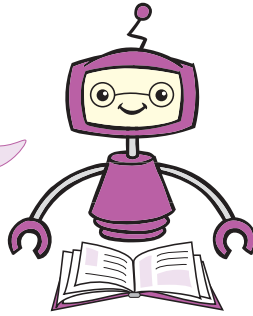


# There's no place like home

What is home? What do you think creates the feeling of 'home'? Is 'home' the place you live, or is 'home' another place connected to your history, heritage, friends, family or country? Let's find out more about the idea of home ...



## LINKS TO:

Stage 3, Module 7

Learning Object 3: *I can't wait*

## 1 Leaving home

In this work sheet, you will be asked to read a short personal essay using a range of the reading skills you have already learned in Stages 1 and 2. You will also use some critical- and creative-thinking skills to develop a deeper understanding of the text and the ideas it contains.

The exercises that follow will lead you through the process of reading the text.

### Writing from the heart

As you have already learned, a personal essay is a flexible and largely informal piece of writing. It is a piece of non-fiction in which the author expresses their personal opinion about something.

The example you are about to read is a personal essay in the form of a blog post. There are very few rules about how to write a personal essay, but some features of this text type you might notice are that:

- it is written in the first person
- the tone is friendly and informal
- the text might include references to both the author's experiences, and to their prior knowledge or understanding.

### Critical thinking

This work sheet introduces you to some strategies for thinking critically about a piece of writing and the ideas that inform it. Critical thinking is a particular way of approaching texts and ideas.

When you think critically, you ask questions about the assumptions that inform the texts, images and ideas you encounter.

When you think critically about a text, you ask questions like:

- What assumptions does the author make, in terms of things such as culture, history, race, background, age, religion or gender? How do those assumptions affect the text? What opinions are expressed in this text?
- What types of arguments has the author used? (For example, have they used analogies, deductive reasoning, or inductive reasoning?)
- How logical are the arguments made?
- What evidence is provided to support the arguments or opinions in the text?
- How reliable is the evidence that supports the arguments?
- What other evidence could be applied to the same problem or set of questions?
- How relevant is the evidence?

Let's apply some critical-thinking skills to the reading that follows.

The following text is a short personal essay in the form of a blog post.

**Your first task is simply to read the text, using all the reading strategies you have already learnt in Stages 1 and 2 of *New Land, New Language*.**

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

29 Juni 2012

## Sudah pulang, belum?

Kemarin siang — pada hari terakhirku di Australia — beberapa orang teman datang ke rumah orangtuaku untuk makan malam bersama. Ini merupakan makan malam perpisahanku dan sebelum makan, ayahku, yang selalu suka mengatakan sepatah dua patah kata, mengangkat gelasnya dan menyampaikan harapannya agar aku sukses. Di akhir sambutannya, ayah berkata:

*... dan di akhir semua petualanganmu yang mengagumkan itu, semoga kamu pulang dengan selamat kepada kami, orang-orang yang mencintaimu.*

Apa yang dikatakan ayah bukan sesuatu yang tak lazim diutarakan pada kesempatan-kesempatan seperti ini, tapi sementara dia mengatakan itu aku sadar bahwa aku tidak lagi melihat Australia, atau rumah orangtuaku, sebagai rumahku. Atau, lebih tepatnya, aku melihatnya hanya sebagai salah satu dari rumah-rumah yang aku miliki. Ini kemudian membawaku berpikir mengenai apa sebenarnya arti 'rumah' untuk seseorang seperti aku: yang telah menjalani sebagian besar masa kecilnya hidup di manca negara, dan yang, sebagai seorang dewasa, telah memutuskan untuk tinggal dan bekerja di sebuah tempat yang bukan tempat kelahiranku.

Aku lahir di Australia, tapi orangtuaku melewatkan hampir seluruh masa kecilku tinggal dan bekerja di luar negeri. Kami tinggal, paling tidak selama setahun, di Hong Kong, London, Afghanistan, Israel dan Maroko. Untuk beberapa waktu aku menganggap tempat-tempat ini sebagai rumah, tapi aku sadar, sekarang kalau aku mengingat kembali masa-masa itu, bahwa di samping merasa 'kerasan' di masing-masing tempat itu, aku dan keluargaku selalu menyebut Australia sebagai 'rumah' kami. Australia selalu adalah negara di mana kami akan pulang pada suatu hari nanti; budaya yang membedakan kami dengan orang-orang lain dan negara yang selalu kami rasakan sebagai 'milik kami'. Kami bicara Bahasa Inggris Australia di rumah, membaca buku-buku dan surat kabar Australia, dan berteman dengan sesama orang Australia.

Namun demikian, waktu kami akhirnya kembali ke Australia, ketika aku dan adik perempuanku berada di SMA, aku tidak merasa kerasan. Aku menyadari adanya perbedaan yang jelas antara diriku dan anak-anak Australia lainnya di sekolahku. Sebagian dari perbedaan itu jelas disebabkan karena kami pernah tinggal di luar negeri, tapi sebenarnya masalahnya lebih dalam daripada itu. Banyak dari anak-anak di sekolah kami sudah melewatkan seluruh masa sekolah mereka bersama-sama; mereka besar di lingkungan yang sama dengan yang mereka tinggali sekarang. Rumah, untuk mereka, tampaknya merupakan konsep tunggal yang terpadu dan tidak terlalu rumit. Untuk mereka, 'pulang' bisa dilakukan setiap hari; untuk kami, melibatkan perjalanan lintas negara naik pesawat terbang.

Aku juga tidak bisa berhenti berpikir bahwa 'rumah' adalah merupakan gagasan politik di samping pribadi. Pada tahun 1997, sebuah laporan berjudul *Bringing Them Home*, diajukan secara resmi ke Parlemen Australia. Laporan itu adalah sebuah laporan mengenai generasi yang hilang: anak-anak penduduk asli Australia yang diambil dari keluarga mereka (dari rumah keluarga mereka), dan ditempatkan di rumah-rumah lainnya: panti asuhan, keluarga kulit putih, tempat kerja. Dalam artian tertentu, banyak orang yang berasal dari generasi yang hilang ini tidak akan bisa 'pulang': hubungan mereka dengan orang dan tempat asal mereka telah dirusak.

Kemarin, ayahku menyodorkan sebuah pemberian yang berupa jaminan bahwa, di mana pun orangtuaku berada tempat itu akan selalu menjadi rumah untukku. Aku menganggap diriku beruntung karena memiliki kemewahan itu, di dunia di mana ada terlalu banyak orang yang tidak memiliki apa pun yang bisa mereka sebut rumah. Orang-orang yang rumahnya sudah hancur karena peperangan, atau bencana alam, atau yang keluarganya — orang-orang yang mengubah sebuah bangunan menjadi sebuah rumah — sudah dipisahkan dari mereka.

POSTED BY AARON ELDORADO at 10:14 AM 19 comments

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## Exercise 1

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First, let's have a look at how well you understood the text.

- 1.1** What are the main ideas in the text? Summarise, in English, the main ideas from each paragraph. Use quotations from the text to support your answer.

**Introduction:**

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**Body paragraph 1:**

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**Body paragraph 3:**

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**Body paragraph 4:**

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**Conclusion:**

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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 they meant?**

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**Exercise 2**

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It is time to start asking some critical-thinking questions about the text you have read — paying attention to the underlying assumptions, and thinking critically about the use of evidence to support an argument.

When answering critical-thinking questions, you should always support your answers with quotations from the text. This shows that you are focusing your attention on the text, and helps to ground your answer.

**Answer these questions in English.**

**2.1 What assumptions does the author make in terms of things such as culture, history, race, class, age, religion or gender? Consider both the audience for the text, and the individuals or types of people (diplomats, Australians, and so on) mentioned in the text.**

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**2.2 What evidence does the author provide to support his arguments? How reliable is the evidence?**

**Hint!** In assessing how reliable the evidence is, you should consider how you could verify it. Could you repeat the experience or find other documentary evidence of the same type? Consider the authority of the person providing the evidence: are they an expert in the field, or someone with first-hand experience? If their authority comes from first-hand experience, how reliable a witness are they?

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**2.3 How relevant is the evidence the author uses to support his arguments?**

**Hint!** Consider whether there is other evidence that would be more relevant. Ask yourself why the author has chosen the evidence they have included: are they trying to present only one side of an argument? Do they want to skew the evidence, or are they aiming to be balanced?

**2.4 What other evidence about the notion of home could the author have included? Try to think of at least one other piece of evidence that would support the author's claims, and one that would show another side of the issue.**

For example, can you think of other anecdotes from your own experience that contrast with the evidence the author supplies? Are you aware of any other kinds of evidence about the topic, such as data, case studies, reports, textbooks or research papers?

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