

Section 1:

#1 "As soon as I stepped off the plane in Antarctica, I felt the freezing air rush through my jumper. We caught a taxi to our cruise. When I stepped off, it was so cold that I could see my breath in the air. My lips were covered in ice, and I didn't feel like talking to anyone. My face felt like I had just dipped it into icy water. I had never felt anything like it before."

Strengths: Your sensory details effectively convey the extreme cold. The description of seeing breath in the air and the comparison of your face to being dipped in icy water creates vivid imagery.

Weakness: Sequence clarity → Your transition from plane to cruise is abrupt and lacks detail. You mention stepping off twice (the plane and then again) without explaining the journey between these moments clearly. The phrase "caught a taxi to our cruise" is particularly confusing since cruises typically depart from ports, not directly accessible by taxi.

Exemplar: *After stepping off the plane in Antarctica, I felt the freezing air rush through my jumper. We travelled by special snow vehicle to the harbour where our cruise ship waited. When I finally boarded the ship and ventured onto the deck, the cold hit me even harder.*

#2 "Everyone else seemed excited. They were pointing at penguins and chatting loudly. I stood still, staring straight ahead at the huge glaciers. If I wanted to see the penguins, I'd have to turn my head to the left but I was too cold to move. I wrapped my scarf tightly around my face, trying to stay warm and cozy."

Strengths: Your contrast between others' excitement and your own discomfort creates an interesting character perspective. The detail about being too cold to turn your head is particularly effective at showing your extreme discomfort.

Weakness: Emotional depth → While you describe your physical reaction to the cold well, your emotional response lacks development. You don't explain your feelings about missing the penguin sighting or whether you felt disappointed, frustrated, or indifferent about focusing on the glaciers instead.

Exemplar: *While everyone else seemed excited, pointing at penguins and chatting loudly, I stood frozen in place. I desperately wanted to see the penguins, but my body refused to cooperate. I felt a mix of frustration and wonder as I stared at the massive glaciers instead, wrapped tightly in my scarf.*

#3 "I sighed and hoped tomorrow would be a better day. Just before I went to sleep, someone brought me hot cocoa. It was warm, sweet, and perfect for the cold weather. I felt a little better after drinking it. Later that night, I heard my classmates shouting, 'Penguins are in the water!' I was annoyed because I

wanted to sleep, but I didn't want to miss out again. So I got up and joined them. It turned out to be an amazing experience. I hope tomorrow is even better!"

Strengths: The ending shows character growth as you overcome your initial discomfort to join the group activity. The contrast between your early reluctance and final enjoyment creates a satisfying story arc.

Weakness: Detail expansion → The most important moment—seeing the penguins in the water—is rushed with just "It turned out to be an amazing experience" without specific details about what made it amazing. This important turning point deserves more description of what you saw, felt, and thought during this special moment.

Exemplar: *Despite my exhaustion, I dragged myself out of bed and joined my classmates by the railing. The penguins were diving and swimming in the moonlit water, their sleek bodies creating silver ripples across the dark surface. For the first time since arriving, I forgot about the cold completely. Watching their playful movements under the starry Antarctic sky, I finally understood why everyone was so excited to be here.*

■ Your piece effectively captures the contrast between discomfort and wonder in an Antarctic adventure. The sensory details about the cold are particularly strong, helping readers feel the harsh environment. However, you could strengthen your writing by creating clearer transitions between locations. For instance, the journey from the plane to the cruise ship needs more detail to help readers follow your movements. Additionally, you could expand on your emotional journey throughout the experience. When you finally enjoy seeing the penguins at night, this is a perfect opportunity to include specific details about what made it "amazing" rather than just telling readers it was amazing. Also, consider developing the relationship with your friend more—you mention her briefly but could show more interaction between you. Your ending shows good development as your attitude shifts from reluctance to enthusiasm, but adding more specific details about what you saw and how it made you feel would make this transformation even more powerful.

Overall score: 43/50

Section 2:

On Wednesday to Monday, my school had a trip to Antarctica. As soon as I stepped off the plane in Antarctica, I felt the freezing air rush through my jumper. We ~~caught a taxi to our cruise~~ [travelled by special vehicle to our cruise ship]. When I stepped off, it was so cold that I could see my breath in the air. My lips were covered in ice, and I didn't feel like talking to anyone. My face felt like I had just dipped it into icy water. I had never felt anything like it before. #1

Everyone else seemed excited. They were pointing at penguins and chatting loudly. I stood still, staring straight ahead at the huge glaciers. If I wanted to see the penguins, I'd have to turn my head to the left but I was too cold to move. I wrapped my scarf tightly around my face, trying to stay warm and cozy.
#2

When it was time to go to our cabins, I felt a burst of excitement but only in my head, because I was too frozen to show it. The others didn't seem as happy. Once we got on the ship, I looked out the window and saw seals, penguins, and even dolphins swimming in the icy water. It was amazing to see all the animals in their natural home. My friend pulled her sweater close and gave me a tired look. I knew she felt the same way I did—cold, amazed, and a little overwhelmed.

When we reached our cabins, I jumped onto the comfiest bed I could find. Sadly, the blankets were cold and not as cozy as my bed at home. I climbed to the top bunk and looked out at the sky. Ice cubes were melting in the frozen lake below, and the stars were shining above. It was peaceful and quiet.

I sighed and hoped tomorrow would be a better day. Just before I went to sleep, someone brought me hot cocoa. It was warm, sweet, and perfect for the cold weather. I felt a little better after drinking it.

Later that night, I heard my classmates shouting, "Penguins are in the water!" I was annoyed because I wanted to sleep, but I didn't want to miss out again. So I got up and joined them.

~~It turned out to be an amazing experience. I hope tomorrow is even better!~~ [As I reached the deck, I gasped in wonder. Dozens of penguins were gliding through the moonlit water, their black and white bodies creating beautiful patterns beneath the surface. For the first time since arriving, I forgot about being cold. Standing there with my classmates under the Antarctic stars, I knew this moment was worth getting out of bed for. I hope tomorrow brings even more incredible sights!] #3