

Section 1:

#1 "QVB bustled with life and chatter as I anxiously looked around at everyone who was watching. The sun had just begun to paint the horizon with its first blazes of orange, and already there were countless people in the building. Tall stained-glass windows filtered the light into soft hues, casting colourful reflections across the marble tiles. My crushing weight of self-doubt threatened to overwhelm my delicate confidence, reluctant to press a note on the grand piano."

Strengths: Your vivid description of the QVB setting creates a strong visual image. The contrast between the bustling environment and the narrator's anxiety effectively establishes tension.

Vague imagery → Your description lacks specific sensory details that would make the scene more immersive. Rather than stating there were "countless people," you could describe specific types of people or their actions to create a more concrete picture.

The QVB bustled with morning commuters and tourists as I anxiously scanned the faces watching me. The sun had just begun to paint the horizon with blazes of orange, filtering through tall stained-glass windows and casting colourful patterns across the marble tiles.

#2 "The moment my fingers touched the piano, a breathtaking melody resonated through the building. My palms were still sweaty, a manifestation of my inadequacy, but with each note I played, my confidence slowly began to grow."

Strengths: You effectively show the character's emotional journey from nervousness to growing confidence. The physical detail of sweaty palms adds authenticity to the character's anxiety.

Undeveloped transformation → The shift from anxiety to confidence happens too quickly without showing the specific moments that triggered this change. You mention a "breathtaking melody" but don't describe what the character played or how the audience reacted.

The moment my fingers touched the ivory keys, Chopin's Nocturne flowed from my hands. My palms were still sweaty, a manifestation of my inadequacy, but as an elderly woman stopped to listen, then a young couple with their child, my racing heart began to steady with each note.

#3 "After finishing my performance, I was still incapable of understanding how I was able to play such a complex piece. As I stared at all the money in my hat, it made me eager to go home and give my parents everything that I had made. My unquenchable desire to help my parents had finally become a reality."

Strengths: You effectively tie the conclusion back to the character's motivation. The emotional payoff of seeing the money that will help the parents creates a satisfying resolution.

Limited emotional depth → The ending focuses primarily on the money rather than the emotional impact of the performance itself. The narrator's feelings about discovering their own musical ability are mentioned but not explored fully.

After finishing my performance, I sat in wonder at how my fingers had remembered every note of such a complex piece. As commuters applauded and I counted nearly fifty dollars in my hat, tears welled in my eyes—not just for the money I could give my parents, but for discovering something in myself I never knew existed.

■ Your piece has a compelling premise with a clear beginning, middle and end. The character's motivation to help their unemployed parents gives the story emotional weight. However, you could strengthen your writing by adding more specific details about the music being played and the audience's reactions. For example, mention what song the character plays and show how specific audience members respond to the performance. Also, you could expand on the character's emotional journey by showing their thoughts during key moments. Try adding a short conversation with someone who appreciates the music or a specific memory that flashes through the character's mind while playing. Your story would benefit from stronger transitions between paragraphs to show how time passes during the performance. Additionally, consider developing the conclusion to balance both the financial success and the personal growth the character experiences through their performance.

Score: 40/50

Section 2:

QVB bustled with life and chatter as I anxiously looked around at everyone who was watching. The sun had just begun to paint the horizon with its first blazes of orange, and already there were countless people in the building. #1 Tall stained-glass windows filtered the light into soft hues, casting colourful reflections across the marble tiles. My crushing weight of self-doubt threatened to overwhelm my delicate confidence, ~~reluctant to~~ [making me reluctant] to press a note on the grand piano.

A few weeks ago, my parents had become unemployed, so today was my first time street performing – ~~determined~~ [I was determined] to help my parents. After inhaling the warm scent of polished wood, I began to play. #2 The moment my fingers touched the piano, a breathtaking melody resonated through the building. My palms were still sweaty, a manifestation of my inadequacy, but with each note I played, my confidence slowly began to grow. Soon ~~before~~ [after] I finished, I noticed that my ragged old hat was filled with an unbelievable amount of money, creating a smile on my face.

#3 After finishing my performance, I was still incapable of understanding how I was able to play such a complex piece. As I stared at all the money in my hat, it made me eager to go home and give my parents everything that I had made. My unquenchable desire to help my parents had finally become a reality.

