We channelled Ernest Hemingway, whose exam writing effort on the prompt, ‘Is it more important to be true to yourself than to conform to the expectations of others?’ scored badly even though the grading criteria required something earnest, long-winded and predictable.

We brought you the handiest, dandiest advice ever on memo writing – that’s meemo, not memo – in six easy steps.

We got on our high horse about language, misused, abused, jargonised and just plain fancy schmancy, and for some reason – and with apologies – never quite got off the horse.

We, like, literally tore our hair out, not to put too fine a point on it, about clichés.

We addressed the scourge of teachers – newfangled technology – from the no-longer-humble photocopier to apps in the cloud.

We googled ‘Google is making us stupid’ – and found that Google is making us stupid.

We reported on actual, real research into new year’s resolutions.

We got serious about ANZAC Day, cyberbullying, quality teaching, the ethics of scientific research and fabricated data, and more.


‘The last word’ has always been fun to write, which hopefully means it’s been enjoyable to read. We’ve addressed topical issues in a humorous way, hopefully, to provoke thought through laughter.

Thanks to contributors to ‘The last word’ over the years: John Collier, Peter D’Angelo, Bev Hewlett, Rebecca Leech, Cynthia May, David Rish, Catherine Scott, Mick Wilkinson and Robert Yen.

It’s been quite a ride.

This month’s last Last Word was written by Steve Holden, Editor of Teacher. His latest book is Somebody to Love published by University of Queensland Press.