

Writing Feedback

TERM 2 | WEEK 3 WRITING | 18th May | Y5 SCHOLARSHIP

#1 - Opening paragraph: "Lena held the key between trembling fingers. It was old—older than the house, older than the whispers that roamed the halls at night. The metal was dull, yet when moonlight kissed it, the inscriptions flickered like breathing embers."

Strengths: You create immediate atmosphere with sensory details like "trembling fingers" and "breathing embers." The comparison of the key's age to the house builds mystery effectively.

Unclear Context → Your opening doesn't give readers enough information about Lena or why she's in this situation. We don't know her age, background, or what led her to find this key, making it hard for readers to connect with her character.

Exemplar: *Lena, now seventeen and alone in her grandmother's house, held the key between trembling fingers.*

#2 - Dialogue section: "You shouldn't be here." through "This door was meant to stay shut."

Strengths: The mysterious voice creates tension well. Your description of the voice as "everywhere and nowhere at once" is creative and spooky.

Missing Speaker Identity → You never explain who or what is speaking to Lena. The phrase "The voice was wrong" tells us something is unusual, but readers need more clues about whether it's a ghost, spirit, or something else to understand the danger.

Exemplar: *The voice belonged to something that had once been human, its words echoing from the walls themselves.*

#3 - Ending: "Choose. Lena understood..." through "Darkness rushed forward, swallowing her whole."

Strengths: You build to a clear choice moment effectively. The connection to her missing mother adds emotional weight to the decision.

Rushed Resolution → Your ending feels too quick after building suspense throughout the story. The phrase "Lena turned the key one last time" doesn't explain what choice she actually made or why, leaving readers confused about her decision.

Exemplar: *Lena looked at her mother's pleading face one last time, then stepped forward into the darkness, choosing truth over safety.*

■ Your piece shows good understanding of horror elements like atmosphere and suspense, but needs more character development and clearer plot progression. Readers need to understand Lena's background and motivations better to care about her choices. Additionally, you could explain the supernatural elements more clearly so readers understand what's happening. Also, consider expanding the ending to show Lena's thought process during her final choice, which would make the resolution more satisfying for readers.

Score: 42/50

Section 2:

The Last Key

Lena held the key between trembling fingers. It was old—older than the house, older than the whispers that roamed the halls at night. The metal was dull, yet when moonlight kissed it, the inscriptions flickered like breathing embers. #1

She should turn back. She should pretend she hadn't found it buried beneath the loose floorboard in the nursery, wrapped in silk that smelled faintly of decay. But the door stood before her, carved deep with symbols that matched the key's ridges. The key fit. She knew it would.

She stepped forward.

"You shouldn't be here."

The voice was wrong. It came from everywhere and nowhere at once. A chorus, a single warning whispered in a hundred overlapping tones.

Her heart pounded. She tightened her grip, feeling the bumps dig into her palm.

"This door was meant to stay shut." #2

Lena swallowed, but the dryness in her throat turned it into a painful scrape.

She'd lived in this house her whole life. She knew its secrets—the stories never spoken in full, the family heirlooms they never discussed. But she didn't know why.

She turned the key.

Click. Silence.

And then—

The door swung open, exhaling a breath that had been trapped for centuries. Cold, unnatural air rushed past her, curling around her ankles like fingers dragging her forward.

Beyond the threshold, darkness pulsed. It wasn't empty; it was moving, breathing. Waiting.

Her pulse pounded in her ears.

Then she saw them.

A row of figures stood in the void, barely visible yet horrifyingly distinct. Their faces—some familiar, some lost to time—were twisted in expressions of warning. Of pleading.

Among them was her mother.

Lena stepped back, shaking her head. "Mom?"

The woman who had vanished without a trace when Lena was eight. The woman no one would ever speak of again.

Her mother reached out a hand. Her lips moved, but no sound came. The figures behind her stirred, restless.

The door creaked. The key burned against Lena's palm.

Choose.

Lena understood. She could step forward into the truth, the answers she'd craved her entire life. Or she could slam the door shut, pretend it had never opened.

Her mother's eyes locked onto hers.

A choice. A cost.

Lena turned the key one last time.

Darkness rushed forward, swallowing her whole. **#3**