

## Section 1:

#1 I've taken the ferry from Singapore to Batam so many times, I could do it with my eyes closed. It's usually a peaceful 45-minute ride, blue skies, still water, maybe a short nap or a quick scroll through my phone. That morning felt just the same. I found a window seat, leaned back, and watched the skyline disappear behind us. The boat hummed gently as we glided across the water. I could taste the salt air drifting in through the cracks of the door, light and sharp on my tongue.

Strengths: Your sensory details like "taste the salt air" and "light and sharp on my tongue" create a vivid picture of the ferry experience. Your short sentences build a calm rhythm that matches the peaceful journey.

Weakness: Limited scene-setting → The opening lacks specific details about the departure point and timing that would ground the reader. Phrases like "That morning" don't tell us when this happened or why you were travelling. Adding context would help readers connect more deeply with your experience.

Exemplar: ***I've taken the morning ferry from Singapore's HarbourFront Terminal to Batam so many times over the past five years that I could do it with my eyes closed.***

#2 But about twenty minutes in, things changed. There was a sudden lurch, then a sharper swerve. A few people looked up, puzzled. Then came another sharp turn, and the boat tilted hard. Cups rolled off tables, a child screamed, and nervous laughter bubbled up in different corners of the cabin. I could feel the cold water on the handrails as I gripped them for support, my palms tightening with every jolt. The calm sea had turned into a racing track.

Strengths: Your progression from "sudden lurch" to "sharper swerve" to "sharp turn" builds tension effectively. You capture both physical sensations and human reactions like "nervous laughter" that make the scene feel authentic.

Weakness: Underdeveloped emotional response → While you mention physical reactions like gripping handrails, your own emotional state during this dramatic shift isn't fully explored. Phrases like "my palms tightening" hint at fear but don't reveal your complete internal experience. Sharing your thoughts and feelings would create stronger reader connection.

Exemplar: *My heart pounded against my ribs as I gripped the cold, wet handrails for support, certain we were in serious danger as the ferry lurched sideways again.*

#3 Looking back, I realise how quickly nature can flip a routine on its head. That short trip reminded me that the sea isn't just a background for holiday plans, it's alive, and full of surprises. The ferry ride I almost slept through became the most thrilling journey I've ever had. And I'll never look at the Singapore Strait the same way again.

Strengths: Your reflection about nature being "alive, and full of surprises" shows personal growth from the experience. You bring the piece full circle by contrasting the expected sleepy journey with what actually happened.

Weakness: Rushed conclusion → The final paragraph moves too quickly to wrap up without fully unpacking the lessons learned. Phrases like "I'll never look at the Singapore Strait the same way again" suggest a change but don't explore what that means for your future travels or outlook. Developing this reflection would give your piece more lasting impact.

Exemplar: *Looking back, I realise how quickly nature can flip a routine journey on its head, teaching me an important lesson about respect for the sea. That short trip reminded me that the Singapore Strait isn't just a predictable blue path between destinations—it's a dynamic, powerful force deserving of proper caution. Now, whenever I book that same ferry crossing, I check the weather forecast first and pack my sea legs along with my passport.*

■ Your piece captures an exciting event with strong sensory details and creates a clear beginning, middle and end structure. The experience of the unexpected storm is vividly portrayed, especially in the second and third paragraphs where you describe the physical movements of the boat. You might improve your writing by adding more personal reactions throughout. How did you feel when the boat first lurched? Were you scared, excited or confused? Also, try connecting this experience more clearly to your life before and after the event. Why were you travelling to Batam? Has this experience changed how you approach sea travel now? Adding these details would make your story feel more complete and meaningful. Your conclusion could be stronger if you shared a specific action or thought process that has changed because of this experience, rather than just saying you'll "never look at the Singapore Strait the same way again."

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Score: 45/50

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## Section 2:

I've taken the ferry from Singapore to Batam so many times, I could do it with my eyes closed. It's usually a peaceful 45-minute ride, blue skies, still water, maybe a short nap or a quick scroll through my phone. That morning felt just the same. I found a window seat, leaned back, and watched the skyline disappear behind us. The boat hummed gently as we glided across the water. I could taste the salt air drifting in through the cracks of the door, light and sharp on my tongue. #1

But about twenty minutes in, things changed. There was a sudden lurch, then a sharper swerve. A few people looked up, puzzled. Then came another sharp turn, and the boat tilted hard. Cups rolled off tables, a child screamed, and nervous laughter bubbled up in different corners of the cabin. I could feel the cold water on the handrails as I gripped them for support, my palms tightening with every jolt. The calm sea had turned into a racing track. #2

The ferry began to move like it was dodging obstacles at high speed. We weren't just rocking, we were drifting. It felt like we were in a high-stakes action movie. Spray smashed against the windows, and the engine growled as the captain steered hard through the churning water. Someone behind me shouted, "This is Tokyo Drift at sea!" It was half-joke, half-panic. The sky had gone grey, and the wind howled as we zigzagged over the waves.

Later, a crew member explained that a sudden squall, a small storm, had appeared on the radar too late to avoid entirely. To stay ahead of the worst of it, the captain took an aggressive route, speeding through open water, cutting between dark patches on the sea. A maritime expert we spoke to said the drifting wasn't reckless, it was skillful. "In weather like that, it's about staying in control while moving fast," she explained.

When we docked in Batam, just minutes behind schedule, everything had gone back to normal, sunshine, calm seas, and a quiet terminal. But none of us were the same. People clapped, laughed, and patted the crew on the back. I saw strangers swapping stories like they'd been through something together. That ride turned us from quiet passengers into a small, slightly soggy team of survivors.

Looking back, I realise how quickly nature can flip a routine on its head. That short trip reminded me that the sea isn't just a background for holiday plans, it's alive, and full of surprises. The ferry ride I almost slept through became the most thrilling journey I've ever had. And I'll never look at the Singapore Strait the same way again. #3