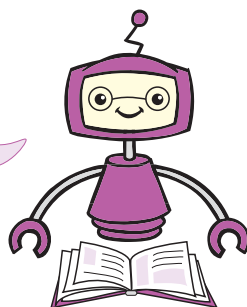


# A beautiful life

How do we learn about how people thought and felt in the past? One of the ways we can learn about the human side of history is by reading biographies and memoirs. These texts can help us learn about people's dreams and aspirations, the decisions they made, and the emotions they experienced. Let's find out more about reading between the lines of history ...



## LINKS TO:

Stage 3 Module 10

Learning Object 3: *What are you going to be?*

## PRIOR LEARNING:

### Stage 2

Module 12 Work Sheet 3: *This is your life*

Module 12 Work Sheet 2: *Diary days*

## 1 When I grow up ...

In Stage 3, Module 9, Work Sheet 4, *Life Writing*, you learned a little about the different modes of life writing: biography, autobiography and memoir.

Many longer biographies begin with a section or chapter outlining the person's childhood, and the dreams they had for the future.

The aspirations people have for their future can reveal a great deal about the world they lived in, such as what careers were available to them, what personal qualities they felt were admirable, and what kinds of relationships they valued.

In this work sheet, you will read an extract from a biography in which a young person talks about their aspirations, both personal and professional.

### Making your way in the world \_\_\_\_\_

When they are young, many people dream about their future. In the Learning Object, *What are you going to be?* you saw Peter, Anna and their friend exploring some of the options available to them at the career expo.

To decide what careers might suit them, they each considered their skills and capabilities, as well as their likes and dislikes.

These days, most people in Australia believe you have the right to choose what career to pursue, but throughout history there have been various times and places where what you did with your life — what personal and professional goals you pursued — was limited in some way.

Did you know, for example, that some professions in Australia have been restricted to people of a particular gender, age or even marital status? For example, married women were not permitted to work in the Commonwealth Public Service until 1966. And the only role in the armed forces available to women before World War II was as part of the Australian Army Nursing Reserve. Until the 1960s, their numbers were limited to 4 per cent of the services.

### Home sweet home \_\_\_\_\_

At times, the political and economic climate of the period in which you live can have a radical impact on your professional and personal aspirations.

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In Australia, one of the personal aspirations of many people is home ownership. For decades, owning your own home has been seen as a goal that should be accessible to all Australians. Owning your own home is sometimes referred to as 'The Great Australian Dream'. About 70 per cent<sup>1</sup> of Australians own, or are buying, the home they live in: this is one of the highest rates of home ownership in the world.

There is an expression in Indonesia — *sandang, pangan, papan* — which basically means 'clothing, food, housing'. Indonesians believe these constitute a human's primary needs, and Indonesian society views the ability to attain them as an indicator of prosperity.

However, although 70 per cent of people in urban areas and 89 per cent in rural areas of Indonesia own their own home, the quality of the housing, lack of services and infrastructure, and the areas where the houses are built, mean that owning a home in Indonesia does not always indicate that someone is prosperous. For many Indonesians, even providing *pangan* each day can be a struggle, and for them home ownership, though strived for, will never be achieved.

Source: <sup>1</sup> The Australian Bureau of Statistics

<sup>2</sup> Marja C. Hoek-Smit. 'The Housing Finance Sector in Indonesia'. The Programs Using Survey Data from Beijing'. Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University, 2005.

## Exercises

The following text is a short extract from a biography. In this section, the focus is on the hopes and dreams that the subject had for their future.

**Read the text, using all the reading strategies you have learned to date.**

After you have read the text, you will be asked to complete two kinds of reading exercises: comprehension questions, and critical-thinking questions.

Sebagai seorang anak perempuan yang dibesarkan di negara terjajah Kashmir, aku seringkali berangan-angan untuk bepergian ke tempat-tempat eksotis yang jauh.

Di atas kota tempat tinggalku adalah lokasi gletser Siachen, tempat di mana telah terjadi banyak sekali pertempuran antara orang-orang India dan Pakistan sejak Perang Pemisahan tahun 1947. Bukan itu saja, di kotanya sendiri, ada banyak taman dan bangunan indah yang dirusak oleh lubang-lubang bekas peluru atau tanda-tanda konflik lainnya. Seringkali, kami mendengar suara dentuman meriam atau tembakan senjata di kejauhan.

Aku juga berangan-angan menjadi seorang ahli masak. Ibuku hampir selalu memasak makanan yang sederhana, tapi kadang-kadang dia menyelimuti rumah dengan harumnya pilaf ketumbar dan zaman, Gurdé Kaporé, Rista dan chukunder yang pahit manis. Dapur kami yang kecil akan dipenuhi suara kelontang panci, suitan uap, dan gelegak kaldu dan saus.

Di samping ibu aku belajar seni memasak, dan bermimpi bisa mempersiapkan jamuan makan besar untuk tuan-tuan dan nyonya-nyonya yang anggun. Dalam mimpiku, aku kepala restoran yang menyediakan makanan-makanan lezat dalam pinggan-pinggan perak di atas taplak meja putih. Pelayan-pelayan anggun dan penuh perhatian bergerak di antara meja-meja seperti hantu yang baik hati, menarik kursi, menuang minuman, mengantarkan piring-piring berisi makanan yang indah dilihat dan lezat rasanya

Aku akan tinggal di sebuah rumah yang indah dekat situ, dengan jendela kaca yang lebar dan lantai karpet. Tempat tidurku akan berisi tumpukan bantal sutera, dan kamar mandiku diberi wewangian bunga-bunga eksotis. Kebunnya hijau dan harum: rumah bagi bunga kacapiring

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dan melati, bunga-bunga eksotis dan rempah-rempah yang digunakan untuk menghias restoran dan memberi aroma pada makanan yang kumasak. Anak laki-lakiku tidak akan pernah ikut berperang, dan anak-anak perempuanku bisa bebas mengejar impian mereka untuk hidup mandiri dan mendapat pendidikan yang menyeluruh dan yang memperkaya hidup mereka.

Dan, tentu saja, daripada naik sepeda untuk pergi bekerja, kedinginan di musim dingin dan bermandi keringat di musim panas, aku akan menyetir mobilku ke tempat kerja. Aku akan naik mobil melewati jalan-jalan yang panjang dan lebar; jalan-jalan tanpa lubang-lubang besar, dan sampai di tempat kerjaku tetap segar dan bersih.

Suatu hari nanti, setelah semua berada pada tempatnya, aku akan membawa ibuku ke tempat itu. Ke sebuah rumah yang hangat, nyaman, dan sebuah jamuan makan yang anggun dan dipenuhi oleh makanan baik yang sudah dikenal maupun yang eksotik. Akan kutunjukkan kamarnya yang dipenuhi oleh seprei putih dan bantal-bantal sutera. Kamarnya sendiri, dengan sebuah jendela yang menghadap ke laut, dan sebuah pemandangan yang cantik dan tanpa akhir seperti sebuah kebebasan.

## Exercise 1

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### Reading comprehension

First, let's see how well you have understood the text.

**1.1 What are the main ideas in the text? Summarise, in English, the main ideas in each paragraph of the text.**

**Paragraph 1**

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**Paragraph 2**

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**Paragraph 3**

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**Paragraph 4**

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**Paragraph 5**

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**Paragraph 6**

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**Paragraph 7**

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**1.2** Were there particular words or phrases you found difficult to understand? What strategies did you use to understand these words or phrases, or to understand the text as a whole, despite not being sure what some words meant?

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**1.3 Where did the author of this biography grow up?**

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**1.4 What professional dreams did the author have when she was young?**

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**1.5 What personal aspirations did the author have when she was young?**

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**Exercise 2**

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**Critical and creative thinking**

I bet you can't wait to flex your creative and critical-thinking skills by applying them to this extract from a biography.

**Answer the following questions in English, using quotations from the text in Exercise 1 in Indonesian, where appropriate.**

- 2.1** People's personal memories are often used by historians, but there are some problems with relying on them as evidence of what really happened. Often they are used in conjunction with other forms of historical evidence.

**Think about what you know about Indonesian history. How much of what you know is based on people's memories? What other sources of information, or evidence, do you think historians could use to construct a picture of the past in Indonesia?**

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2.2 From the overall tone and focus of the extract, do you think that the author achieved some, or even all, of her childhood aspirations?

**Write a short paragraph, in Indonesian, in which the author reflects on which of her childhood dreams she has achieved.**

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