

Background

Intended to accompany the 'write@uni' resource, found at www.aucklanduni.ac.nz/writeatuni

Follow Hua, Marcus, and Mele on their journey as they navigate their way through writing in their first year at university. Each of them have unique challenges that they face, but they have their own strengths too!

On their journey, they will be helped by Graham, a third year Law student, and Kiri, the lecturer of the paper that they are taking together: GENED 108 Sustainable Cities.

Meet the Characters

Hua

Degree: Bachelor of Music, first year

Born in Auckland, Hua is a high school leaver who is studying Music in her first year at the University of Auckland. She is a talented violin player who loves puzzles, riddles and codes. She relates to music and numbers more than to words, and panics easily when assignments overwhelm her.

Markus

Degree: Bachelor of Science (CompSci)/Bachelor of Commerce Conjoint

Markus, an international student from Germany, has recently arrived in Auckland to study computer science and commerce. Aside from his study interests, he loves reading and is a passionate, highly critical blogger who regularly writes about the environment, technology and current affairs. He's open-minded and interested in everything new he encounters, but finds it at times difficult to be far away from home. Even though his English skills are great, Markus sometimes struggles to understand local expressions.

Mele

Degree: Bachelor of Science (Biology)

Mele is a Tongan student in her early 30s. She has only recently decided to take the plunge and go to university and is highly motivated. Because she is passionate about nature, she has decided to pursue a degree in biology. Mele is currently juggling her studies, a happy marriage and being a mum of her six-year-old son 'Asipele very successfully. To help her through this insanely busy time she relies on coffee as her secret weapon.

Graham

Degree: Bachelor of Law, third year

Graham has been living next door to Hua for most of his life. Being a very conscientious law student, he never skips a class or tutorial nor loses focus, yet somehow still manages to find time for his other passion: cricket. Multitasking is certainly one of his many strengths. Having been an older brother figure to Hua for most of their childhood, he now has to put up with her at uni as well - to his mild despair.

Dr Kiri Williams

Dr Kiri Williams, a science lecturer at the School of Environment, teaches GENED 108: Sustainable Cities among a few other courses in her field. She's keenly interested in sustainable development and passionately lives in alignment with her values. For example, Kiri cycles to and from work every day to act as an aspirational role model. She's not really a city person, but her job and her children's education keep her in Auckland. As soon as she gets the chance to take a break from Auckland (and students!), however, she visits her extended whanau (family) in Northland.

Credits

Art and character design: Theodore Macdonald.

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Comic #1: 1.1. Who's Rubrick?

Hua turns up almost late to the first lecture because she got carried away during violin practice. She rushes in with laptop in one hand, violin in another, headphones flying.

It's her first ever lecture at uni, and the only available seat she can find is in the front row next to Mele and Markus, who both sit there looking rather uncomfortable. As she sits down, the lecturer starts to speak.

Dr Kiri Williams, the lecturer, speaks from the podium, her bike helmet sitting next to the mic.

Kiri: ... what we'll look at in GENED108: Sustainable cities. Here on Canvas you have my details- Kiri Williams, that's me - and the details of your first assignment. Oh, and the rubrics, here.

Alright, let's get started. *(starts to lecture)*.

Mele: *(whispers to Markus)* What canvas? And who's Rubrick?

Markus: *(whispers back to Mele)* It's a sort of online platform... Never met Rubrick.

Hua: *(anxiously looking around the lecture hall where all other students are very busy typing away, thinking; glances at the course outline)* 2 assignments?! Like, writing essays? Please, no...

Kiri: *(wrapping up first lecture)* Thank you. Remember the readings on Canvas for the next lecture!

Mele: *(relieved she's survived lecture 1)* Well, that was interesting.

(To the other two) Oh, by the way, I'm Mele.

Markus: I'm Markus. I'm from Germany.

Hua: I'm confused. Er, I'm Hua.

Mele: When did she say the first essay was due?

Markus: *(already scanning through Canvas on his phone)* In four weeks.

The three exchange looks, equal part dread and confusion.

Hua: *(clutching at the violin for dear life)* This is going to be fun...

Comic #2: 1.3. From High School to University

Hua, Markus and Mele are walking out of their first lecture. Hua is still holding on to her violin, looking a bit shaken and insecure. Markus is walking confidently, even though he is a bit confused himself. Mele is looking around, but is actually deep in thought.

Hua: Wow, that was different to what I'm used to!

Mele: *(nostalgic and feeling a bit old right now)* That's different from my high school. Mind you, that's half a lifetime ago.

Markus: That was a lot of info all at once.

All stop by a water fountain. Mele is refilling her water bottle. Markus is looking things up on his phone.

Mele: I think my six-year-old kid does more writing than I do, these days.

Hua: *(by now, well freaked out)* I don't even write! I play the violin!

Graham has crept up behind Hua.

Graham: Yes. Badly.

Hua leaps, then turns around. Seeing Graham, she gives him a 'little sister' kind of hug.

Hua: *(runs her words together in excitement)* Oh my god Graham!

Graham: *(choked in a hug)* Hi, I'm Graham. I'm her next door neighbour.

Hua: He's doing third year law.

Marcus and Mele exchange glances. They look impressed. Looking hopefully at Graham they both speak at the same time.

Mele: A man on the inside!

Markus: Inside information!

Graham: *(sighs theatrically, like a man much put upon)* First years...

Comic #3: 1.5. What's for homework?

The location: Quad. The usual Quad scene at the start of semester, with people chatting, Skyping on laptops, a stall can be seen in the corner. Our heroes are seated at one of the tables.

The scene: Markus is trying his first L&P, Mele having bought him one. He is staring at his laptop over his drink. Hua is devouring a ginger slice. Mele and Graham walk up happily talking and carrying coffees.

Hua: (to Markus, between mouthfuls) So, what's the homework on Canvas?

Graham facepalms.

Graham: Homework? Seriously?

Markus: (putting his L&P bottle back on the table after his first sip, looking at it intrigued) The reading list is definitely NOT what I expected. It's like 5 pages long! (still looking at his L&P bottle with surprise, murmuring under his breath) ... the drink is not what I expected either...

Hua: (chewing) That reading list is longer than my personal reading record.

Mele: (also peering over Markus's shoulder) Not really homework, is it?

Markus: (pensively looking at his L&P) I'll never have time to blog again.

Graham pulls out a book big enough to kill a small animal. It's "The Law of Torts".

Graham: And I have to go through this by Friday!

Markus: Torte? Is that some sort of cake?

Mele: Aw, come on, cheer up! We wanted to be here!

She raises her coffee cup in a toast. The others smile.

Mele: To the next generation of academics! (to Markus) Pull up the first reading, we'll tackle it together.

General shuffling around the table as Markus opens his laptop and Hua and Mele cluster in.

Graham: (to Mele) No more sugar for Hua, please.

Comic #4: 1.7. Just answer the essay question!

Kiri has finished the lecture. She's in a rush to leave and has already put her bicycle helmet on. Hua shyly raises her hand and half-stands up, awkwardly.

Hua: *(shy and intimidated)* Excuse me... um... Kiri?

Kiri stops, helmet askew on her head, her papers and keys dangling from her arms.

Hua: Um... Just wondering if maybe... perhaps um, you could maybe tell us, um, you know, what we have to do in this assignment? Like... to pass?

All the students in the lecture theatre are looking equally relieved that someone has had the courage to ask the question everybody was dying to have the answer to. Perhaps think of it as the entire theatre breathing an enormous sigh of relief.

Kiri: *(perplexed, as she's already halfway out the door with her helmet on her head, wondering how on Earth a student would come up with a question like this)* You just answer the essay question! Check the rubric on Canvas. Ask your tutor! *(she rushes off, her helmet wobbling on her head)* Sorry, gotta run!

Cut to Hua sitting down, perhaps on the edge of the grass square in John Hood plaza. She's a bit shaken by the whole experience. Mele and Markus are hovering nearby, Mele juggling phone + takeaway coffee. Markus is kneeling in front of the laptop.

Mele: *(to Markus, with a grin)* Do you know who Rubrick is yet?

Markus: Yup. Marking criteria for the course. Look, they're here. *(points to laptop)*

Hua: *(still trying to figure out what Kiri has said)* But "The Future of Auckland Transport" is not a question. How do I answer a question that's not a question?

Mele is thinking, Markus is typing away like mad.

Hua: Maybe I'll ask Graham.

Mele: How's he gonna help? This isn't Law.

Markus: *(to Hua)* Can you ask in the tutorial today?

Mele laughs as Hua prepares to whack Marcus with the violin.

Mele: I think she's done asking in front of a full class.

Markus: *(pensively)* I think we should swing around our tutor's office tomorrow.

Hua: 'By'... 'Swing by', not 'around'.

Mele: *(drains the coffee and expertly lobs the cup into a bin)* By, around, over and under, it's a good idea. I'll see you there.

Comic #5: 2.1. Thinking Caps

Markus, Hua and Mele are sitting on a bench in Albert Park. It's a warm, sunny day, and they're all wearing beanies. They're engaged in a heated conversation about Auckland Transport. Graham walks past, his cricket bag strapped to his back, fast and determined stride - he's got to make it to cricket training in time and has been studying at the library until now. He spots his three 1st-year friends and stops.

Graham: *(surprised and amused at the same time)* Are you guys cold?

Markus, Hua and Mele stop their conversation and look up at Graham. They all seem a bit surprised that Graham doesn't "get it".

Hua: No, these are our thinking caps.

Markus: They help us do higher level thinking.

Mele: *(resigned to her fate and her beanie)* It was their idea.

Graham scratches his head while considering the enormity of first-year ignorance.

Graham: Ah, starting to get the hang of uni, I see. And what are you thinking about at a higher level?

Markus,
Mele and Hua *(in unison)*: Transport in Auckland!

Graham: Tell me when you've figured it out. *(He looks with disgust at the huge bag of cricket gear.)*
Meantime, I gotta carry this all the way to Britomart. See ya.

Graham walks off. The three follow him with their eyes.

Mele: We can take them off now.

Hats come off. The three laugh like crazy. Comments like 'haha', 'lol', 'did you see his face', 'that was good' etc. hover about.

Hua: *(standing up)* Time for the tutorial.

Mele: More higher level thinking.

Markus: *(looking back in the direction Graham went)* And he still has time for cricket! I haven't touched my blog in weeks!

Comic #6: Thinking at University

Caption: After the first few weeks at Uni, Hua dreams...

Hua finds herself at a party. There are people holding drinks, the endless hubbub of conversations, snatches of music. To Hua's horror, she is wearing onesie bunny pyjamas!

She spots a familiar face – Markus? – and rushes over.

Markus: ... a blog about biking in Auckland that takes it -

Mele: *(out of nowhere)*: - under critical consideration. Our discourse of sustainability is not necessarily –

Hua: What are you two talking about?

They seem to ignore her.

Markus: Sustainability is not a Western-only concept. Why frame it that way?

Hua turns around to find that Kiri, their lecturer, has appeared, bike helmet and all. She smiles and speaks as though responding to a question of Hua's.

Kiri: *(to Hua)* Oh, I agree with you.

Hua: But I didn't say anything! And they're all talking without me!

Kiri: Here, everyone is talking. And everyone is invited.

Hua: But they're all saying different things!

Kiri: That's just how we roll. Join us!

Hua: I can't! I'm in baby clothes!

Graham: *(dressed in something outrageously stylish, holding up a photo)*: So was I, once. Here, see Kiri in her baby –

Hua wakes catapult-like, sitting up in bed. Snatches of conversation still hover in the air. The clock shows it's 8am.

We now see Hua with sleep-muddled face and puffy eyes stumble into a seat next to Mele inside a lecture theatre.

Mele: *(chirpy and smiling, shoves her phone/tablet under Hua's nose)*: You know how Kiri talked about "joining scholarly debates"? Look at this sweet quote a friend sent me!

Hua: *(reading out loud)*: 'Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. [...] You listen for a while, [...] Someone answers, you answer him; another comes to your defense, another aligns himself against you [...] the discussion is interminable.[...] You have become part of the academic conversation.'

Mele: *(thoughtfully, still smiling)*: That's how we join academic conversations at Uni.

Hua: *(giving back the phone)*: Now I'm completely creeped out –

We zoom in on Hua's face, now breaking into a smile. Floppy bunny ears from her onesie hover, almost transparent, over her head, like a semi-visible hat.

Hua: - Yet strangely relieved at the same time.

Comic #7: 2. 4. More cyclists, fewer cars

Mele, Hua and Markus are sitting on the stairs in front of Old Choral Hall, comparing notes and discussing the rapidly approaching assignment.

Hua: I found an argument that Kiri will like: "A cyclist is one less car!"

Mele: Sounds like the stuff 'Asipeli brings home from school.

Markus: Seems kind of obvious.

Hua: Not if you write it in the proper way!

They stop as they notice Kiri walking past, helmet on, no bike in sight, looking angrily at someone she just passed, face like thunder.

Markus: Hi, professor...

Kiri: *(looking over her shoulder)* Honestly, what kind of idiot bikes on the footpath? They're a menace!

Mele: *(shyly)* But they're one less car!

Kiri: Yes, and ten more ACC claims when they don't watch what they're doing! *(She notices them looking at her, partly frightened by the outburst, partly confused.)*

Hua: It causes less pollution. No traffic jams. And you like biking –

Kiri: Doesn't mean it's without problems. You gotta consider other aspects, too. For example, I saw an article the other day – *(fiddles with the phone to find the article, then looks at it bug-eyed.)* Oh dear. Running late, sorry. I'll put it on Canvas!

The three stare after her in confusion.

Mele: Looks like the 'one less car' line won't pass muster that easily.

Hua: And I thought I had it figured out.

Markus: "Pass the mustard"?

Mele turns to Markus to explain the idiom. Now Hua is checking her phone.

Hua: Come on, now we'll be late for our workshop.

Markus: *(picking up his things, passing Hua her violin)* What was it, again?

Mele: Critical thinking.

Comic #8: 3.1. One book, all the answers!

HSB quad. Hua, Mele and Markus. Behind them, we (vaguely) see a figure fastening her bike to the bike stand by the poupou. It's Kiri, but we won't tell them that just yet.

Hua: *(happily, holding up a book)* Guess what! I just saved us a lot of time!

Close up on the book, with a showy title: "Auckland transport: The Solution to the Future".

Hua: *(proudly to bemused Mele and Markus)* One book, all answers!

The book hovers over them, angelic, radiating light. You can almost hear the choir of cherubim in the background. Hua basks in the light, Mele and Markus still unconvinced.

Hua: *(bathed in light fantastic)* Saves reading time! And it has a reference list, so it's scholarly!

As the scene returns to normal, a dark figure approaches from the back, bike helmet on her head.

Markus: My dad always says: Timeo hominem unius libri.

Kiri: *(from behind them)* And what does that mean?

The three students leap up, hair standing on end, with startled expressions.

Markus: It's Latin. "I fear the man who's read only one book".

Kiri: Your dad's right. *(looks at the book in Hua's hand)* Good stuff in chapter 3 there, the rest is out of date by now. *(walking off)* Have a good day!

Hua bangs her head against the book, using it as a portable wall. Mele is answering her phone.

Mele: *(on the phone)* Yeah, we're seeing his teacher today. No, that's fine. Just pick me up from Uni.

She glances aside to where Marcus is giving the distraught Hua a friendly pat on the shoulder.

Mele: Where to pick me up? *(still looking at the other two)* I think we'll be at the library...

Comic #9: 3.6. But it's ALL important!

Caption: After their visit to the library, Markus visits Hua...

Hua is sitting in her room. Her desk is overflowing with books and printouts. There are three coffee mugs or soda cans next to her, two of them empty, one of them still steaming. Markus walks in, an L&P in one hand and his laptop under his arm.

Markus: Wow! Hard at work!

Hua: It's so much to read! And I'm nowhere near the end!

Markus stand over Hua and peers at the book she's reading.

Markus: How do you use so much highlighter?

Hua: To know what's important.

We see a page from Markus's POV. Almost all the text is highlighted.

Markus: You mean it's all important?!

Hua: *(almost in tears)* How can I tell? I'm good with numbers and music!
You read more than I do!

Markus: *(sits down on the bed dejected)* I read the entire "Lord of the Rings" twice before I was 16.
And now I can't handle three articles.

Hua: We must be doing something wrong.

Hua's phone beeps. She reads the message she just received.

Hua: Mele's inviting us to lunch with her family tomorrow.

Markus: Should we bring something?

Hua: *(texting, still depressed)* More highlighters, possibly.

Cut to Mele's place. Mele's standing at the table covered with salad bowls and oven trays, phone in one hand, calling to someone out of the frame.

Mele: And get some more bread! *(turns head to the other side)* 'Asipeli! Did you do your school reading?

A small boy appears, carrying a pile of books almost bigger than him. Mele smiles a little worriedly, looking at the huge pile.

'Asipeli: Yes, mum. Here, I brought you yours.

Comic #10: Critical Readers Engage with their Sources

This is a stand-alone image to illustrate the section about reading critically and engaging with the text.

We see Mele in her living room, at the dining table. To the side, we see her son sitting on the floor in his school uniform, reading a comic.

Mele has one or two printed articles to the side, is currently reading a book and making notes. Pens, highlighters and post-its are scattered about.

The speech balloons are also scattered about.

Mele: (to herself, as she works)

I remember this from the lecture.

That's not what the other article said, my friend...

What does this word mean? Should look it up.

Good quote, must write down page number.

Oh, that's a good word to use!

Comic #11: 4.0. Writing with purpose

This is a stand-alone image to illustrate the section about planning your essay.

We see the disaster that is Hua's bedroom. Books, papers and music notation sheets are scattered about. She has the 'thinking beanie' on.

On the wall in front of her is a large piece of paper, A1 or so, tacked over the posters for Forman's "Amadeus" and Tyldum's "Imitation Game".

The poster has large headings. We can see some of them: STRUCTURE, MAIN POINTS, READINGS. Post-it notes in three different colours are stuck under each heading.

Next to it, on the wall, a smaller piece of paper. It reads: 'Deadline: next Friday' and 'Don't panic', in big red letters.

Hua is pensively nibbling on a Sharpie pen as she observes arrows she has drawn to connect the various post-its.

Comic #12: 4.3. Writing is everywhere

Mele and Hua have finally found two empty seats and computers in the study space. Mele realizes she happens to sit next to Markus and peers over at his screen curiously.

Mele: Blogging, are we? Instead of studying?

Markus: I wish I was. This is an assignment.

Hua has now joined them. Markus continues typing.

Markus: I gotta review the programs my classmates wrote. And they'll review mine.

Hua: *(looks bored)* I thought you did cool stuff like...

We see Hua flying through a sky, or a universe, filled with snippets of computer code

Hua: ... Write code!

Mele appears in the code sky, arms crossed, looking displeased.

Mele: And what do you think I do in Biology? Draw animals?

Hua: *(pointing an accusing finger at Mele)* I saw you carrying pictures of animals yesterday!

Mele: *(angrily)* We're making a research poster!

Hua: *(back in the real world now)* Oh. Sorry.

Markus: Not everything that's written is an essay.

Mele settles down into the computer chair.

Mele: Writing, huh? It gets everywhere.

Comic #13: The Transition from High School to Uni Writing

A printing station in Info Commons or the General Library. Markus is printing off his essay. Hua, her violin on her back and her arms crossed in front of her, is impatiently tapping her foot, while Markus is self-confidently and calmly picking up and admiring each page as it comes out. Graham hovers nearby.

Hua: Come on, how long is that essay?

Markus: *(proudly)* 20 pages - I wrote more than I needed.

Markus is shown standing proudly on a mountain of paper, triumphantly waving the essay.

Markus: Extra research, and more information, for bonus points and an A+!

Hua: Dude. The word count.

Markus: Surely more is better!

Hua: Concise, Kiri said concise! Like NCEA!

Markus: What's Antsy Yay?

Hua: *(speaking from an imaginary lectern, wearing a high school uniform)* Highschool is very clear on the matter! For a short essay: Intro - body - conclusion, no more than three sentences per -

Graham: You're such a kid. That's for high school, not university.

Hua: Oh great. The Wannabe Lawyer is back.

Graham: That's Mr Wannabe Lawyer to you.

Markus: *(looking hopefully at Graham)* So I don't need to do the antsy yay?

Hua: You still need to stick to the word count!

Graham: What you two need is some serious help, like an essay writing workshop.

Comic #14: 4.8. I'm so lost!

It's 2.30am. Markus is sitting at his desk in front of his laptop. It is dark around him, the only light shining on him comes from his computer screen. His eyes are bloodshot with bags underneath, his hair is all scruffy and he's looking quite stressed.

Next to him is his printed 20-page essay, and on it, written in red, thick marker, it says "Shorten!" and "Due: Friday!".

Markus: I'm so lost...

A ghostly Graham appears behind him.

Graham: No, you just took a wrong turn.

Graham's hand points to books and papers on the desk, closer up.

Graham: *(off panel)* You've done the reading. You've done the thinking. You've packed your luggage, as it were.

Kiri waves from the corner of the room. She is holding up her bike with one hand, a map-like paper in the other. A large backpack is leaning against the wheel.

Kiri: Before you're ready to travel, you need a map.

We close in on the paper in her hand. The caption reads 'Essay plan'.

Kiri: *(off panel)* The difference is, with writing at uni, you write the map yourself.

Mele is now standing next to Kiri.

Mele: Then you just fill in the map. You know, with all the stuff you've read and thought about and written down.

Next to Mele now stands Hua, playing the violin. She stops and points to Markus with the bow.

Hua: And stick to the WORD COUNT!

Markus wakes up - poof! - at his computer, mouth half open. He had fallen asleep at the keyboard.

Markus: *(switching the laptop back on)* Okay, the map... Let's try this...

Markus begins typing, breaking into a smile.

Markus: I was wondering how they all fitted in here anyway. With the bike.

Comic #15: 4.10. Oh dear...

It's evening. Kiri is in her office, marking essays from another course. Her glasses are on the tip of her nose, her helmet or resting on a table nearby, and a bowl of apples next to her. One of the apples is half-eaten. Two boxes of paper in front of her: large one labelled 'TO MARK' and a thin one labelled 'MARKED'.

As the strip begins, Kiri is sitting up straight in her chair. As she reads, she progressively sinks or slides lower and lower down in her seat. The 'to mark' and 'marked' piles slowly change size as the 'to mark' pile decreases and the other one increases.

Caption: Dr Kiri Williams is in her office marking assignments from a different course.

Kiri: *(reading, and sinking lower and lower behind the desk)*

"It's well known that - " No, it's not! Where's your evidence? Where's the reference? Known to whom?

"All the known research" - What research? Hedge it!

"The problem with it's approach -" Oh dear...

"You can't be sure, that you're analysis - " Oh no. Please, no.

The paragraphs, where are your paragraphs?!

(Kiri sinks so low that she disappears under her desk)

Kiri: *(from the deep nether below the desk)* Calm down, Kiri. Breathe in, breathe out, 1, 2, 3...
They'll learn. They'll learn.

Comic #16: 4.12. But I love it!

Mele is sitting at a table in the Relax Lounge garden. Her little boy, 'Asipeli, is eating a cake. Two steaming cups of coffee await the arrival of Graham.

Graham walks in, bag in one hand, cricket bat in the other.

Graham: I made it!

Mele: Thanks so much. 'Asipeli, make room for Mr Graham.

Graham sits down, smiling at the kid.

Graham: No worries. Here, I read your draft.

From this point, the conversation text is overlaid upon images of papers, tablets, coffee cups, spoons, hands holding papers and writing.

Graham: Overall, good. But here, third paragraph, this sentence doesn't fit.

Mele: But I love it! It's probably the best sentence in the whole essay!

Graham: It's a great statement. But it adds nothing to your argument. You only have room for stuff that's directly relevant.

Mele: Aw, man... I understand, though. No room.

'Asipeli: Mummy, I can't finish this cake.

Mele: Pass it here. That, I do have room for.

Comic #17: Editing and Proofreading

Continuation from the previous comic. Mele is sitting in the same seat, now with her thinking beanie on, editing her essay on the printout. In the background, we see the silhouettes of Graham showing 'Asipeli how to use the cricket bat.

Hua walks up, happy-bubbly-proud, waving her printed essay in the air.

Hua: Guess who's finished!

She sits down next to Mele, and puts her feet up on an empty chair.

Hua: Just in time for tonight's practice!

Mele: *(to 'Asipeli)* Get your feet off the chair.

(to Hua) Good for you. I'm still editing. Then I need to proofread.

Hua: *(with a confused look on her face)* Isn't that the same thing?

Mele nibbles pensively at the end of her pen.

Mele: Not really. Proofreading comes after editing.

Hua: How do you do that?

Mele's voice acts as voiceover above images of Graham and 'Asipeli playing cricket.

Mele: You check you capitalisation, typos, grammar, that sort of thing.

Hua: No, I mean, how do you know that stuff?

Mele: I've been to a workshop about editing and proofreading.

Hua is tapping her nose with her essay printout. You can see (or imagine) the wheels in her head turning.

Hua: Tell you what: I'll proofread yours if you proofread mine!

Mele: Agreed.

Comic #18: 5.2. We're done, right?

Under a tree in Albert park, Hua, Markus and Mele are relaxing, having just handed in their assignment. Mele is sitting on the ground, savouring her coffee. Markus is lying on his back, using his backpack as a pillow, laptop on his stomach. Hua is plucking at the violin, checking that it's tuned.

Mele: (with a huge smile) I can't believe it.

Markus: The Future of Auckland's transport - proofread, referenced and submitted to Turnitin.
We're done!

Hua is fitting the violin on her shoulder. She speaks to the other two without looking at them.

Hua: And the next one is due in five weeks' time.

Mele: Thanks for ruining the moment.

Markus: Yes, but now we know so much more.

Mele: We're sorted for academic writing skills.

Hua takes the violin off her shoulder and stares off into the distance.

Hua: I don't think it works that way.

Mele and Markus: Huh?

Images are a series of closeups, of Hua's fingers on the violin, then a flower in Mele's hair, then Markus's fingers on the keyboard.

Hua: (voiceover across panels) It's like playing an instrument. You do one performance...

... then another piece begins...

...and you start practicing... all over again.

Mele and Markus smile at each other as Hua begins to play.

Comic #19: 5.4 How do I figure out what I did wrong?

The group are sitting together on a bench beside the Old Barracks Wall.

Mele, Hua and Markus have just picked up their marked essays and silently go through the pages, trying to decipher the comments Kiri has left in a haste. Mele is pointing at a comment she can't decipher.

Caption: The marked essays are handed back...

Mele: I just can't read Kiri's handwriting. What does it say here?

Markus: *(leaning in to look)* Arf - arqu - Is it 'argument'?

We see the page in Mele's hand. The grade is A-.

Mele: So how do I figure out what I did wrong?

Hua: A- is hardly 'wrong'.

Mele: Well it could be an A or A+ next time. If I figure it out.

Hua: *(squints at the page, holding it at arm's length)* What's 'keep in mind the opposite argument, see Lawrie 1997'?!

Graham walks past on his way to Law school. All three call out to him at once.

Mele, Hua, Markus: Graham!

Graham looks mildly displeased.

Graham: Now what?

The three cluster around him. All we can distinguish is snatches of hasty questions, and much paper being waved about.

Mele, Hua, Markus: *(all at once)* I got an A-, but... What's this supposed to mean? Is this bad?
Who's Lawrie?

Graham: *(losing patience)* Sheesh! One at a time! I was going to lunch...

We shift to Graham sitting comfortably. Before him is one of the overflowing \$5-all-you-can-eat plates that Sustainability Network sells on Wednesdays. We see Markus's hand adding a cup of coffee.

Caption: And so, the lunch is provided...

Graham: Ah, thank you.

Mele: Now, decipher Kiri's feedback for us.

Graham: As soon as Hua is here with my waffles.

Comic #20: 5.6. And we do it all over again

Caption: Orientation week, one year later.

We see our heroes in their new roles.

Hua and Markus are both wearing the red t-shirts of UniGuides. We see them talking to their tour groups, but they have their backs to each other.

Hua: (to her group) So I'll see you back here at 1pm.

Markus: (to his group) ... for any questions, and see you later.

They turn around and see each other. They smile.

Hua: Hi there.

Markus: Hi yourself.

Hua: I'm meeting Mele for a coffee. Come along if you're done here.

Cut to a table at the Quad. Mele is wearing a Tuākana t-shirt. Coffee is being consumed - but Markus sticks firmly to L&P.

Markus: Ah, those first years. Were we ever that scared and confused?

Mele: (to Hua) Have you seen Graham much?

Hua: Only when he's going in and out of the house in his new suits.

Mele: Wow, fourth year Law.

Markus: We should catch up before the classes start.

Hua: (rummaging for something in her bag) Let's grab some dinner after I'm finished at the O-week concert.

Mele: You're playing the violin at the O-week concert?

Hua grins, holding up a cable with a plug.

Hua: Electric violin.

Mele looks frightened.

Mele: (standing up) I might skip the concert, in that case.

Markus: (to Hua, as they collect their bags) What was that thing you said last year? About practicing? And writing?

Hua: (also standing up to go) Oh, that. That just as you finish one thing...

Pan away from the two them walking away. They walk close together, holding hands.

We hear Hua's voice off-panel, in a caption.

Hua: ... another piece begins, and we're practicing - all over again.