

Year 11A - Reading and Exploring Text

Unit 1 Area of Study 1 - Reading and Exploring Texts

In this area of study, students engage in reading and viewing texts with a focus on personal connections with the story. They discuss and clarify the ideas and values presented by authors through their evocations of character, setting and plot, and through investigations of the point of view and/or the voice of the text. They develop and strengthen inferential reading and viewing skills, and consider the ways a text's vocabulary, text structures and language features can create meaning on several levels and in different ways.

Key Knowledge

- inferential reading and viewing strategies
- ideas, concerns, and tensions in a text
- vocabulary, text structures and language features in a text
- personal and analytical writing in response to a text
- small group and whole class discussion, including ways of developing constructive and collaborative interactions and building on the ideas of others
- the conventions of discussion and debate
- the conventions of syntax, punctuation, and spelling of Standard Australian English.

Key Skills

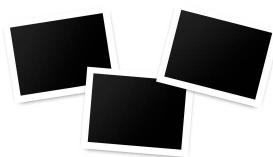
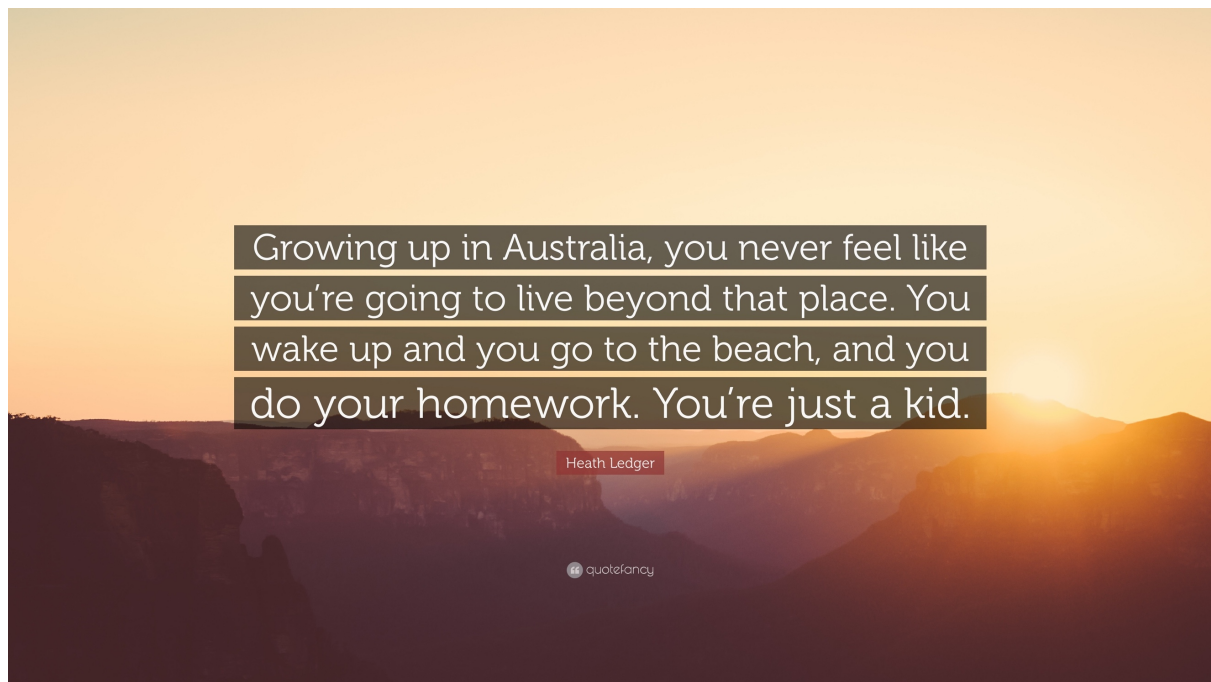
- develop strategies for inferential reading and viewing
- consider and explore:
 - ideas, concerns, and tensions presented in a text
 - characters, settings and plot, and point of view and voice
 - how vocabulary, text structures and language features create meaning
- engage productively in small group and class discussion, including listening to others
- develop, share, and clarify ideas with peers and teachers employing appropriate strategies for discussion and debate
- plan and develop personal and analytical writing about a text, including the use of appropriate metalanguage to discuss vocabulary, text structures and language features
- use textual evidence, where appropriate, to support writing
- use appropriate strategies to review and edit writing
- apply the conventions of syntax, punctuation, and spelling of Standard Australian English.

Assessment Task

On completion of this unit the student should be able to make personal connections with, and explore the vocabulary, text structures, language features and ideas in, a text.

To demonstrate this outcome students will be asked to write their own personal reflection on their childhood. They will draw heavily on the structure and language features in the set text to inform their own writing.

What does it mean to grow up in Australia?

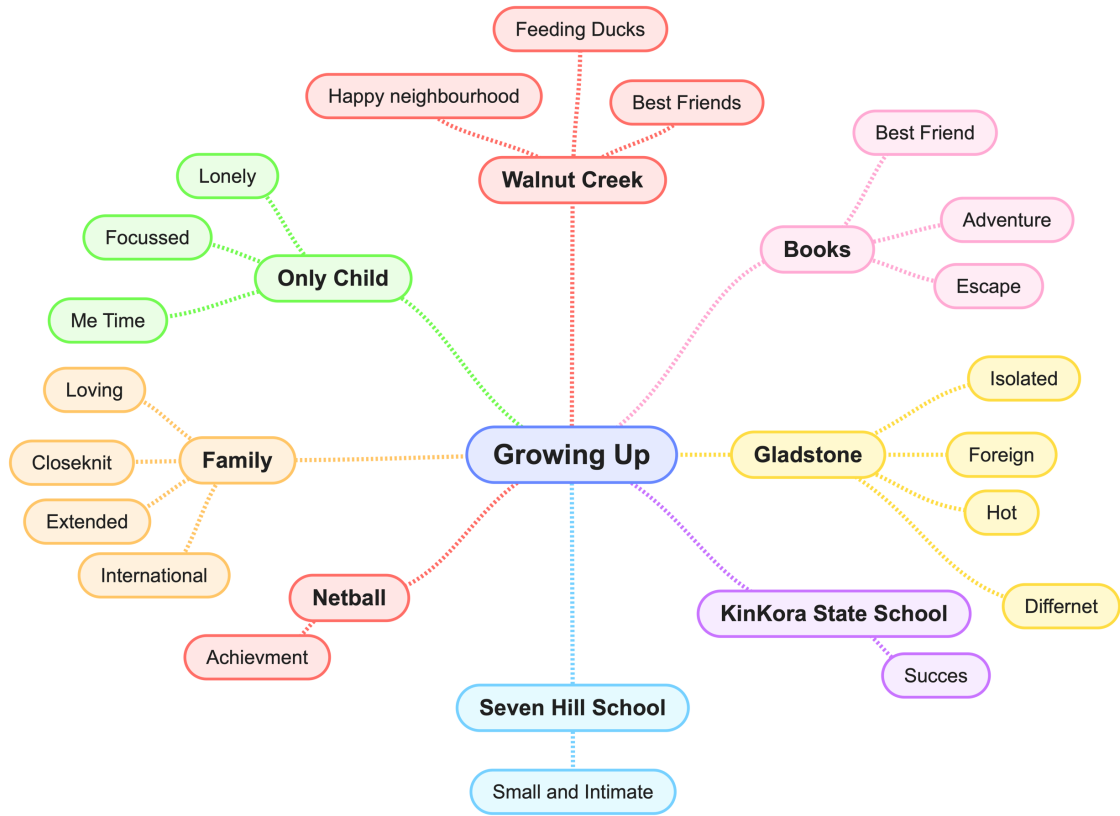


Create a collage with 10-15 images that represents what it means to you to grow up in Australia.



From your collage, brainstorm a list of nouns (things, people, places) that come to mind. For each noun, write a series of adjectives (describing words) and/ or other words that you could associate with these nouns to help add meaning.





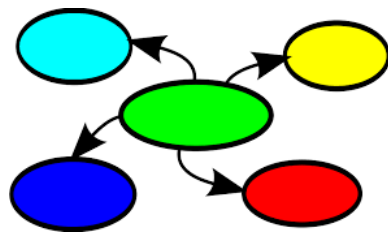
Synopsis

The text Growing Up in Australia provides insight into the rich experience of coming of age on this land. The anthology (collection of writing) reflects the universal experience of adolescence, beginning with the need to belong and a shifting sense of self.

These pages also offer an acute understanding of the gap between our own identity and the way the world perceives us, particularly as we leave the relative innocence of childhood. The text also shines a light on the heterogeneous nature of adolescence; there is no one Australia, and there is no one experience of growing up.

'Reckonings' by Magda Szubanski

Magda Szubanski is an Australian comedy actress, author, singer, and LGBT rights advocate. She is perhaps most famous for her role as 'Sharon Strzelecki' in the TV show *Kath & Kim*. Szubanski has spoken openly about her struggles with intergenerational trauma, anxiety, and suicidal ideation in her teens. In 2015, Szubanski released a memoir, *Reckoning*, in large part about her father, Zbigniew Szubanski who was a World War 2 Polish Resistance assassin, and dealing with themes of intergenerational trauma, possible genetic inheritance of traumatic memory and Szubanski's struggles with her own sexuality. The book won the TBA and \$40,000 Douglas Stewart Prize for Nonfiction^[31] and "Book of the Year" and "Biography of the Year" at the Australian Book Industry Awards. This essay is an abridged version of that extensive Memoir.

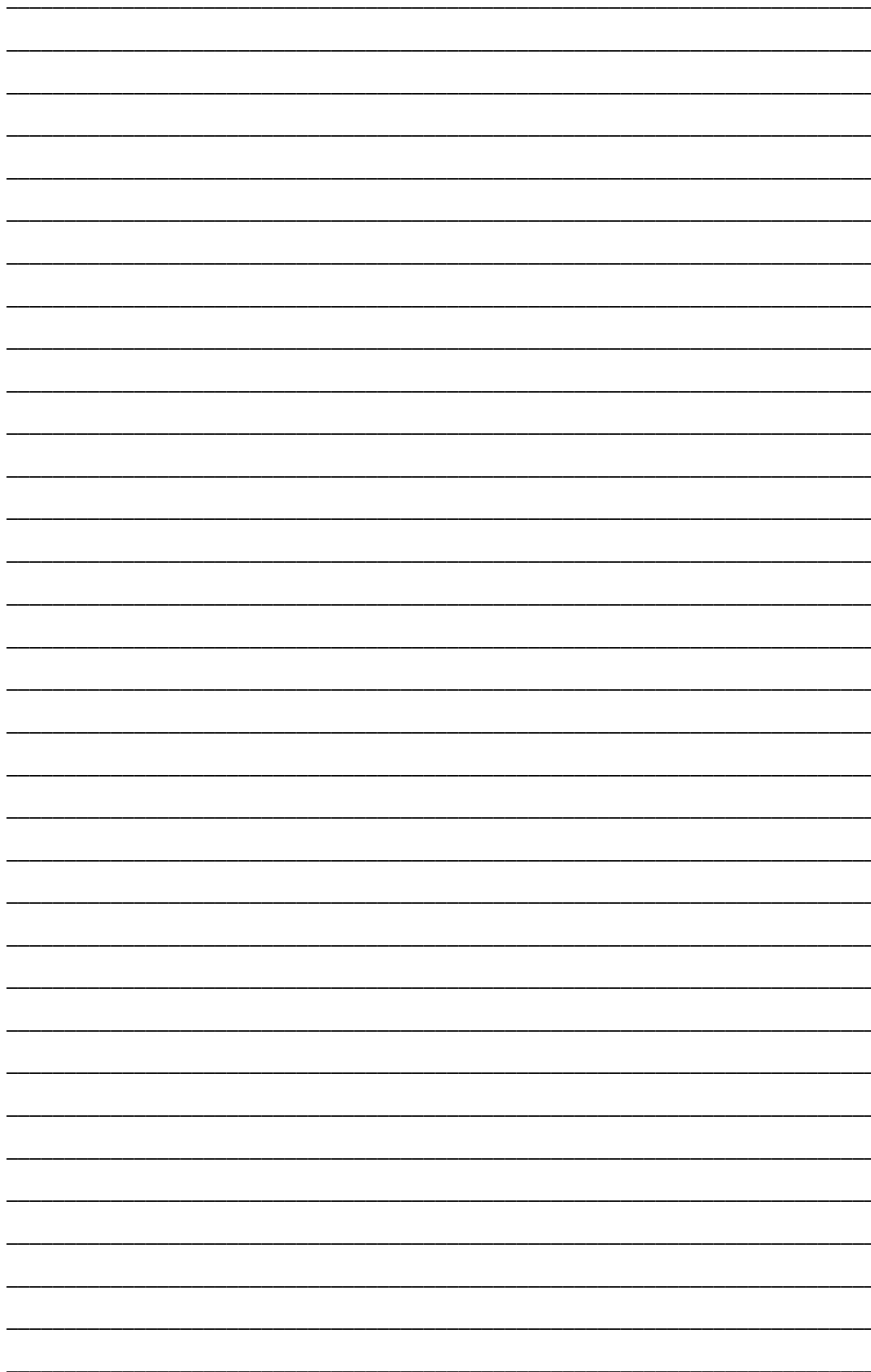


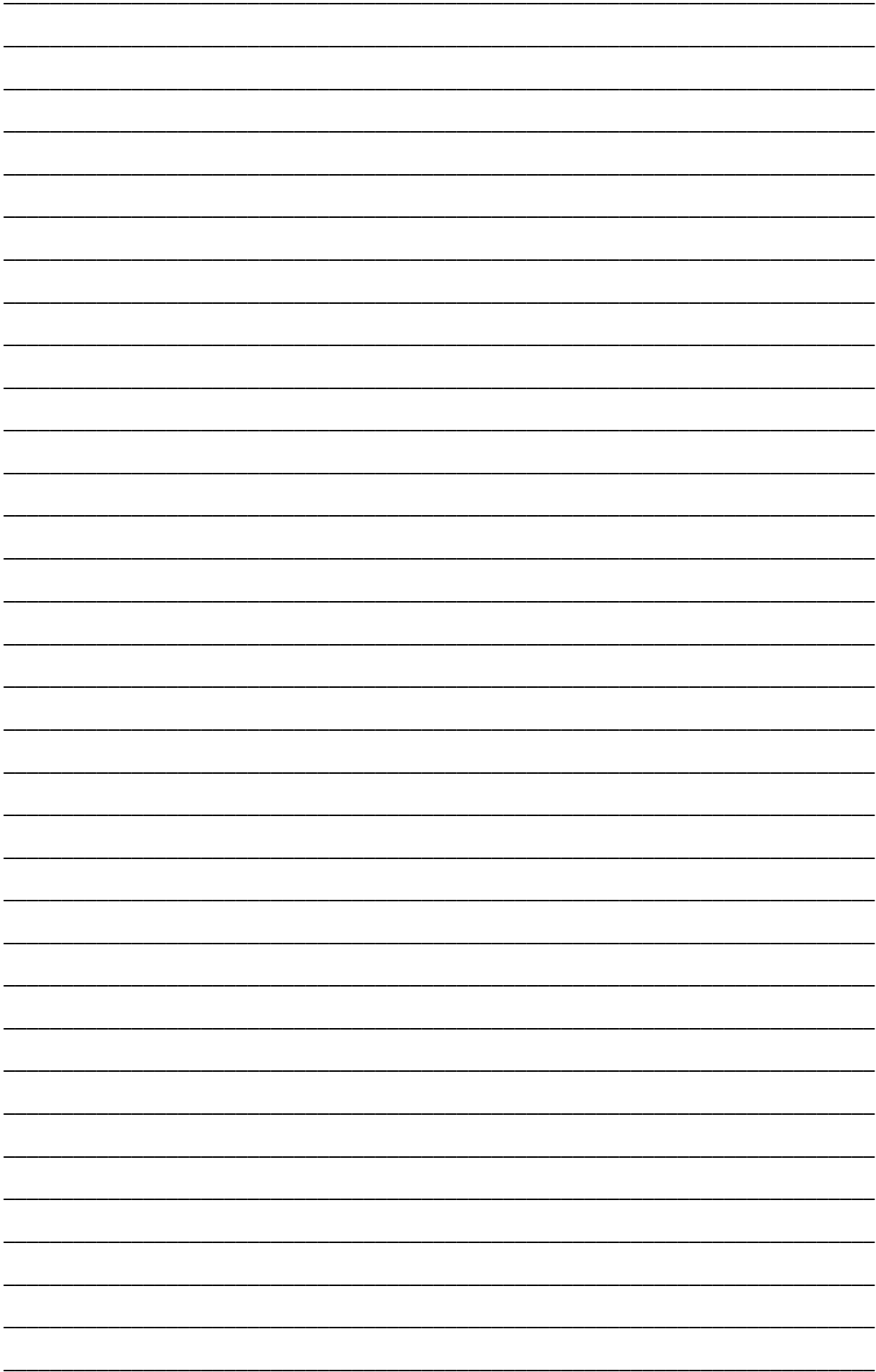
Create a Mind Map that looks at the key elements of Szubanski's childhood.

Questions

- What connections did the Szubanski's lack when they moved to Australia?
- Why were First Nations people 'spectacularly absent' from the Szubanskis' lives?
- What is the 'cruel irony' that Szubanski sees in the relationship between her family and Aboriginal land?
- How was Szubanski's father trying to 'tame' the land?
- Why does Szubanski see the bush as 'mythological'?







Deep Dive

Consider this extract from Szubanski's essay.

By 1966 we had been in Australia for a year and the Szubanskis were well on the way to becoming Aussies. Still, culturally we were British. Even though we spoke the language, all our references, all of our knowledge of custom and practice, was British or European. We knew nothing of local lore or wisdom or parochial efficiencies. We had no connections. We didn't know the names of streets, towns, birds, trees, famous people. We knew nothing of weather patterns and Warning signs. Of the dangers – bushfires, floods, heatstroke, poison berries and sharks. Or sensible precautions – shaking out your shoes in case of spiders; making loud noise in long grass in case of snakes; lifting the toilet seat to check for redbacks. The myriad survival tips that get passed down passed us by. Everything was jarringly and excitingly new.

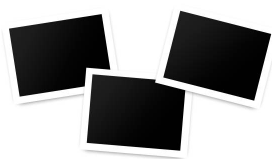
- What does this opening paragraph suggest about Szubanski's early experiences when she first arrived in Australia? How might they contrast with someone who was born here? How might this help us better understand the experience of migrants and refugees?

A sheet of white paper with 24 horizontal black lines, providing a ruled writing area.

'Tourism' by Benjamin Law

Benjamin Law is an Australian writer and broadcaster. He's the author of *The Family Law* (2010), *Gaysia* (2013), the Quarterly Essay *Moral Panic 101* (2017) and editor of *Growing Up Queer in Australia* (2019).

Benjamin is also an AWGIE Award-winning screenwriter. He has a PhD in creative writing and cultural studies from the Queensland University of Technology (QUT).

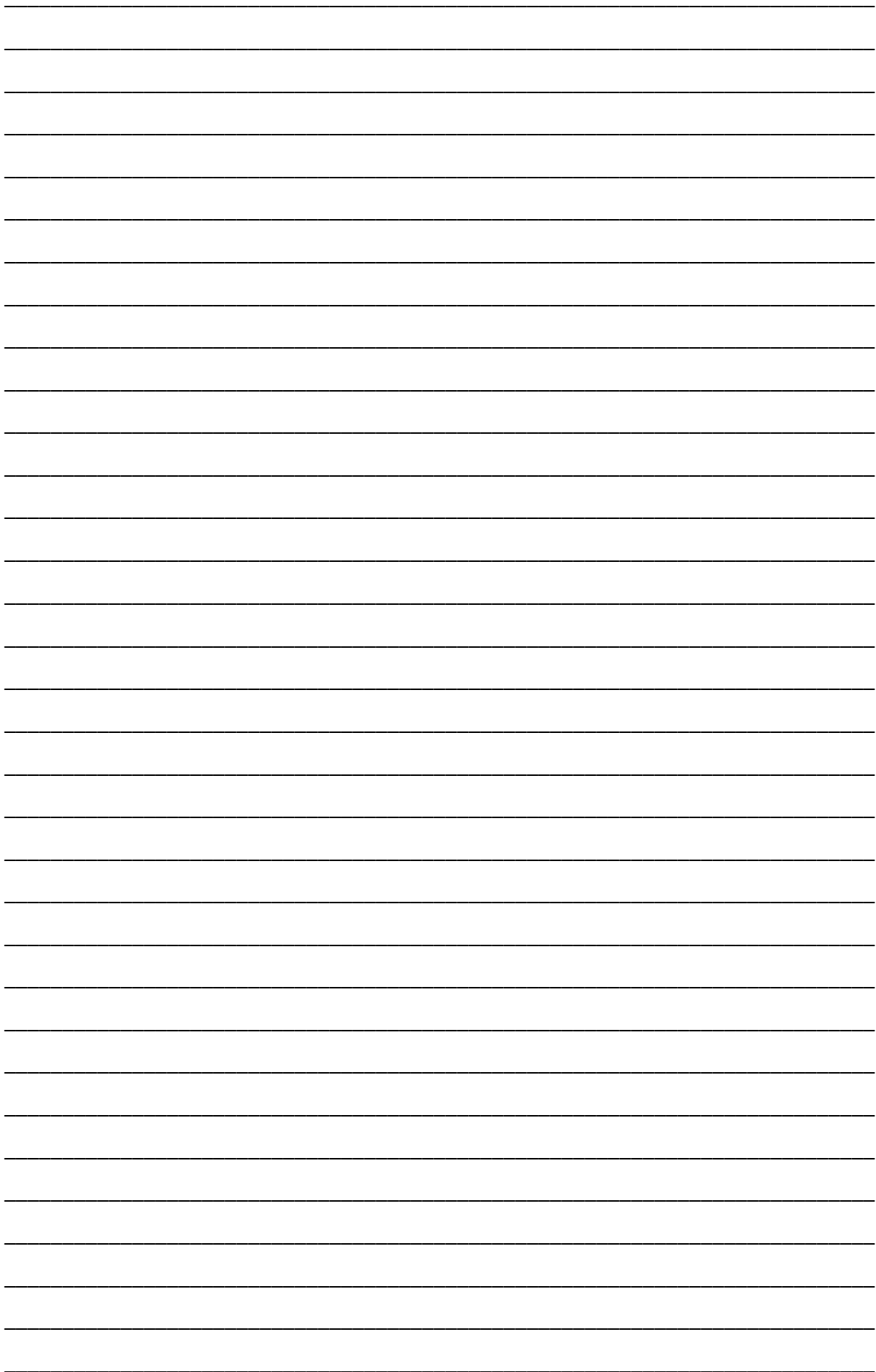


Create a Collage of places you remember visiting as a family. Attach notes to each picture that describe how you saw them then and how you view them now.

Questions

- Why did Benjamin Law's Mum declare that the family 'were never camping people'?
- Why did Law want to 'distinguish [himself] from the actual Asian tourists'?
- How did Law's mother seek to 'sabotage all [his] efforts to set [himself] apart'?
- What role do theme parks play in Law's childhood?
- In what ways is Law embracing Nostalgia Town's motto in his own writing?





Deep Dive

Consider these extracts from Law's essay.

It was family tradition that once a year, our family of seven (eight, including my Ma-Ma) would cram ourselves into my grandmother's 1990 grey five-seat automatic Honda. *Five seats*. We'd travel like this – faces smashed against the glass; no leg room; the two smallest children illegally wedged between various legs – for a good three hours before we reached the Gold Coast. By the time we got to the theme park, our limbs were numb, our nerve endings destroyed. On the ride home, exhausted and drained like dead batteries, we'd fall asleep in extreme angles, our spines contorted and twisted. We'd wake up, our shirts covered with drool we weren't even sure was ours.

- What does this passage suggest about our memories of childhood?

Nowadays, if you drive through Coomera, towards Dreamworld, you'll see the Thunderbolt has been dismantled. Nostalgia Town has long been torn down, and the deer at Forest Glen have disappeared, presumably having undergone a mysterious transformation into venison. (I don't know what happened to the emu.) That old wildlife sanctuary is now a luxury tourist resort. I can't find a trace of the Big Bottle on the internet, so I can only assume that the piss fumes proved a health hazard, and that it's been torn down too.

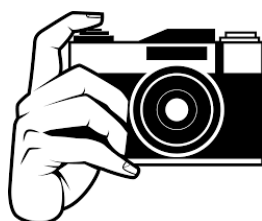
Right now, my family is planning to spend New Year's Eve together. (Everyone except Dad. He will be slaving away at a restaurant.) We're throwing around some ideas for what to do, since this will be the last time the family will be in the same place, at the same time, for quite a while.

Someone has suggested we go camping.

- Law chooses to end his essay by reflecting on change? Why might that be important in a reflection on growing up in Australia?

'Lands Edge' by Tim Winton

Tim Winton grew up on the coast of Western Australia, where he continues to live. He is passionate about the environment and protecting the natural beauty of Australia. Tim Winton has published twenty-nine books for adults and children, and his work has been translated into twenty-eight languages. Since his first novel, *An Open Swimmer*, won the *Australian Vogel Award* in 1981, he has won the Miles Franklin Award four times (for *Shallows*, *Cloudstreet*, *Dirt Music* and *Breath*) and twice been shortlisted for the Booker Prize (for *The Riders* and *Dirt Music*). In 1998 the Australian National Trust declared Winton a national living treasure.

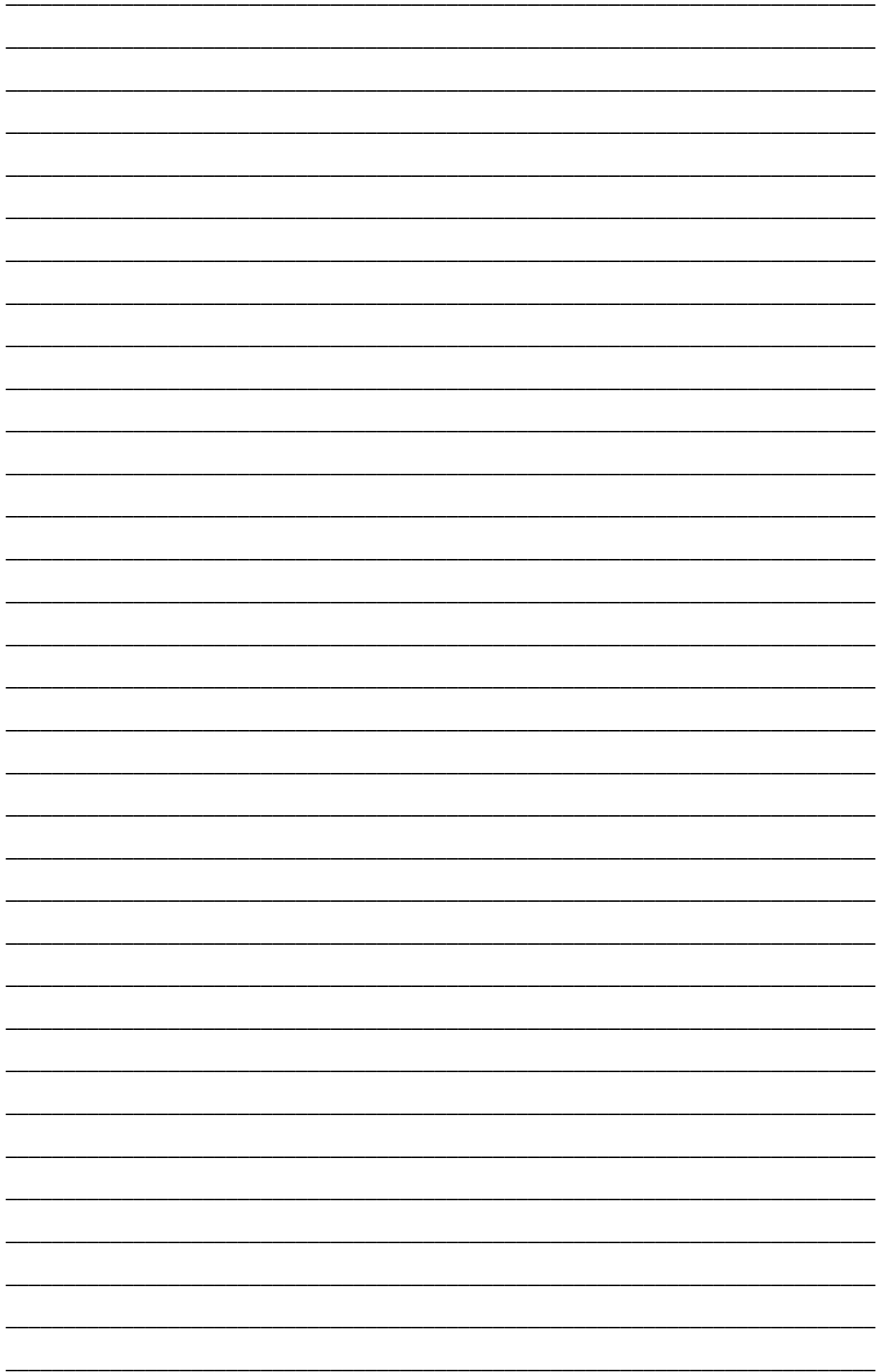


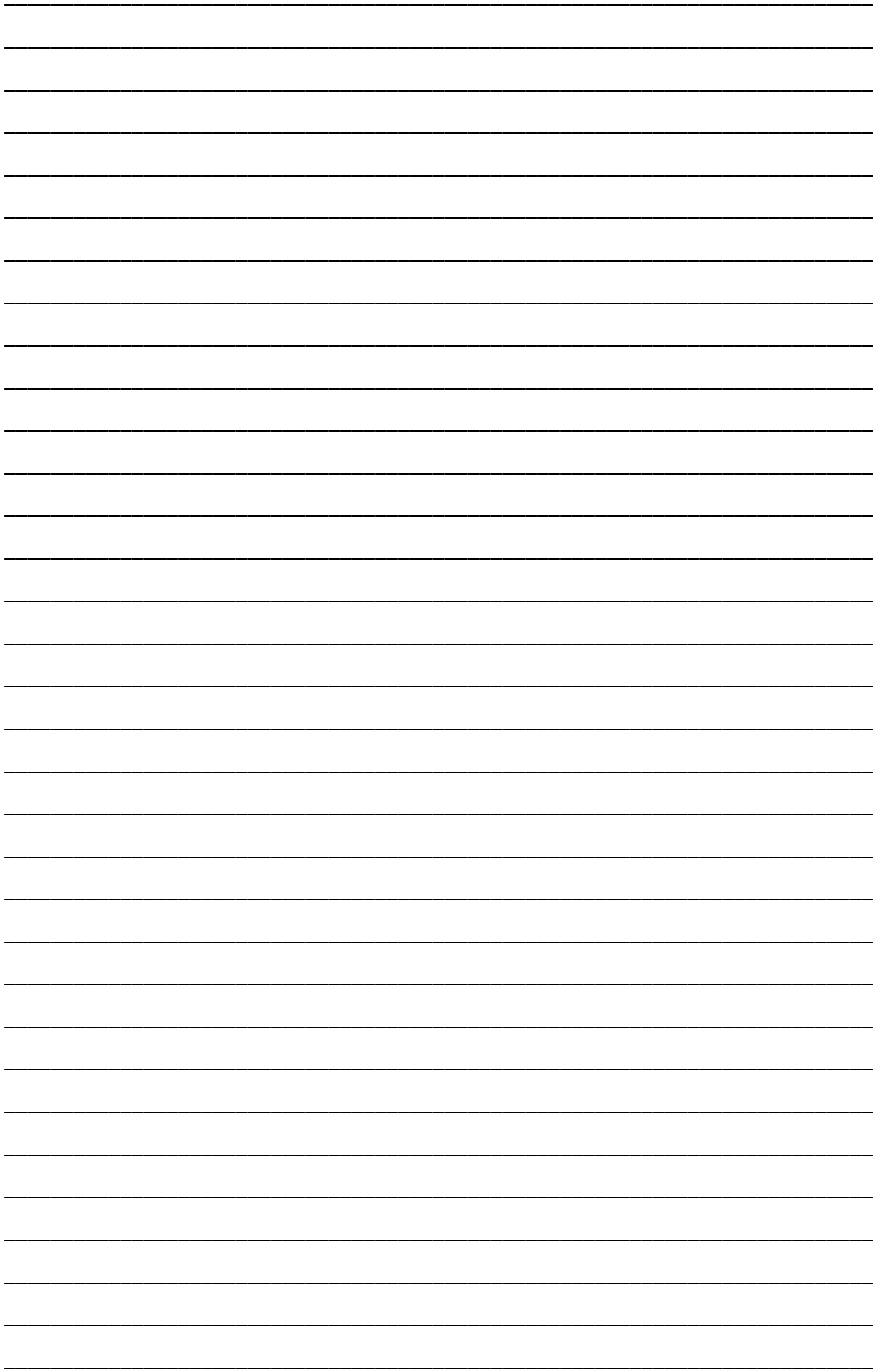
Find one image that represents the happiest memory of your childhood. In a brief paragraph (100-150 words) explain why this image is so important.

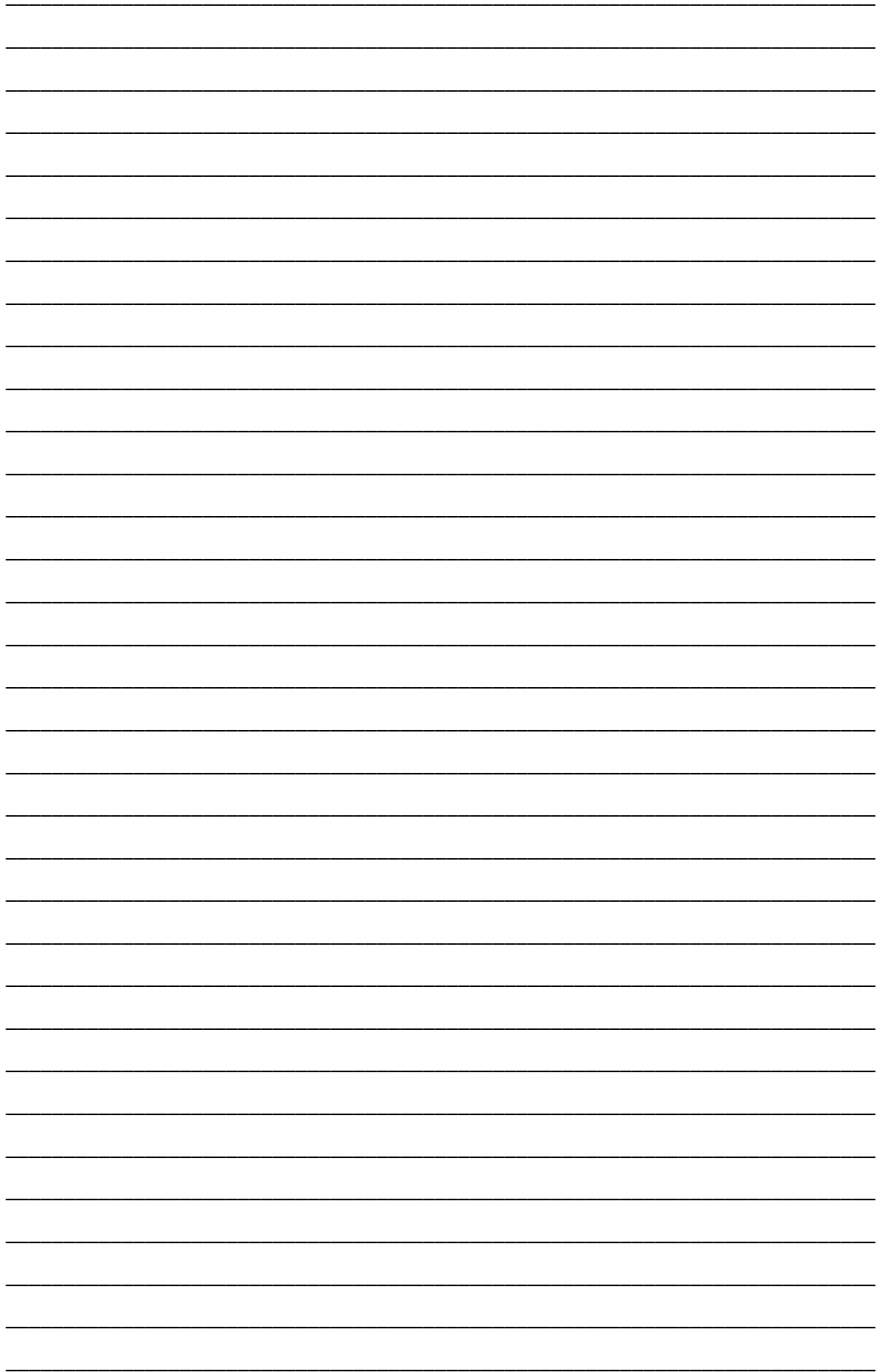
Questions

- Why do the smells of the coast linger for Tim Winton?
- What role did the 'mystery' of the house play for Winton?
- How did books help Winton develop as a young man?
- What role does the climate play in Winton's story?
- How does Winton characterise the pattern of his life?







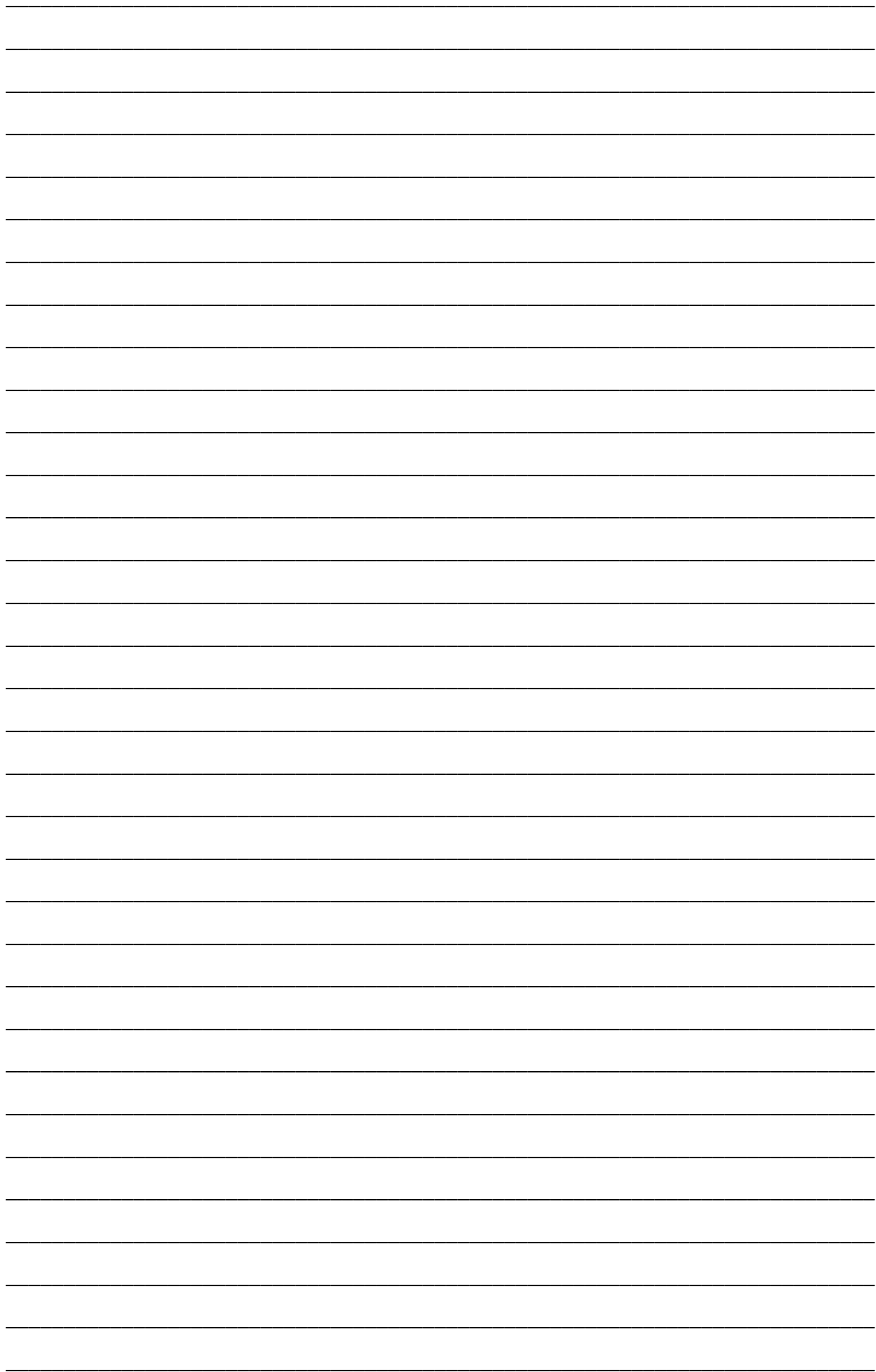


Deep Dive

Consider these extracts from Winton's essay.

Summer days were long at Greenough. We swam in the river and surfed on the beach when the rips weren't too treacherous. We rowed around the estuary and fished for bream and stood out on the jagged limestone point and baitcast for tailor. Every day my little brother went down to the caravan that served as a shop to try to buy lollies with bits of glass and bottle tops. He had more success some days than others, but at the end of the holidays Mum had to go down and settle his account.

- Looking at the above paragraph, find 5 more examples from the Essay where Winton uses a range of adjectives to paint a picture for readers. Explain why these examples resonate with you.



'Don't Touch Alcohol' by Sara El Sayed

Sara El Sayed was born in Alexandria, Egypt, in 1995. A sessional teacher at Queensland University of Technology, she is also completing a Master of Fine Arts. Her work is featured in the anthologies *Growing Up African in Australia*, *Growing Up Australian*, *Arab-Australian-Other*, and in publications including *Frankie*, *Overland* and *The Lifted Brow*. She was shortlisted for the 2019 Richell Prize. Sara's debut memoir '*Muddy People*' was released 2021.



Make a list of 8-10 things that might be unusual for people who have recently arrived in Australia from other countries. There is a new student to St Leonard's who has arrived from Afghanistan. You have been asked to explain these things to them. How might you help them understand 3-4 of these differences?

Questions

- What motivates El Sayed’s father when he arrives in Australia?
- What principle is he unwilling to compromise?
- Why might it be so hard for the El Sayed family to adjust to life in Australia?



Deep Dive

Consider these extracts from El Sayed's essay.

The ground in the yard was hard and dry, so I dug a hole in the loose bark that sat at the base of the tree on the nature strip. The time capsule was a box of us. This is the story it told: we liked yoghurt, because the yoghurt tub was licked clean; we received junk mail, because we finally had a mailbox; and we never, ever ate rum balls, because we were Muslim.

'Excuse me,' called a voice from behind. The lady from next door, the chickens-and-flagpole side. She was wearing horse-riding boots, and her hair was coiffed in a ponytail that pulled her forehead taut. She looked like she would smell overwhelmingly perfumed if you hugged her. She must have been watching me burying the capsule, but had kept her distance. When she spoke, she sounded polite: 'Your rubbish doesn't belong on our street.'

- What does this paragraph suggest about the judgements we make of others? How do we arrive at these judgements and what might motivate us in making them?

Planning a Personal Reflective Essay



Planning— 800-word Reflective Essay

(You are Writing for the second edition of *Growing Up Australian*. You have been asked to choose an event or memory from your childhood and write a reflective essay looking back at that event/experience.)

<p>Title: (You want a title that engages the reader and makes them interested to read on.)</p>	
<p>Setting the Scene Identify the period you will be speaking about. Think about why you might have chosen this period? Write some key words that will help you describe this period. How old were you? Where were you? What was happening around you?</p>	

Description

Think about the events/ experiences you wish to reflect on in this essay. Make some notes on each looking at who was involved, what happened, where it happened, why it happened. Make a list of words – both nouns and adjectives – that you can use in your descriptions.

Evaluation

Was the experience positive or negative? How did you view it at the time? What was your reaction/ feelings/ thoughts at the time?

Reflection

Thinking back on the event/ experience, how do you see it now? How has your view changed from your childhood to now?

Conclusion

What are the key lessons that you feel this event/
experience taught you and how might these
lessons feature in the future?

Personal Reflective Essay Structure

Introduction (8-10 sentences)

- Begin by describing the period you are speaking about and explain why you have chosen this moment in time.
 - You can look back at the essays we have studied and see the different ways the authors choose to start their essay.

Body Paragraphs (2-3) (10-12 sentences each)

- These paragraphs will focus on the event/ experience you are reflecting on.
- Begin by describing the specific event/ experience that you wish to explore.
- Think about who, what where and why.
 - Look at the essays we have read and the specific level of detail each author uses to describe the events they are reflecting on.

Conclusion (8-10 sentences)

- Thinking back on the event/ experience, how do you see it now? How has your view changed from your childhood to present day?
- What are the key lessons that you feel this event/ experience taught you and how might these lessons influence your future?
 - Look at the final paragraphs in the essays we have read. Use these as a guide for your own writing.

Extended Analytical Writing

1. 'Growing Up in Australia shows that there is no one way to grow up in Australia.' Discuss.
2. Growing Up in Australia demonstrates that social norms serve only to suffocate.' Do you agree?
3. 'Growing Up in Australia showcases the experience of being othered.' Do you agree?
4. 'Growing Up in Australia shows the damage caused by the Australian Dream.' Discuss.
5. To what extent are the parents in Growing Up in Australia forced to sacrifice for their children?
6. 'Growing Up in Australia demonstrates the importance of controlling your own identity.' Discuss.
7. To what extent are the young people in Growing Up in Australia destined to conflict with adults?
8. 'Growing Up in Australia spotlights the impossibility of moving past your childhood experiences.' Do you agree?
9. To what extent does a strong sense of community restrict the growth of an individual in Growing Up in Australia?
10. To what extent are the writers in Growing Up in Australia still growing up?
11. How do experiences of oppression shape the writers in Growing Up in Australia?

