

Section 1:

#1 - Opening paragraph introducing Kacey's nervousness about the sleepover

Strengths: Your writing effectively establishes the main character's anxiety through physical details like "fingers instinctively drummed against her leg" and "a lump appeared in her throat." The image of the packed bag waiting "like a sentinel" creates a strong sense of anticipation.

Weakness: Pronoun confusion → You switch between "her" and "his" when referring to Kacey, which creates confusion about the character's identity. The phrase "his stomach performed a series of peculiar flips" should consistently use "her" since Kacey appears to be female throughout the rest of your piece.

Exemplar: *"Every time Kacey passed by, her fingers instinctively drummed against her leg, and a lump appeared in her throat as her stomach performed a series of peculiar flips."*

#2 - Second paragraph describing Kacey's preparation routine

Strengths: Your writing captures the repetitive, anxious behaviour well with specific details like "for the seventh time" and "for the fifth time." The description of "damp prints on the fabric" effectively shows her nervousness through physical evidence.

Weakness: Repetitive sentence structure → Most sentences follow the same pattern of listing actions, making the writing feel monotonous. Phrases like "hastily untieing and readjusting her hair, taking out and replacing her hair ties" create a choppy rhythm that could flow more smoothly.

Exemplar: *"Frozen, Kacey stood in front of the mirror, repeatedly adjusting her hair with trembling fingers whilst her desk became cluttered with clips and brushes from her seventh attempt at the perfect style."*

#3 - Final paragraph with the car journey and arrival

Strengths: Your writing builds tension effectively through the series of "what if" questions that mirror a child's worried thoughts. The contrast between fears and excitement shows the complex emotions of the experience well.

Weakness: Unclear transitions → The jump between different thoughts and the final resolution feels abrupt. The phrase "Yet, alongside these thoughts ran others" and the ending "Despite the jumbly feeling in her stomach, Kacey felt ready" don't connect smoothly with the previous anxious tone.

Exemplar: *"As the car pulled into Janet's driveway, Kacey's racing heart reminded her of all her worries, but beneath the nervousness, a spark of excitement began to grow."*

■ Your piece captures the authentic experience of childhood anxiety around new social situations very well. The specific details about Kacey's preparations and physical responses to nervousness feel realistic and relatable. However, your writing would benefit from smoother connections between ideas and more varied sentence structures. Additionally, you could strengthen the emotional journey by showing how Kacey's feelings change more gradually throughout the story. Consider combining some of your shorter, choppy sentences into longer, flowing ones that better reflect the stream of anxious thoughts. Also, work on making your transitions between paragraphs clearer so readers can follow Kacey's emotional journey more easily. The ending feels a bit rushed - you might expand on what specifically helps Kacey feel ready despite her nervousness. Finally, double-check that all pronouns consistently refer to the same character throughout your writing.

Score: 42/50

Section 2:

#1 Janet's invitation had lain on the refrigerator for several days, a constant reminder of her upcoming sleepover party. Every time Kacey passed by, her fingers instinctively drummed against her leg, and a lump appeared in her throat as ~~his~~ [her] stomach performed a series of peculiar flips. Her mother had already packed her overnight bag, which waited at the front door like a sentinel. Within its depths lay Kacey's toothbrush, pyjamas, towel, ~~swimmers~~ [bathers], clothes and – tucked secretly in the midst of it all – her teddy bear that no one at school knew about.

#2 "We're leaving in five minutes," called Kacey's mother from her room. Frozen, Kacey stood in front of the mirror, ~~hastily untying and readjusting her hair, taking out and replacing her hair ties~~ [hastily untying and readjusting her hair whilst taking out and replacing her hair ties]. Her desk was a mess, filled with different clips and brushes as she did her hair again and again. For the seventh time, she rehearsed her greeting to Janet's parents, before reorganising her bag for the fifth time and practising how she was going to walk in, and sensibly set her shoes on the side. Then, she double checked her zipper on her bag for the third time, leaving damp prints on the fabric.

#3 Outside, the afternoon sun stretched long shadows across the pavement, signalling the approach of evening – the first she would spend away from her house. Her bed. The car journey

passed in a blur of houses and trees. Kacey's leg bounced rhythmically against the seat while scenarios played through her mind: What if Janet's other friends didn't like her? What if she was still too babyish? What if they saw her teddy bear and laughed at her? What if she spilled something at dinner? What if she couldn't fall asleep? And what if she fell asleep while they were chatting in the dark? Yet, alongside these thoughts ran others – of midnight snacks, of sharing secrets in whispers, of being treated like one of the big kids at last. As they pulled into Janet's driveway, Kacey's heart was racing at such a speed that she was certain it must be visible through her dress. She bade goodbye to her mum, and here she was. Despite the jumbly feeling in her stomach, Kacey felt ready. To face her first sleepover.