

RRR03 Letter to My Son:

Part 1 - Think about this

What are the pertinent dates in this fictional piece?

What year was it written?

In what year was it published?

How old was her son when it was published and how old is he now?

What elements of the letter have become real since it was written?

Think about generalisations as well as specifics in her letter. Is her letter accurate?

If so why? If not, why not?

Do you think the predicted changes are for the bad and good.

Think about this letter:

The letter is dated August 21, 2000, and was published in 2002. This means the son, who was fifteen when the letter was written, would have been about seventeen at the time of publication and is around 41 years old today.

Although many of the specific predictions in the piece never came true, such as the United States merging with Canada, mileage limits on travel, or "cocoon" housing, several broader ideas turned out to be surprisingly accurate. Flanagan correctly anticipated the rise of constant personal technology, smart homes, subscription-based consumption, localized high-tech agriculture, climate-driven migration, and even the use of sound as a tool for control.

In that sense, the letter is accurate in its themes even if the details are exaggerated for effect. The future she imagines is a mix of good and bad: clean energy, local food systems, and creative technologies on one hand, but also privacy loss, corporate power, restricted mobility, and deeper social divides on the other.

Part 2 - Write / plan

Imagine you have a daughter or son born in 2020. Also imagine you are writing a letter in 2025 for them to read in 2035.

What would you write about?

What can they expect?

Think about the positive and the negative. Plan out a letter in bullet points or use sketchnotes - it's not necessary to write out the letter in full. Keep everything to one side of A4.

A Letter Written in 2025:

Dear my little one,

When I'm writing this letter, you are only five years old. You're at an age full of curiosity and energy. You like to put your favorite things everywhere, as if you're marking your own territory, and every day I try my best not to trip over your toys. You don't really know what the world is going through right now, but I hope that when you read this ten years later, you'll see what we imagined about the future, and also see how you grew up.

You were born in 2020, a year that future kids will definitely learn about in their history classes. The world was a mess, and you slept peacefully in your cradle, completely unaware that people were rushing to buy the masks outside. Now it's 2025. The world is still complex, but we've learned how to live with the chaos, and you've learned how to grow happily during that period.

I don't know what the world will look like in 2035, but I can try to imagine it.

What 2035 might look like for you:

Technology will be much smarter than it is now. AI might help you with homework, plan your schedule, remind you to drink water, and maybe even know your preferences better than I do (though it probably won't remind you to wear a jacket like I do). Virtual reality might be so immersive that you can experience places around the world without leaving home. But I guess you'll still complain when I tell you to clean your room. I'm just worried that the smart cleaning robot might suck up your favorite things by mistake, so I want you to tidy them yourself.

Cities might be greener, energy cleaner, and streets quieter. You might see more self-driving cars, more solar panels, and more things we can't even imagine today.

Your future job might be something I can't fully understand. You might become a virtual-world architect, an AI ethics advisor, a digital ecosystem designer, or something that doesn't even exist yet. Thinking about this makes me excited, and a little jealous.

Of course, the future won't be all bright.

Climate change might make summers hotter and extreme weather more common. With more technology, people might get lost in endless information, and privacy might become rare. Competition might be tougher, and you might feel like you're in a never-ending upgrade game.

But these challenges aren't meant to scare you. I want you to know that the future will have both hope and difficulty, and you are strong enough to face it.

A few things I want to tell you:

Stay curious. No matter how fast the world changes, curiosity will always be your key to exploring it.

Stay kind. Technology can change the world, but kindness shapes who you become.

Think for yourself. Don't let algorithms decide what you like, and don't let others define who you are.

Take care of your health, not just your body, but also your mind. The future might be loud, fast, and overwhelming. You need to learn how to give yourself some quiet space.

Be brave. You will face challenges, but you are stronger than you think.

What I hope for you:

I don't need you to be a genius, a billionaire, or a superhero.

I only hope you can:

- Find something you truly love
- Find people you truly care about
- Find a way of living that feels right for you

· And remember to send me a message once in a while (even if it's just "I ate already")

And finally:

If you read this in 2035 and the sky still isn't full of flying cars, then I guess sci-fi movies fooled all of us.

But no matter what the world becomes, I hope you can smile when you look back at us in 2025. Remember, you will always have a home, love, and support. You will always be my favorite, most precious little one.

And I hope you can tell me someday:
Was the future better than we imagined?

Best wishes,
Your beautiful mother

Reference:

Busch, A. (ed.) (2001) Design Is: Words, Things, People, Buildings, and Places at Metropolis. New York: Metropolis Books.