

Section 1:

#1 - Opening paragraph establishing the relationship between Sam and Jacob Strengths: Your opening effectively establishes the warm father-son bond through dialogue and Sam's admiring reaction. The sensory detail of the "creaky wooden chair" helps set the scene.

Weakness: Unclear timeline → The narrative jumps confusingly between different war periods without establishing when events occur. The phrase "Napoleon's army was strong but we were even stronger" suggests historical warfare, yet later Jacob "got sent to war again" without clarifying if this is the same conflict or a different one.

Exemplar: *"Napoleon's army was strong, but our battalion proved stronger during the 1815 campaign," Jacob recalled, his eyes gleaming with pride.*

#2 - The transition showing Sam joining the military Strengths: The sunflower gift creates a touching symbolic connection between father and son. Your writing shows Sam's devotion through this meaningful gesture.

Weakness: Confusing character actions → The paragraph states "Jacob was waiting for a milk delivery on the doorstep when he spotted a poster asking for new recruits" but this occurs whilst Jacob is supposedly already at war and Sam is with Miss Smith. The sentence "Without second thought, he joined" doesn't clarify who is joining - Jacob or Sam.

Exemplar: *Whilst staying with Miss Smith, Sam discovered an army recruitment poster and, inspired by his father's bravery, decided to enlist without hesitation.*

#3 - The revelation scene at the church Strengths: The emotional impact of the scene is powerful, and Miss Smith's dialogue "They didn't tell you?" creates effective dramatic tension. The image of soldiers saluting creates a respectful tribute.

Weakness: Sudden perspective shift → The narrative abruptly changes focus from Jacob's shock to describing Sam's heroic actions without smooth transition. The phrase "Later on they informed Jacob what happened" feels disconnected from the emotional moment and reads like an afterthought rather than integral storytelling.

Exemplar: *As Jacob stood frozen beside the coffin, Miss Smith gently explained how Sam had sacrificed himself to save his fellow soldiers by detonating the locked gates.*

■ Your piece demonstrates strong emotional instincts and creates genuinely moving moments between characters. The central theme of sacrifice and heroism resonates well throughout the story. However, your narrative would benefit from clearer chronological structure to help readers follow the sequence of events. Additionally, consider developing the middle section more thoroughly - the

transition from Sam's childhood admiration to his military service feels rushed. You could strengthen the emotional impact by spending more time showing Sam's growth and decision-making process. Also, work on smoother transitions between scenes to maintain narrative flow. The ending has real emotional power, but connecting it more clearly to earlier events would enhance the overall impact. Consider adding a few sentences that bridge the gap between Sam's departure and the tragic news to help readers fully absorb the story's progression.

Overall Score: 42/50

Section 2:

The Last Smile

#1 Sam sat on his creaky wooden chair, listening intently to his father's war stories.

"Napoleon's army was strong, but we were even stronger! We fought courageously and ~~annihilated~~ [defeated] them!" cried Jacob, Sam's father, with a triumphant smile.

Sam's eyes sparkled as he imagined his father fighting like a god. ~~He beamed as his father got sent to war again as he knew his father would save the day again.~~ [When Jacob was deployed again, Sam beamed with pride, confident his father would once more prove victorious.] Sam ~~even~~ gave his father a sunflower with canary yellow petals and a coffee-~~centre~~ [coloured centre]. While Jacob was at war, Sam stayed with the old lady next door, Miss Smith. ~~Jacob was waiting for a milk delivery on the doorstep when he spotted a poster asking for new recruits for the army. Without second thought, he joined.~~ [During his stay, Sam discovered an army recruitment poster and, inspired by his father's courage, enlisted without hesitation.]

#2 Jacob returned from the brutal war with Sam's sunflower and a mind full of stories. He spotted his elderly neighbour sobbing her heart out on her doorstep. He dashed over and asked her if she was alright and where Sam was. Miss Smith stopped crying and looked up with red, puffy eyes.

"They didn't tell you?"

#3 Jacob stared. Tell him what? Miss Smith told him to follow her, and she led him to the church. There was a photo on a coffin—a photo of Sam. Sam's fellow soldiers were saluting ~~to~~ the photo and marching out. Jacob's world crumbled. He looked down at Sam's sunflower and saw the flower bow down to the photo ~~and~~ [as] its petals withered and died.

~~Later on they informed Jacob what happened.~~ [The commanding officer then explained the tragic events.] Sam ~~was~~ [had been] fighting until their army had to escape, but someone had to open the

locked gates. So Sam grabbed a bomb and exploded the gate. He died during the process~~,~~ [.]
~~and if~~ [If] he hadn't done that, no one would've gone home that day. Sam died, but he died a hero.