

WRITING PIECE 1

Section 1:

#1 "On the last day of summer, Lucas found a glass jar buried in the sand, and inside was a message written in a language he couldn't understand." Strengths:

- Creates mystery and intrigue through the discovery of an unreadable message
- Sets a clear time and location while introducing the main character

Weakness: Limited sensory details → Your opening could benefit from more vivid descriptions of how Lucas discovered the jar. The phrase "buried in the sand" doesn't give readers a full picture of the moment of discovery.

Exemplar: *On the last day of summer, Lucas's toes struck something hard beneath the warm sand. Brushing away the golden grains, he unearthed a glass jar containing a message written in strange symbols he had never seen before.*

#2 "Even though it was unreadable, he clutched it tightly to his chest, to add it on to his continuous influx of collected jars" Strengths:

- Shows character's emotional connection to his collection
- Reveals character's dedication through physical action

Weakness: Unclear motivation → Your writing doesn't fully explore why Lucas collects jars. The phrase "continuous influx" doesn't help readers understand the emotional significance of his collection.

Exemplar: *Though he couldn't read the message, Lucas hugged the jar close, knowing it would be perfect for his growing collection - each jar representing a step closer to his dream of supporting his family.*

#3 "His bare feet brushed the horribly hot concrete as he stared straight ahead, towards his home at a rented beach resort." Strengths:

- Includes physical sensation that readers can relate to
- Provides context about the character's living situation

Weakness: Contradicting setting details → Your writing moves between beach and concrete settings without clear transitions. The phrase "horribly hot concrete" suddenly appears after previously mentioning sand.

Exemplar: *His bare feet alternated between scorching concrete and cool sand as he made his way along the beach path leading to his temporary home at the seaside resort.*

■ Your story has an interesting premise about a young boy's determination to help his family through an unusual collection. However, you could strengthen the emotional connection between Lucas and his dream. Try showing more of his thoughts and feelings as he searches for jars. Consider developing the conflict with the smaller boy further to create more tension in the story.

Actionable task: Rewrite the scene where Lucas loses the jar, focusing on his emotional reaction and what this specific jar meant to his collection and dreams.

Score: 40/50

Section 2:

#1 On the last day of summer, Lucas found a glass jar buried in the sand, and inside was a message written in a language he couldn't understand.

#2 ~~Even though it was unreadable, he clutched it tightly to his chest, to add it on to his continuous influx of collected jars~~ [Though unreadable, he clutched it tightly to his chest, adding it to his ever-growing collection of jars]; he had found them all over the city, through trash bags, second hand shops and other places he had rummaged in. He just hoped, with all of his heart, he would be able to open a museum and earn money for his family.

#3 In his shaggy, azure overalls and frazzled hair(~~that looked much like a rat's nest instead~~ [which resembled a rat's nest]), he continued to venture home, rummaging through trash bins as he walked past. ~~His bare feet brushed the horribly hot concrete as he stared straight ahead, towards his home at a rented beach resort~~ [His bare feet alternated between hot concrete and sand as he walked towards his home at the rented beach resort]. Feeling the rough sand of the beach enveloping his feet, he heard a voice behind him. Turning around, he saw no one, but felt the jar grabbed from his arms; in front of him, stood a smaller boy, unusually in a bathing suit running towards the jetty. "Stop right there and give me my jar back!" Lucas yelled as he lost his footing in the sand and flopped over onto his neck. From a distance, he looked like a circus seal, poised in a circle.

WRITING PIECE 2

Section 1:

#1: "Every midnight, the stars above the village flickered off for exactly one minute, but only Liam seemed to notice. Of course, he stayed up all night to read and ponder over his books and stare up at the stars above."

Strengths:

- Creates an intriguing opening hook with the mysterious star phenomenon
- Effectively establishes the main character's personality through his late-night habits

Weakness: Limited sensory details → Your writing could paint a richer picture of this unique midnight moment. For instance, when you write "flickered off," you could describe how the darkness feels and what else Liam notices during that minute.

Exemplar: *The stars above the village vanished each midnight, plunging the world into perfect darkness for sixty seconds, while Liam sat at his window, counting the seconds until their return.*

#2: "His dream... it was a question he had pondered for all long time and he had finally decided; he wanted to be an astronaut."

Strengths:

- Shows character development through decision-making
- Links well to the star-gazing theme

Weakness: Unclear emotional connection → Your writing doesn't show us how Liam feels about this decision. When you write "he had finally decided," you could share his emotions about this choice.

Exemplar: *After years of wondering, Liam's heart soared as he finally understood - becoming an astronaut wasn't just a dream, it was his calling.*

#3: "As an astronaut, he was determined to discover the reason behind the 'Star Eclipse,' as he had named it and be someone who others could lead."

Strengths:

- Connects the mysterious phenomenon to the character's goals
- Shows ambition and purpose

Weakness: Underdeveloped motivation → Your writing doesn't fully explain why finding the star mystery matters so much to Liam. The phrase "be someone who others could lead" needs more context about his leadership goals.

Exemplar: *Liam knew becoming an astronaut would let him solve the Star Eclipse mystery, and perhaps inspire other children in his village to chase their own dreams among the stars.*

■ Your story has a lovely magical element with the disappearing stars that draws readers in. You could make your writing stronger by showing us more of Liam's feelings and thoughts throughout his journey. Think about adding small details about how he reacts to things - like his excitement when collecting money or his wonder when watching the stars vanish. This would help readers connect more with Liam and care about his dream.

Rewrite the paragraph about Liam deciding to become an astronaut, focusing on his emotional journey and what this decision means to him personally.

Score: 37/50

Section 2:

#1 Every midnight, the stars above the village flickered off for exactly one minute, but only Liam seemed to notice. Of course, he stayed up all night to read and ponder over his books and stare up at the stars above.

#2 ~~His dream... it was a question he had pondered for all long time and he had finally decided;~~ [The dream that had filled his thoughts for so long finally crystallised;] he wanted to be an astronaut. Every week, he went around the neighbourhood, offering to walk dogs and volunteering. It was all just to earn some pocket money. And to achieve his dream shown in the stars.

#3 ~~As an astronaut, he was determined to discover the reason behind the 'Star Eclipse,' as he had named it and be someone who others could lead.~~ [As an astronaut, he was determined to discover the reason behind the 'Star Eclipse,' as he had named it, and become someone who could lead others.] But, ~~he would still always remind them.~~ [he would always remind them:] Don't look down at your feet, but look up into the stars and dream.