

Section 1:

#1 "I sensed something was fundamentally misaligned the moment I stepped onto school grounds and was met not by the usual stale scent of overused whiteboard markers and adolescent anxiety but by the unmistakable aroma of buttery popcorn hanging strangely in the morning air. My backpack, ordinarily a burden groaning with worksheets, forgotten lunch containers, and the quiet guilt of overdue assignments, felt peculiarly weightless — as though it contained nothing but the echo of obligation."

Strengths: Your sensory descriptions create a vivid opening that immediately establishes the surreal atmosphere. The contrast between the normal school environment and the unusual circumstances effectively draws readers in.

Weakness: Limited character development → Your protagonist remains somewhat undefined beyond their reaction to the situation. We get little sense of who they are as a person, their usual school experience, or why we should connect with them emotionally.

I sensed something was fundamentally misaligned that Monday morning. As I stepped onto school grounds—usually dreading my maths test and overdue geography assignment—the unmistakable aroma of buttery popcorn hung strangely in the morning air instead of the usual stale scent of whiteboard markers.

#2 "In science class, we sat before blank notebooks, paralysed by the absence of instruction, structure, and reason. In history, no one could recall which empire we were supposed to be studying — or if empires even mattered anymore. The bell, that once-reliable anchor of routine, rang without logic: sometimes twice within five minutes, sometimes not at all. Classes blurred into confusion. Someone in the art room was constructing a corkboard web of yarn and post-it notes labelled "The Homework Spirit is Trapped — and It's Angry""

Strengths: Your paragraph effectively captures the growing sense of disorientation and chaos. The specific details about different classes help readers visualise how the school environment has broken down without homework.

Weakness: Underdeveloped consequences → While you show confusion, you could explore deeper emotional or practical impacts of this sudden change. How does this affect different students? Are some thriving while others struggle?

In science class, we sat before blank notebooks, paralysed by the absence of instruction. Mia, who always finished assignments early, tapped her pencil nervously while Jayden—who usually complained about every worksheet—looked equally lost. When the bell rang twice within five minutes, our history teacher Mr. Thompson just shrugged and continued building a paper aeroplane out of what would have been our essay prompts.

#3 "I still groan when I hear, "It's due next lesson." But now, in some strange way, I also find comfort in it — the rhythm, the ritual, the reminder that I'm still moving forward. And somehow, the backpack felt heavier that morning — but in a way that made me feel real again."

Strengths: Your conclusion offers a thoughtful reflection that brings depth to the narrative. The emotional journey comes full circle with a mature realisation about structure and purpose.

Weakness: Rushed resolution → The final realisation feels somewhat abrupt without showing the process of reaching this understanding. The transition from dream to awakening and new perspective happens too quickly for readers to fully absorb the significance.

I still groan when I hear, "It's due next lesson." But as I packed my books that morning, I thought about how each assignment was like a stepping stone—sometimes annoying to cross, but ultimately leading somewhere. My backpack felt properly heavy again—Geography folder, English novel, Science workbook—each item a small anchor connecting me to tomorrow and next week and next year. The weight wasn't just burden; it was possibility.

■ Your piece creates a wonderfully imaginative world where the familiar structure of school disappears, leading to both initial joy and eventual confusion. To strengthen your writing, consider developing your main character more fully in the opening paragraphs. Give us small details about their normal life—their favourite subject, a friend they sit with, a teacher they normally avoid—so we understand what's at stake when everything changes. Also, slow down the middle section where chaos grows. Show us specific conversations between students or teachers that reveal different reactions to this new world. The dream ending works well, but try expanding the moment of realisation—perhaps the character could try doing some voluntary homework after waking up, testing their new understanding in a concrete way. Your strongest writing comes when you balance the fantastical elements with genuine emotional insights about school life.

Score: 44/50

Section 2:

The Day Homework Ceased to Exist

#1 I sensed something was fundamentally misaligned the moment I stepped onto school grounds and was met not by the usual stale scent of overused whiteboard markers and adolescent anxiety but by the unmistakable aroma of buttery popcorn hanging strangely in the morning air. My backpack, ordinarily a burden groaning with worksheets, forgotten lunch containers, and the quiet guilt of overdue assignments, felt peculiarly weightless — as though it contained nothing but the echo of obligation.

Inside, the atmosphere vibrated with a surreal lightness, an undercurrent of confusion masked by euphoria. Conversations, typically dominated by murmurs of deadlines and whispered panic over unsubmitted work, were replaced by bursts of laughter, unbothered and unearned. Something had shifted. Something seismic.

I passed my English teacher in the corridor — a man once so devoted to rubric and ~~rigor~~ [rigour] he could make a comma splice feel like a felony — now wearing oversized sunglasses indoors, greeting me with an unapologetically enthusiastic pair of finger guns. "No homework today," he declared, smiling with the reckless abandon of someone who had truly snapped — or been freed. I stared, hesitant. "Just for today? Or...?" "For everyone. For everything. Forever"] He skateboarded away before I could question the logic of it.

Disbelieving, I raced to the noticeboard — where announcements usually trembled with threats of pop quizzes and uniform infractions — and found, instead, a gold-glittering poster declaring:

ATTENTION ALL STUDENTS: HOMEWORK HAS BEEN PERMANENTLY ABOLISHED. Live freely. Perform spontaneous cartwheels. Eat celebratory waffles. Embrace the chaos.

At first, the school erupted into a kind of utopian lunacy. Hallways transformed into indoor carnivals. Someone had brought a golden retriever into class, and no one questioned it. The library, stripped of purpose, morphed into a labyrinth of pillow forts and fairy lights. My math teacher — once a sentient calculator with a soul of algebra — was found in the quad, quietly building a sandcastle out of abandoned TI-84s.

But soon, the cracks began to show.

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I wandered the building like a ghost in a house that no longer remembered how to be a home. The lack of Homework, once the fantasy that got us all through Monday, now felt like an erasure of purpose itself — a vanishing of momentum.

And then I saw her.

A younger version of myself — maybe from Year 6 — sitting alone at a single desk planted absurdly in the middle of the hallway, her pencil furiously scratching onto paper like her thoughts were on fire. She looked up at me, eyes ringed with fatigue but full of intent, and whispered, "Homework wasn't the enemy. It was the thread. Without it, everything unravels"[:-"] And just like that, I woke up, blinking at the ceiling above my bed, the room still vibrating faintly with the dream's strange logic.

There, in the quiet, I understood something I'd never let myself admit: yes, school overwhelms me. Yes, ~~Homework~~ [homework] burdens me, frustrates me, and drains me. But beneath the complaints, beneath the wish for everything to stop, there lies the unspoken truth that structure is not the same as oppression. Sometimes, the things we rail against are the very things holding us together.

~~#3 I still groan when I hear, "It's due next lesson."~~ [I still groan when I hear, "It's due next lesson."] But now, in some strange way, I also find comfort in it — the rhythm, the ritual, the reminder that I'm still moving forward.

And somehow, the backpack felt heavier that morning — but in a way that made me feel real again.