

Section 1:

#1 "Maya stood at the edge of the old railway bridge, the wind playing with her hair as she stared down at the rushing river below. It wasn't a real crossroads, but it felt like one."

Strengths: Your opening creates a vivid picture that draws readers in straight away. The metaphor of the bridge as a crossroads works well to show Maya's difficult choice.

Weakness: Sentence structure variety → Your sentences follow similar patterns, making the rhythm feel a bit flat. The second sentence feels disconnected from the first, breaking the flow of your description.

Exemplar: ***It wasn't a physical crossroads, yet Maya felt the weight of decision pressing down on her as surely as the wind that tugged at her hair.***

#2 "The letter was from an art school in Paris. Ever since Maya was little, she'd dreamed of becoming an artist. She would draw dragons on her walls, sketch during boring lessons, and even sell tiny paintings at the school fair."

Strengths: Your specific examples like drawing dragons and selling paintings help readers understand Maya's passion for art. The details make her character feel real and relatable.

Weakness: Choppy paragraph flow → Your sentences are all short and start abruptly, creating a bumpy reading experience. The ideas don't connect smoothly, making the paragraph feel like a list rather than flowing storytelling.

Exemplar: ***The letter bore the seal of a Parisian art school, representing a dream Maya had nurtured since childhood—from sketching dragons on bedroom walls to selling miniature masterpieces at school fairs.***

#3 "She took a deep breath. A bird flew overhead, wings wide in the sky. It made her smile. Maybe she was scared, but being scared didn't mean she shouldn't go."

Strengths: Your use of the bird symbol works nicely to represent freedom and courage. The simple message about fear not stopping us is powerful and clear.

Weakness: Underdeveloped symbolism → Whilst the bird appears as a symbol, you don't explore its meaning deeply enough. The connection between the bird and Maya's decision feels rushed and could be much stronger.

Exemplar: *She took a deep breath as a bird soared overhead, its wings stretched wide against the endless sky—a reminder that sometimes the most frightening leaps lead to the most beautiful flights.*

■ Your piece tells an engaging story about making tough choices, and readers can easily connect with Maya's struggle between safety and adventure. The central conflict feels real because many people face similar decisions about leaving home. However, your writing would benefit from smoother connections between ideas and more detailed exploration of Maya's emotions. Additionally, you could strengthen your descriptions by varying sentence lengths and structures to create better rhythm. Also, consider developing your symbols more thoroughly—like the bridge and the bird—to add deeper meaning to your story. Furthermore, work on connecting your paragraphs more naturally so readers flow smoothly from one idea to the next. Your dialogue and character interactions could also be expanded to show relationships more clearly. Finally, take time to explore Maya's internal thoughts more deeply, helping readers understand exactly why this decision matters so much to her. Focus particularly on the paragraph where Maya thinks about her family—expand this section to show specific memories that make leaving difficult, and connect these thoughts more smoothly to her final decision.

Overall Score: 42/50

Section 2:

#1 Maya stood at the edge of the old railway bridge, the wind playing with her hair as she stared down at the rushing river below. ~~It wasn't a real crossroads, but it felt like one.~~ [It wasn't a physical crossroads, yet the weight of decision pressed upon her just as surely as the wind itself.] In her hands were two things: a crumpled letter and her phone. One meant going far away, chasing her dream. The other meant staying, where everything was safe and known.

#2 The letter was from an art school in Paris. ~~Ever since Maya was little, she'd dreamed of becoming an artist. She would draw dragons on her walls, sketch during boring lessons, and even sell tiny paintings at the school fair.~~ [Ever since Maya was little, she'd dreamed of becoming an artist—sketching dragons on bedroom walls, drawing during

tedious lessons, and selling miniature paintings at school fairs.] Now, that dream could really happen. The school had accepted her. It was everything she'd ever wanted.

But Paris was far. Far from her mum, her little brother Leo, and her best friend Josh. She thought about all the things she'd miss: movie nights with her family, helping Leo with his spelling, and racing Josh to the corner shop. Her mum had said gently, "You don't have to go. You can study art here too. We'll support you no matter what." That made the decision even harder. If they were angry, maybe it would be easier to leave. But they weren't. They loved her.

Maya looked out across the trees and the sky, thinking about the two futures. In one, she stayed. Life would be calm, familiar. She'd still draw, still dream. In the other, she'd be walking through Paris streets, learning from artists, seeing the world differently. But she'd also be alone. No one would be there to remind her to eat breakfast or laugh at her terrible puns.

~~#3 She took a deep breath. A bird flew overhead, wings wide in the sky. It made her smile. Maybe she was scared, but being scared didn't mean she shouldn't go.~~ [She took a deep breath as a bird soared overhead, wings stretched wide against the endless sky—a reminder that fear needn't prevent flight.] Maybe she was scared, but being scared didn't mean she shouldn't go. Maybe it meant this choice really mattered.

She looked down at the letter again, then at her phone. Her thumb hovered before she typed: Mum, I'm going to Paris. I'll miss you so much. But I need to do this.

As she walked away from the bridge, Maya felt her heart beating fast. The choice was made. It hurt a little, but it also felt like flying. The future was waiting, and she was ready to meet it, one bold step at a time.