

Section 1

#1 - Opening paragraph: "My backpack was packed so full the zip barely closed. Inside were my pyjamas, toothbrush, clean socks, and my stuffed dog I had had since forever. I stood by the door, rocking on my heels, hands stuffed into my pockets."

Strengths: Your opening creates immediate connection through specific details like the overstuffed backpack and nervous body language. The list of items gives readers a clear picture of what's important to the character.

Weakness: Repetitive sentence structure → All three sentences follow similar patterns, making the opening feel choppy rather than flowing naturally. Each sentence starts with "I" or describes one action, creating a staccato rhythm that doesn't draw readers in smoothly.

Exemplar: *My backpack bulged at the seams, the zip barely managing to contain my pyjamas, toothbrush, clean socks, and Max, my beloved stuffed dog. Standing by the door, I rocked nervously on my heels with hands buried deep in my pockets.*

#2 - Middle section: "We played until our hands ached. We built a Lego tower taller than my arm and laughed so hard I spilled my fizzy drink on my shirt. Dinner was pizza, garlic bread, and ice cream with chocolate sauce."

Strengths: Your writing captures the fun atmosphere through specific activities and sensory details. The spilled drink incident adds authentic childhood realism to the scene.

Weakness: Shallow description → The activities are listed without exploring deeper emotions or significance. Phrases like "played until our hands ached" tell us what happened but don't help readers understand how the character felt or why these moments mattered.

Exemplar: *After hours of intense gaming, our fingers were stiff and sore, but we couldn't stop grinning. The Lego tower we constructed reached past my elbow, and when I doubled over with laughter, fizzy drink splashed across my shirt—but I didn't care.*

#3 - Night scene: "The rocket lamp flickered. Shadows danced across the walls. A creak came from the hallway. Was that Shadow? I held Max tight against my chest and listened."

Strengths: Your use of short sentences effectively builds tension and mirrors the character's anxious state. The detail about holding Max tight shows vulnerability without stating it directly.

Weakness: Missing emotional depth → While the scene creates atmosphere, it doesn't explore the character's internal struggle deeply enough. The writing stays on the surface of what's happening rather than diving into complex feelings about being away from home.

Exemplar: *The rocket lamp's gentle flicker cast shifting shadows that seemed to reach towards me, and every creak from the hallway made my heart race—was that just Shadow padding about, or something else entirely?*

■ Your piece tells a relatable story about a child's first sleepover, but it needs more emotional depth to truly connect with readers. The writing moves through events quickly without spending enough time on the character's feelings and thoughts. Additionally, you could improve the flow by varying your sentence structures and lengths more effectively. Many paragraphs feel like lists of actions rather than smooth storytelling. To strengthen your writing, focus on showing emotions through actions and descriptions rather than simply telling what happened. Also, try combining some shorter sentences to create better rhythm and pace throughout your piece.

Score: 40/50

Section 2

#1 My backpack was packed so full the zip barely closed. Inside were my pyjamas, toothbrush, clean socks, and my stuffed dog I had ~~had~~ [owned] since forever. I stood by the door, rocking on my heels, hands stuffed into my pockets.

~~Mum crouched to double-check the bag. "Got everything you need?" she asked, brushing invisible fluff off my shirt.~~ [Mum crouched down to double-check the bag. "Got everything you need?" she asked, brushing invisible fluff from my shirt.]

I gave a quick nod.

"If you want to come home, just call, okay?" She gave me a long squeeze before letting go.

~~Liam's mum opened the door. "Hey! You made it!" Liam popped up behind her, already bouncing on his injured toes.~~ [Liam's mum opened the door with a warm smile. "Hey! You made it!" Liam appeared behind her, already bouncing excitedly despite his injured toes.]

"Come on! The new, amazing racing game's ready!"

~~"We battled through game after game until our fingers went numb."~~ ["We battled through game after game until our fingers went numb."]

Inside, the house smelled like garlic bread and chocolate. Family photos covered the walls. Their dog, Shadow, wagged her tail like crazy, then followed us upstairs.

~~#2 Liam's room looked like a comic book exploded.~~ [Liam's room looked like a comic book had exploded.] Superhero posters, shelves full of Lego, and a glowing rocket lamp in the corner.

He threw me a red sleeping bag. "This one's yours!"

We played until our hands ached. We built a Lego tower taller than my arm and laughed so hard I spilled my fizzy drink on my shirt. Dinner was pizza, garlic bread, and ice cream with chocolate sauce.

Then the lights went out.

~~#3~~ Liam climbed into bed and pulled his superhero blanket to his chin. I lay in the sleeping bag. It was soft, warm... too quiet.

The rocket lamp flickered. Shadows danced across the walls. A creak came from the hallway. Was that Shadow? I held Max tight against my chest and listened.

My backpack sat in the corner. The phone was in there. I could unzip it. Just one quick call. Mum would come.

But I did not move.

~~The glow from the rocket lamp settled into a soft light.~~ [The rocket lamp's glow settled into a soft, steady light.] Liam's breathing was slow and steady. I matched mine to his. In, out. In... out...

I blinked, and the ceiling blurred.

Then sunlight.

"WAKE UP!" Liam shouted ~~at my face~~ [near my face] in a friendly tone. "Mum made warm pancakes! With sweet ~~chee~~ [chocolate] chips!"

~~I sat up, rubbed my eyes, blinking several times to get used to the light and smiled.~~ [I sat up, rubbed my eyes, blinked several times to adjust to the light, and smiled.]

I stayed. All night.

And it was awesome and pure magic.