- **Common interest:** musical instrument, climate change
- **Stakeholder for topic:** residents of a community who are attending a speech about a proposal, the recipient of a letter who is being asked to take action

You can find examples of audience groups under the subheading ‘Background, context and audience’ within each mentor text’s section.

## Context

Finally, you need to consider the **context** for your writing. This refers to the surrounding circumstances, setting and/or environment in which the writing was produced or is being read. It can include the historical, cultural, literary, audience and publication factors that impact its interpretation and meaning.

- **Historical context:** The social, political and cultural conditions and events of the time in which the writing was produced.
- **Cultural context:** The shared beliefs, values and practices of a particular group or society.
- **Literary context:** The genre, style and conventions of writing that inform the interpretation of the text.
- **Audience context:** This is similar to the considerations set out above for ‘audience’.
- **Publication context:** The platform on which the writing is published and the ways that this medium influences how it is read and shared.

You can find examples of context under the subheading ‘Background, context and audience’ within each mentor text’s section.

## Writing habits

If you’re looking for the first step in writing about personal journeys, you need to start by being observant. Take note of the small things around you, which might seem mundane. For example, Amy Duong writes about the red plastic chairs that she sees throughout the Vietnamese community. While many people might be familiar with these chairs, she manages to surprise her reader

with some quirky details. These details might connect with the reader's own experiences, or at least feel familiar through her vivid descriptions.

A useful habit is to keep a writer's journal with you, or there might be a place on your smartphone where you keep a record of your observations. Celebrated Melburnian author Helen Garner shares that 'pretty much everything [she has] ever published was drawn from this compulsion to watch and witness and record'. You never know when inspiration will hit you, providing an idea worth writing about. It may be at school, in the shower or while you're taking a walk.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to read about Australian writer Helen Garner's writing habits.

## Writing prompts

There are many different ways that you could be assessed for this area of study. Your teacher might give you free choice over all your writing decisions. Alternatively, they might provide you with a more guided task, including a writing prompt and/or stimulus material. In the end-of-year examination, you will likely be given stimulus material and/or a prompt to direct your writing.

The following writing prompts are intended to spark your thinking, and some suggestions are included to help you get started. Ultimately, you are encouraged to find your own unique voice and perspective to share in your writing, so feel free to take each prompt in your own direction.

### One: Ticket to ride

**Stimulus:** Train travel became popular in the nineteenth century, and was considered a luxurious and glamorous mode of transportation, often associated with the wealthy elite. Since the dominance of cars and air travel, trains have become a less popular mode of transport for long-distance journeys in Australia. However, there are still many train lines in regular operation throughout our regions.



**Prompt:** Imagine that you are sitting in a comfortable seat, watching the countryside pass by. Drawing inspiration from the pictured train ticket, create a text that targets prospective train travellers who read your popular travel blog.

**Audience:** prospective travellers

**Context:** travel blog or travel magazine

**Purpose:** free choice – see below for some examples (each of which also includes a possible text type)

- Express the beauty of the train journey. Use the journey as a metaphor to reflect a shift or change in your life. Write a short story in first person and present tense.
- Reflect on your most memorable travels in a personal reflection. Use elements from this train trip to connect with a past journey which had a significant impact on you.
- Explain the reduced status of train travel for long journeys in Australia. Write a blog post with first-person references to your experience on this train trip. Focus on identifying causes and consequences of the decline in Australian train travel.
- Building on the purpose above, you may choose to argue for the rejuvenation of train travel in Australia. Write an opinion piece to motivate others to take more journeys by train.

## Two: *Collins St, 5p.m.*

**Stimulus:** *Collins St, 5p.m.* is a famous painting by Australian artist John Brack. It depicts the rush-hour crowd on Collins Street, Melbourne. The painting is significant for its portrayal of the everyday life of urban workers and its commentary on the conformity of modern city living.



Scan the code or click [here](#) to see Brack's painting.

**Prompt:** Interpret this painting, including what it represents and what is missing. Based on your interpretation, create a text that explores the journeys of those who are (or are not) pictured.

**Audience:** Victorians

**Context:** a monthly magazine with a broad Victorian readership

**Purpose:** free choice – see over the page for two examples (each of which also includes a possible text type)

- Express the feelings of someone who lives in this world. Write a short story about this individual, with a focus on how this person did or did not conform to the expectations of the time.
- Explain how the world of this painting is similar to and/or different from the world that you inhabit. Write a feature article that explores how '5p.m.' looks in these two locations.

### Three: Work–life balance

**Stimulus:** The majority of Victorians feel that they have a good work–life balance. This means that they are able to enjoy other aspects of their life, besides work. However, since the upsurge in working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, many people are noticing that they are experiencing job creep. That is, they are starting to think more about work at home and outside of working hours.

**Prompt:** Imagine that you have been tasked with interviewing someone about their hobbies and passions outside of work. (You might like to conduct a real interview of someone in your life who has an interesting hobby.) Your interview will be the basis for a weekly column in a local newspaper. The purpose of this column is to promote healthier work–life balance in the community.

**Audience:** local community

**Context:** local newspaper

**Purpose:** free choice – see below for two examples (each of which also includes a possible text type)

- Through exploration of the interview subject’s hobbies, reflect on what makes a ‘good’ life. Write a biographical column about the interview subject, ensuring that you draw on their personal experiences of both work and their hobbies.
- Argue for more people to take up a hobby, and work less. In your opinion piece, make clear references to your interview as evidence to support your line of argument.

### Four: She did it the hard way

**Stimulus:** An epitaph is a phrase written in memory of a person who has died, normally inscribed on their gravestone. Its purpose is to honour and commemorate the person’s life. Ruth Elizabeth ‘Bette’ Davis was a famous Hollywood actress who was known for taking on challenging roles and fighting against gender stereotypes. Her gravestone bears the epitaph ‘She did it the hard way’ to reflect her advocacy for women in the film industry.

**Prompt:** Imagine that you are commemorating the life of someone who has recently passed away. This person was known for their work in advocating for change.

**Audience:** those who were familiar with the recently deceased person or their work

**Context:** either a funeral service or a social media website

**Purpose:** free choice – see below for two examples (each of which also includes a possible text type)

- Express how the recently deceased person ‘did it the hard way’ during their life. Convey this purpose by reflecting on their life in a eulogy. A eulogy is a speech that honours and celebrates the life of a deceased person, usually delivered by a close friend or family member.
- Reflect on the life of the recently deceased person in a social media post. In your extended post, include details about their life and how they ‘did it the hard way’. Use this post as a chance to explain how mourners can keep the person’s advocacy work alive.

## Five: From here to there

**Stimulus:** The average Melburnian commutes for 65 minutes per day for work. Over a typical year, this adds up to a total time of 12 full days commuting. There are many modes of transport that people regularly use for their commute: bikes, walking, electric scooters, public transport, car travel or some combination.

**Prompt:** Reflect on your commute to school and the small things that you expect to see during this journey. In the text that you create, aim to capture something unique about your local community.

**Audience:** school community

**Context:** school newsletter or school assembly

**Purpose:** free choice – see below for two examples (each of which also includes a possible text type)

- Drawing on some of your observations from your daily commute, write a school newsletter piece. Aim to include a reflection on the character of your local area.
- In a speech at your school assembly, argue for more people to take a more renewable mode of transport to school. Explain that car travel is not a positive option for the local community. In your speech, ensure that you appeal to the values and unique traits of your community.

## Six: What would you have to say to yourself as a child?

**Stimulus:** Find a photo of yourself as a younger person, ideally from before you were ten years old. Reflect back on the person that you were when this photo was taken.

**Prompt:** Referring to the photo of yourself as a child, write a text offering that version of yourself some advice.

**Audience:** yourself as a younger person

**Context:** imagined time-travelling letter

**Purpose:** free choice – see below for two examples (each of which also includes a possible text type)

- Write a letter to yourself as a younger person, reflecting on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Capture the journey that they are about to embark on, and offer some advice for the attitudes, skills and/or values that they will require.
- Write a speech, directed towards your younger self, explaining a key turning point in your life, and a decision you made that you feel changed the course of your life, for better or worse.

## Seven: Pilgrimage

**Stimulus:** A pilgrimage is a journey, often of a religious nature, taken to a place that is considered sacred in a particular faith tradition. The Camino de Santiago is a pilgrimage in Spain that leads to the shrine of the apostle St James. It is a popular destination for people seeking spiritual growth, adventure or simply a physical challenge.



**Prompt:** Imagine that you are on a pilgrimage. This might be the Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia), the Camino de Santiago or a pilgrimage of your own invention. Create a text that expresses the significance of this journey.

**Audience:** other pilgrims

**Context:** a publication shared with pilgrims

**Purpose:** free choice – see below for two examples (each of which also includes a possible text type)

- Express the significance of this journey in a recount of your pilgrim experience. Include imagery to develop a sense of setting and how this impacted the journey.
- Write a personal reflection on your pilgrimage, reflecting on the impact that it has had on your identity and/or faith.

## **Eight: The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step**

**Stimulus:** Laozi was a Chinese philosopher who is believed to have lived in the sixth century BCE. In his most famous work, the *Tao Te Ching*, he stated: ‘The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.’ This quote is interpreted to mean that all great accomplishments begin with a single small task.

**Prompt:** Imagine that you have just completed a very large-scale endeavour. This might be a writing project, the construction of a building, a course of medical treatment or a series of mental health therapy sessions. Create a text that explores this journey.

**Audience:** broad Australian audience

**Context:** a monthly magazine with a broad Australian readership

**Purpose:** free choice – see below for two examples (each of which also includes a possible text type)

- Reflect on a significant journey that you have undertaken (see examples in prompt), identifying how you felt at the outset of the journey compared with your feelings at the end. Write this as a memoir text with a focus on how this journey helped to shape your identity.
- Drawing on your own personal journey as inspiration, write a personal essay that argues for people to take action in their lives. Develop a motivational tone in your writing as you seek to encourage those who may find it difficult to start a large project.

# Planning your writing

The writing process involves several stages, including prewriting, planning, outlining, drafting, redrafting, editing and proofreading. Each stage is important, and skipping any of them can result in a less effective response.

Before you start writing, it's important to plan your response carefully. This will help you to organise your ideas, structure your writing effectively and avoid writer's block. Prewriting is especially important, as it helps you to generate and organise your ideas. It's also recommended that you create a clear outline from your ideas as this will provide you with a roadmap to follow, making it easier to stay organised and maintain a logical flow in your writing.

## Prewriting checklist

- Define the purpose and audience of your response.
- Brainstorm and generate a range of ideas.
- Organise your ideas into categories or themes.
- Use graphic organisers or other tools to visualise your ideas.
- Identify any research or additional information that may be needed.

## Planning checklist

- Review your prewriting notes and select the most important ideas.
- Choose an appropriate form.
- Follow up on any additional research or sources that may be needed.
- Determine the structure and order of your response.
- Consider the language, style and tone appropriate for your purpose and audience.

## Outlining checklist

- Use your planning notes to organise your ideas and make a final selection of what you will include.
- Identify a clear introduction, body and conclusion for your response, or a narrative structure. If your response is in a form such as poetry, consider how you will structure a poem or collection.
- Create headings and subheadings to organise your content.
- Ensure your outline follows a clear and logical order.
- Review your outline to ensure that it reflects your purpose and audience.

## Drafting, editing and finishing your work

Once you have a planned outline, it's time to begin writing your piece. Drafting is an essential step in the writing process that allows you to explore your ideas, refine your message and create a coherent structure. It's important that you redraft your writing as you go, to enhance your voice and style for the specific purposes of the piece. Pay attention to your language choices, tone, use of transitions, overarching structure and other important features of your chosen text form. Once you're happy with your written piece, you'll then need to edit and proofread the content to put it in the best shape possible.

### Drafting and redrafting

The process of drafting and redrafting is very personal, and there are no right or wrong ways to do it. You should try various methods to make sure you find what suits you best.

Some people draft and edit carefully as they write, working very slowly to construct sentences and paragraphs that are complete and need only proofreading for minor details at the final stage. Others work more quickly initially, jotting down ideas and thoughts as they come, but then spend longer at the editing stage to shape the notes or drafts into cohesive sentences and complete pieces of writing.

Whichever way you work, you should always try to give yourself time and space during the process so that you can step away and come back to it with fresh eyes.

General tips for the writing and drafting process include the following.

- **Break the process into manageable chunks:** Drafting can feel overwhelming, especially for longer pieces. To make the process more manageable, break your writing into smaller parts or tasks, such as completing a specific section, writing a certain number of words or addressing a particular argument. This will help you stay focused and maintain momentum.
- **Write notes:** Keep a notebook beside you or a separate notes document open on your computer as you work, and use it to jot down anything that comes to mind that might interrupt the flow of your writing. These may include ideas you want to follow up on later in your piece, quotes you want to refer back to, or even items for your grocery shopping list!



- 
- **Save your work:** If you work digitally (writing straight onto a computer rather than writing the first drafts by hand), it is worth saving multiple versions of your document as you go. Use a logical file naming system that makes sense for you, and don't simply continue saving changes to a single document. Sometimes you may want to return to ideas or content that you wrote earlier in your drafting and if you don't save new versions, you may lose valuable work that you previously deleted.
  - **Work on tricky sections separately:** If you want to make significant changes or rewrite a sentence or paragraph, copy and paste it into an empty document. This will allow you to work on it without the distraction of the surrounding paragraphs, and without any concerns about getting tangled or accidentally deleting something important. Then, when you are happy with the changes, you can copy and paste it back into your main document.
  - **Keep focused:** If you need to, turn off your phone and even disconnect your computer from the internet for short periods while writing. (You can use your notes page to jot down relevant things that you want to google later, so you don't get distracted by doing it in the middle of your writing period.)
  - **Take breaks:** If you get stuck with what you are writing, try to move to a different section of your piece then come back later, rather than getting bogged down on something that isn't working. Alternatively, you can give yourself a quick break by trying one of the writing exercises in the previous sections.
  - **Seek feedback and revise as needed:** As you work through your draft, don't be afraid to share it with others for feedback. This can help you identify areas that need improvement, and it can also provide valuable insights and perspectives that you might not have considered. Be open to constructive criticism and be prepared to revise your draft based on the feedback you receive. Remember that drafting is an ongoing process, and it's essential to be flexible and adaptable as you refine your work.

## Editing and proofreading

Once you have finished your piece, it's time to edit and proofread it. At this point it can be very useful to take a break, because when you are too close to your work (for example, if you have now read and re-read it a million times and have been working on it for hours or days in a row), it is almost impossible

to spot errors. This is because when you read, your brain will see what you expect to see or what you intended to write, not necessarily what is actually on the page. Ideally you would have days or even weeks between writing and editing, but obviously this is not always practical. If you are pushed for time, even a few hours in between is better than nothing, and will increase how effectively you are able to edit.

If possible, get a classmate or friend to give your work an edit, as they will be far more likely to spot errors, inconsistencies or issues. (You may want to do this with someone not working on the same assignment as you.) Make a clear arrangement about what they will be doing for you and what they are not expected to do. You may not always agree with feedback, and you may or may not make changes in response (remember that feedback can always be subjective). But it is important to take on board any issues raised – your editor is your reader, and they are giving you information about how well your writing is working from an external perspective.

Below are some questions you may want to ask in order to get feedback that is useful. Let your partner know how you would like them to provide the feedback. For example, you might give them a printed copy and ask them to make notes and highlight or underline parts; you might prefer digital mark-ups; you might like them to read the work and then have a face-to-face conversation so that you can discuss questions.

Potential questions for peer editors include the following.

- Is there any way the opening of my piece could be more engaging?
- Is there anything about my piece that is unclear (such as a confusing turn in the argument, events that don't make sense, characters who don't fit the context etc.)?
- Are there any inconsistencies you noted? (This might apply to the argument, narrative point of view, use of certain terms, fonts and headings, features of characters such as age etc.)
- Are there any points in the piece that felt jarring? (This could be a change in the line of argument, a change in perspective, a particular piece of dialogue or imagery, an awkward sentence etc.)
- Can you identify the purpose of my piece?
- Can you summarise my main argument?
- How would you describe the tone of my piece?
- Is it clear how my piece addresses the key topic/idea?
- Is there anything you felt could be left out?
- Is there any part you would have liked to see more of?
- Is my ending satisfying?

You might also have specific questions about anything you are uncertain of in your piece, such as whether a particular character is believable, whether a change in setting is effective, whether your argument is convincing or whether a piece of subtext came across. In some cases, you may not want to ask these questions until *after* your peer has read your piece – for example, if there is a twist or an element you want to check the effectiveness of, but do not want to artificially direct the reader’s attention towards while they are reading.

## Proofreading checklist

- Underline any sentences in which you felt the meaning was unclear the first time you read them.
- Highlight any paragraphs that do not flow on smoothly from the paragraph before.
- Circle any spelling errors or typos, or punctuation that is incorrect or awkward.
- Circle any words or phrases that have been overused.
- Circle any phrasing or vocabulary that seems inappropriate for the context, text type or audience (for example, in terms of complexity, formality or style).
- Note any points where the tone is inconsistent.
- Note any content that feels irrelevant or out of place.
- Note any content that feels repetitive.

If you do not have a peer who you can ask to edit your work, you can use all of the questions and tasks above to help you edit and proofread your work. Try to imagine you are reading someone else’s work, and make any notes or corrections that you would make for them.

A trick to help you separate yourself from what you have written while you are editing and proofreading it is to read it aloud. This will slow your reading down and force you to pay more attention so that you don’t skip over anything.

## Writing a reflective commentary

After producing your creative text, you will be required to write a commentary that reflects on your writing processes. (Note that EAL students will produce a set of annotations of one or both of their original texts outlining their writing choices, rather than an extended commentary.)

When writing a commentary, you will need to consider the purpose, context and audience of your piece, and how these factors influenced your authorial

decisions. These decisions may relate to your use of text structures, language features, conventions, ideas and/or vocabulary. You can use your commentary to explain the reasoning behind these choices and how they contributed to the effectiveness of your writing.

Additionally, you could reflect on how one or more of the mentor texts inspired your writing. Reflect on how you adapted some of the text's features or were stimulated by its ideas. You can use specific examples from the mentor texts, in addition to examples from your own writing, to demonstrate how you have incorporated effective writing strategies.

Remember, the goal of commenting on your writing decisions is to show your understanding of the writing process and to provide insight into your creative processes. By reflecting on your choices and experiences, you can demonstrate your growth as a writer and your ability to write intentionally and confidently.

Here are some steps for writing a successful reflective commentary.

1. **Understand the task:** Before starting your commentary, make sure you fully comprehend the task requirements and what you are expected to do. Carefully read any instructions or guidelines provided by your teacher.
2. **Reflect on your writing process:** Think about the decisions you made throughout the writing process and how they have contributed to the effectiveness of your writing. Consider your purpose, context and audience, and how these factors influenced your choices.
3. **Provide specific examples:** Use specific examples from your writing to support your commentary. Quote passages, explain how you used language features and describe your choice of text form.
4. **Show self-awareness:** Reflect on your strengths and weaknesses as a writer. Explain how you overcame challenges and what you have learned from the writing process.
5. **Discuss the impact of feedback:** Reflect on any feedback you received from your teacher or peers and how you incorporated it into your writing. Explain how this feedback influenced your writing decisions and how it helped you to improve your writing.
6. **Use appropriate language:** Use suitable language to demonstrate your understanding of the writing process. Use metalanguage where appropriate, but also make sure your commentary is clear and easy to understand.

# SAMPLE RESPONSES

The following sample responses are provided to give you an idea of the types of writing that you can consider for this area of study. The responses are in a range of styles and take inspiration from the four mentor texts. Each piece is followed by a short commentary on the authorial choices.

## Imaginative writing: Pilgrimage

The grey nomads took out their anoraks and disappeared under their brightly coloured hoods. The trail was quickly dotted with purple, turquoise and ‘Robin Hood green’. Sandra knew that this last colour was more marketing than genuine description, but like all good copywriting, it had stuck in her mind since she bought it – along with the trekking poles – in the outdoor adventure shop in Prahran.

She had set out to complete the Camino de Santiago with a group of ladies. Over the past 15 years they had met monthly for a book club that they called ‘the Prosecco Pages’. It was during the pandemic that one of them had suggested a group getaway once the restrictions lifted. Sandra had assumed they would travel to Bali or Fiji, but instead they had settled on an 800-kilometre pilgrimage through the Spanish countryside.

The four women, who had all recently reached the milestone age of 70, set out for their adventure. But after a series of minor accidents and medical mishaps, Sandra was the only one left.

As the rain increased its tempo, she continued to trudge alongside the other pilgrims. Today she was walking with a young woman from Japan whose name she could not remember. She was studying at a big university in London to become a primary school teacher. She was also perhaps the only person under 30.

At first the pair exchanged the usual pleasantries. However, after the rain had set in, they were forced to move closer to one another to hear over the static of the storm. This intimate proximity made Sandra feel a deeper connection with her fellow traveller.

Their discussion turned to what motivated them to embark on the Camino. Sandra shared her story first. For decades she had prioritised the needs of others. First this was in her job as an Executive Assistant. After getting married young, it became her husband. Then the children. More recently it was grandchildren. She loved her family, but she did not always love her role within it.

Throw in a couple of years being locked down and she was more enthusiastic than she would have previously expected to be to don a hiking shirt and a sturdy pair of walking shoes.

The student had nodded thoughtfully throughout this speech, asking her to repeat certain sections when the rain was too loud.

‘And what about you?’ Sandra asked. They were now walking so closely that their shoulders grazed with every other step.

‘I’m not sure how to express why I’m here in English.’ She paused.

The path that they were following had been mostly uphill for the past hour or so. But it was gradually levelling out to a plateau. The area lacked tree coverage; it was mostly wild grasses interspersed with thistle. Sandra thought that she could detect the presence of livestock nearby, but none were visible. The rain was starting to ease.

‘I think you could say that Japan is a traditional place. People still have superstitions and conservative views about life.’

The young woman pulled out a small paper envelope from her pocket, taking care to shield it from the rain with her other hand. It had Japanese writing in cursive script, surrounded by a red and gold border. It reminded Sandra of the red pockets that she had

seen around Lunar New Year.

‘This contains the names of my family members. I carry them with me to keep them in my mind.’

Sandra held her silence. She had learned that there was a time to ask questions and a time to let someone speak at their own pace and according to their own rhythm.

‘I left Japan when I was twenty-one because my parents discovered that I had a British girlfriend. They were so ashamed that they told me to leave our family home. I was devastated. I wanted to deny everything and go back to how things were. But after seeing the way that they shut down and turned away from me, I knew that I had no future with them.’

‘My girlfriend sponsored me to come across to the United Kingdom and she became my family. But after going through the immigration and permanent residency process, the romance had long disappeared. We separated during the lockdown.’

‘So now I am here, figuring out what comes next.’

The rain had stopped while she was speaking, so the women were able to remove their jackets’ hoods and face one another.

‘After my youngest child finished high school, my husband handed me divorce papers,’ Sandra said simply. ‘It was an incredible shock, but also inevitable.’

‘I wasn’t sure what I was going to do. I didn’t feel equipped to live life on my own after living for others for so many years. So do you want to know what I did? I kept going. And kept going. And eventually I realised that looking after myself was the only way to survive.’

The women smiled at one another, and took in the view from the high point that they had reached together.

## Commentary

This piece explores the relationship between two women who are undertaking the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage. The purpose of the piece is to explore the impact that others' expectations can have on people. It is written for a broad audience, particularly those who may have a connection with the Camino de Santiago.

I took inspiration from Walter's speech (*The Inheritance*). The idea of an intergenerational friendship was one of the first things that I wanted to explore. In particular, the honouring of experience sits in this story with the older and younger person learning from one another. Additionally, a key theme in López's text is that of discrimination towards the queer community. I connected with this through the Japanese student's personal journey of developing strength and resilience to overcome prejudice. This also links to the central idea in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's 'The danger of a single story' in that the women, from very different backgrounds, learn about their commonalities through sharing their individual stories.

Like López's script, and also Adichie's speech, my story includes some tonal shifts. At the beginning there are some attempts at wry humour, including the references to the book club and the aside about marketing ploys. However, the bulk of the exchange between the women conveys a more sombre and introspective tone as they reflect on the challenges in their relationships.

Additionally, the characters' literal journey is taking its toll. The rain and uphill climb provide a level of physical challenge, but the effort of overcoming this challenge pays off at the end of the story when they reach the plateau. The trek mirrors their own personal hardship. At the end the difficulty eases, and the women are rewarded with a moment of solace.

# Personal reflection: 'Windsor English Language Centre'

## Middle Kingdom Airlines Flight 112

The little plane symbol was about halfway between Guangzhou and Melbourne on the small screen mounted to the seat in front. It had already been five hours. This was the longest flight I had ever been on. When my parents told me that I would be travelling to Australia to finish my education, it had sounded very far away. But on the plane that distance took on a very real meaning.

At my previous school in Qufu, I had learned English from Polish teachers. I never did figure out why they were all Polish. As a result, I was used to hearing English spoken with a distinct accent. In particular, the 'w' sound was tricky for me. It was anybody's guess as to whether it would come out as a 'w' or a 'v'.

On that Middle Kingdom flight out of China, I had my first real-world exposure to the Australian accent. I had to figure out why the older man wearing a puffy jacket and brightly coloured canvas belt was asking the young flight attendant if he could 'have a squeeze'. It wasn't until a few months later that I learned the expression 'have a squiz'. My confusion continued when I heard a young woman say 'up in the air'. I couldn't account for her exasperated tone as it seemed perfectly normal to me that we were all up in the air.

## Miss Heathcliff

The Windsor English Language Centre occupied the top three levels of a (mostly concrete) block in South Melbourne. The windows didn't open and the lights would suddenly switch off. Unfortunately, the similarities between this educational facility and a juvenile detention centre did not end with its amenities.

My home teacher was Miss Heathcliff, and she did not have very good cultural awareness. In our orientation session, she told us that she would not be learning any 'ethnic' names. So

Zhengchao quickly became Patrick and Nazrine rebranded as Patricia. Later she told a Sudanese boy called Geoff – formally known as Ibrahim – that she was so pleased to have an ‘African’ student to ‘add some more diversity to the mix’.

Most of the students in my class came from China, so naturally we wanted to speak to each other in Mandarin. Miss Heathcliff delighted in telling us that this was strictly forbidden. Every time that someone spoke in Chinese, she made them recite a line from a Robert Frost poem.

‘This will help you to integrate into your new home,’ she would remind us proudly. Later I would reflect that Robert Frost was American.

## The 96 to St Kilda Beach

Four months after my Middle Kingdom flight touched down in Tullamarine, I found myself taking the tram home from my new high school. The rules and processes were much more relaxed compared to Windsor, and there was no one like Miss Heathcliff.

I was reading my copy of *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway. There was something about this book that I loved. Back in China, we had studied a translation of this epic tale. At that time my Grade Four teacher had made the whole class recite his personal reflection on the meaning behind the fisherman’s journey. This was quite different to our study in Australia, where my teacher encouraged us to develop our own interpretation.

Looking up from my paperback, I surveyed the other passengers on the tram. There were two older ladies who were chatting together. One of them was holding a paper bag filled with pastries. At the front of the tram was a group of young boys from my school. They were all staring at their phones intently.

Next to me, there was a man in a suit who was speaking into his wireless headphones. ‘I’ll have a squiz when I’m back in the office ... see you then ... okay, bye.’

I had to hide the smile that spread over my face at the recognition of this quaint Australianism.

Even though I couldn't say that it had been an easy start, I was looking forward to whatever the future held for me.

## Commentary

'Windsor English Language Centre' is a fictional piece written in the style of a personal reflection. The journey is broken into three sections which are each introduced with a subheading. This structural feature was inspired by Maya Hodge's 'bidngen'. Also, like Amy Duong, I have focused my writing on the personal journeys of cultural identity and migration, and how these evoke complex feelings. The purpose is to express the complex feelings that international students may experience when arriving in Australia for the first time. It is written for an audience who have an Australian background so that they can learn more about migration.

The three anecdotes provide snapshots of the fictional student's journey. The first part was inspired by my own memory of arriving in a French-speaking country by plane. Many will remember the first time that they were surrounded by people who were speaking in another language, and some of the quirky expressions that they learn in this process. By the final part on the tram, the story has cycled back to the first contact with the expression 'take a squiz'. This is meant to offer some humour, and also reveal that the student has grown in the space of a few months.

Like Matthew López does in Walter's monologue from *The Inheritance*, I have made a literary allusion through the naming of a character. Heathcliff is a character from Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. Although my Miss Heathcliff is not as extreme a depiction as Brontë's, I have similarly characterised Miss Heathcliff as controlling and prone to using harmful language. My story

also makes reference to one of the key ideas in Adichie's text – the danger of a single story, which robs people of dignity. Miss Heathcliff is reflecting her ignorant and prejudiced views towards people who differ from the privileged white Western world she is accustomed to.

## Personal essay: 'The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step'

Fourth quarter. Scores were within striking distance. Monty marked the ball and headed for the goals. He was intercepted by a bloke from the opposition who looked like a teacher, not someone playing in the under-18s. I scanned the field and realised I was best placed to tackle him. The last thing I remember before waking up by the side of the oval was his not-a-teenager face leering down at me.

That semi-final match in August had a huge impact on me. After being knocked down by that gigantic supposed teenager, I found out that I had received a concussion.

For weeks after the injury, I was not in a good place. I was so irritable that I would act out and yell at my family members. One time, I lost control and yelled at my dog for no reason at all! Poor Bentleigh had no idea what he'd done. During the day I would feel tired and have no ability to concentrate on my schoolwork. But then at night I couldn't get to sleep. Go figure. The worst thing was the nausea. Normally I eat more than anyone else in my family. Mum used to call me her little 'hoover guy'. But after the concussion, I'd leave half my meal untouched.

The timing of the concussion couldn't have been worse. Despite my incapacitation, our team had gone on to win that match. We were in the grand final for the first time in over a decade. But I would be sitting it out due to my injury.

On the morning of the grand final, my dad came to wake me

up. He said he'd come watch the game with me. I pretended not to hear him and rolled over. He persisted and tried to shake me awake. I replied with some pretty unkind words.

'Nobody likes a self-pity party, Thomas.' My dad left me in the squalor of my room.

That was the moment when I felt the most alone and hopeless. Lying in bed, I watched social media posts of the game being played without me. It felt like everyone was moving on with their lives, while I was stuck in the past with nothing going for me. A loser and an invalid.

It was my rehab nurse, Allan, who set me on the right track. He told me that 'the journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.' He was right. I had to take that first step towards recovery.

That night I texted my mate Monty to ask him if we could go for a jog together. He replied '👋👋'. At school, I told all of my teachers about my concussion and how it had affected me. Most of them were great – with the exception of Mr Dingley – and offered to help me catch up on some of the coursework that I'd missed while I was zoned out.

Apologising to dad was easy enough. He said sorry for not being more helpful too. But the relationship with Bentleigh was a little harder to mend. I had to take him on a walk every day for a week.

It's been almost a full year since the concussion. My doctor says that I am pretty much fully recovered, but I'm not taking any chances. Now I wear a helmet when I play footy. At first a few of my teammates called me some names that I probably shouldn't write down. But after a couple of practice matches, I noticed some of the others wearing helmets too.

Experiencing a significant injury can feel like your world has ended. Dad says everything feels like your world is ending when

you're young. But I reckon I'm right on this one.

I think back to what the rehab nurse told me when I was in bad shape. When you feel like your problem requires a journey of a thousand miles, you just need to figure out your first step.

## Commentary

This reflective piece of writing has a motivational line of argument. It is intended for the peers of the fictional author, Thomas. The purpose is to show that in the face of hardship, it is important to take small steps, such as connecting with friends and those who can offer support. Furthermore, there is an implied argument that Australian Rules football players should wear helmets to protect them from concussion.

This piece took some inspiration from Amy Duong's piece: in particular, the way that she uses the 'red plastic chair' as a motif. In my piece, I used the Chinese proverb 'The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step' to emphasise the message. There are two explicit references to this quote, and it is also interwoven through the choices that Thomas makes.

I tried to find a balance between informal expression and precise vocabulary. My intention was to develop Thomas' voice: a young, male footy player who is prone to self-reflection. The reflective tone used throughout is inspired by the voice of Walter in *The Inheritance*. The narrator also uses casual language to be relatable to their intended audience. This helps to establish his characterisation as a teenage boy who wants to be cool and approachable. This is contrasted with the use of football terminology, such as 'semi-final', 'under-18s' and 'practice matches', which further develops the narrator's characterisation to include an interest in sports. I also chose to use short and sharp sentences for the opening of my text, to mirror the fast-paced intensity of the football game.

## Speech: 'Modern Scammers'

Seven hundred dollars. Thirteen thousand dollars. Fifty thousand dollars. These three sums of money reflect real values that have been given to scammers by our employees in recent months. Since the beginning of this year, members of our organisation have lost a combined total of over seven hundred thousand dollars to sophisticated and targeted scams.

Many of you already know me as 'that IT guy with the cool hair' who you can go to when your computer stops working. A smaller number of you know me by my real name, Rahit. Today I'm here to talk to you about protecting yourself against phone and online scammers.

I want to share the experience of one of our external clients. To protect her privacy, I'm going to refer to her as Barbara, but that's not her real name.

This story begins a few months ago when Barbara came to visit the IT office. You know the place: full of huge computer servers that look slightly sinister, people working at stand-up desks and a strong sense that no one in the room is aware of the staff dress code. I promise we're working on that last bit! Barbara came in so early that I was the only member of our team who had arrived. The best word that I can use to describe the way that she looked is manic. Tense face with wild eyes. It's a look I've seen too many times, and unfortunately it's becoming all too common of late.

She told me that she had been scammed. The night before she had received a text message which purported to be from her daughter. It was an alarming message. Her daughter revealed that she had been taken hostage, and Barbara needed to accept the next call immediately to speak with her captors. Since the sad passing of her husband a few years ago, Barbara has been living alone. So she felt that the only thing she could do was pick up the phone call that came through shortly after the text.

On the other end of the line she could hear her daughter pleading for help in the background. She was even using Barbara's name. Frightening! Imagine the state of shock and distress that she was in. After about thirty seconds, a man's voice told Barbara that in order to free her daughter, she needed to pay a ransom of fifty thousand dollars. Following the clever instructions from the scammer, Barbara transferred the required money in full. The phone cut dead.

Of course, many of you have already predicted that Barbara's daughter was never in peril. Instead, the scammer had used sophisticated AI technology to re-create her daughter's voice. This fake recording was played in the background to the very real phone call between Barbara and the scammer.

I can see the shock on many of your faces. But this is real. And it is happening all too regularly.

Since that frenzied morning when Barbara shared her story, we have taken all the information that we could gather to the police. The matter is still being investigated by their cybersecurity team.

What I want you to understand is that Barbara is an intelligent woman. She has held a number of leadership positions. Many people like you have sought her advice over the years. The quality of the scams that we are seeing today is nothing like the 'Nigerian prince' scams from the beginning of this millennium. With recent advances to artificial intelligence, scammers are able to do things that many of you might not have thought conceivable.

Impersonating the voice of a loved one is only the beginning. Imagine how this technology could be used to impersonate you and call your bank. Consider the implications for purchasing property when many bidders conduct business over the phone. And that's before we even consider the direct implications for the thousands of calls that our organisation receives every day. The possibilities are still only now being thought up in the minds of crooks.

My message to you is not to pity Barbara. It is to realise that if you're not Barbara today, you very well could be tomorrow. We are witnessing an unprecedented period of change. It's time to realise that we're all on this learning journey together, and we need to support each other to recognise what's still real.

## Commentary

This speech argues that everyone is vulnerable to the dangers that are enabled by new technologies. Rahit's intended audience is employees at a large corporation. His purpose is to persuade all members of the community, including those who believe that they are tech-savvy, to recognise the looming threats of sophisticated scams.

I aimed to establish a compelling and intriguing opening through a group of three short sentences. I also used inclusive language and direct address to the audience throughout, in order to build rapport and connection.

I took inspiration from Adichie's speech, 'The danger of a single story'. She interweaves her argument with expressive anecdotes. Barbara's story sits at the core of Rahit's pitch. At first, the audience may find themselves in a familiar position of superiority, feeling that this is sad, but not a direct threat to them. However, the inclusion of the 'deepfake' impersonation software is intended to offer the first shock to this cohort of the audience. This is emphasised at the end, when Rahit calls out those who feel impervious to scams. Thus the journey is revealed to be one that everyone is taking together.





insight

## FRAMEWORK OF IDEAS

Each title in the *Insight Framework of Ideas* series is a comprehensive guide to one of the key ideas in the VCE English/EAL Framework of Ideas. It explores the idea in detail, unpacks the four set mentor texts and outlines a variety of approaches to developing effective and cohesive written pieces in a range of forms.

### Features

- An overview of the key idea, exploring essential concepts and including a suggested list of supplementary texts
- Detailed discussion of the four set mentor texts, explaining how they engage with the key idea and highlighting the structural elements, language features and vocabulary that students might draw on in their own writing
- Suggestions for developing original texts in different forms, for specific purposes and audiences, and in response to stimulus material
- Guidelines for drafting and editing, and for writing a reflective commentary on the writing process
- Activities to stimulate ideas and develop writing skills
- Four complete sample responses
- Links to the mentor texts, including transcripts of audiovisual texts.

**insight**<sup>®</sup>

▶ innovative ▶ engaging ▶ evolving

[www.insightpublications.com.au](http://www.insightpublications.com.au)



A proudly Australian owned  
and operated publishing house