

Section 1:

#1 - Opening paragraph with the sunflower and field imagery **Strengths:** Your metaphorical comparison between the sunflower and a soldier creates a vivid picture that immediately draws readers in. The contrast between the single sunflower and the surrounding grass effectively sets up the story's theme of standing alone.

Weakness: Unclear metaphor progression → The military metaphor shifts from "soldier" to "servant" to "fortress" within the same sentence, making it confusing to follow. The phrase "destroying any hopes of supplies" doesn't connect clearly to how grass would actually affect a sunflower, leaving readers uncertain about what you're trying to convey.

Exemplar: *The lone sunflower stood straight like a soldier, surrounded by an endless field of grass that seemed to crowd in on all sides.*

#2 - The paragraph describing the narrator's first attempts at reaching out **Strengths:** Your parallel between stretching out "a fragile stem" and your own tentative social efforts creates a meaningful connection between yourself and the sunflower. The phrase "words hitting me like a wrecking ball in the face" powerfully conveys the impact of harsh rejection.

Weakness: Abrupt topic transitions → You jump suddenly from describing the sunflower's growth to discussing being a "shadow" without explaining how these ideas connect. The shift from "two sumo wrestlers" to "I was a shadow" feels jarring because there's no bridge between these different scenes and timeframes.

Exemplar: *Just like the sunflower's stem had to push through competing grass, I too was struggling to find my voice amongst my new classmates.*

#3 - The final paragraph with Freddie's introduction **Strengths:** Your internal conflict about whether Freddie's approach is genuine creates realistic tension that many readers can relate to. The "runaway freight train" comparison for your conversation effectively shows how natural and enjoyable the interaction became.

Weakness: Rushed resolution → The ending feels hurried because you compress the entire friendship development and future happiness into just two sentences. The phrase "A friend, and happy school days" is incomplete and doesn't properly conclude your story's emotional journey.

Exemplar: *As we continued talking, I realised that like the sunflower, I too could bounce back from difficulties and grow strong friendships.*

■ Your piece successfully uses the sunflower as a symbol for personal growth and resilience, which creates a lovely connection throughout your writing. The central theme of overcoming social

challenges through persistence comes through clearly. However, your writing would benefit from smoother transitions between different time periods and scenes. Additionally, you could strengthen your piece by expanding on the emotional journey rather than rushing through important moments. The metaphors you've chosen are creative, but they need to be developed more consistently to avoid confusing readers. Also, consider adding more specific details about your feelings and experiences to help readers connect with your story. Furthermore, the ending needs more development to show how this friendship truly represents your personal growth, similar to how the sunflower rebounds from setbacks.

Overall Score: 43/50

Section 2:

#1 Rebounding

The lone sunflower stood straight like a soldier, loyally attending the sun like a servant. The field of grass surrounded it, a massive army surrounding a minuscule fortress, destroying any hopes of supplies.

I could remember when we had moved ~~here~~ [there], alone in our community of new faces. The unfamiliar scent of smoke replaced the earthy aroma of soil. The rain made different sounds against the dull concrete [—] loud sections of drums instead of the single timpani that pattered peacefully. ~~The first time I went into the back yard, the sunflower, a seed in my hand. I had dug a hole and softly inserted it into the small pit, coaxing the soil into the hole afterwards.~~ [The first time I went into the back yard, I held a sunflower seed in my hand. I dug a hole and softly inserted the seed into the small pit, coaxing the soil over it afterwards.]

#2 In eight days, a confident stem had risen from the soft, gritty but smooth soil bed, its pale green stem wrestling with the grass, two sumo wrestlers struggling against each other to push each other out of the ring. Then, I was a shadow, always there but mute, unable to speak out. Slowly, I stretched out a fragile stem that could break with the weakest touch. I recalled my first time reaching out, remembering the words hitting me like a wrecking ball in the face. What Tom said reverberated in my ears, a tidal wave of insults washing over me.

~~Recollecting my memories, I recalled~~ [Looking back, I remembered] the sunflower in my backyard, squashed and defeated by a turkey, evident by the faint tracks in the soil. The sunflower withered, but still came back, rebounding from the setback. In no time, it was standing tall and proud, a tall skyscraper enduring the fierce winds and weight of its inhabitants.

Today, at school, I reached out again, trying ~~again~~ [once more] to become tall, just like the sunflower. A twister of worries and doubts swirled inside me, leaving a blazing trail of destruction. How do I know I will succeed? What if I face the same situation as last time? I don't want to be targeted as the 'weakling' if I get rejected! While the civil war between the two sides of my brain raged on, I unconsciously sat on the bench.

#3 "Hi, what's your name? My name is Freddie [.]

I froze. My internal war stopped. Did someone just ask for my name? Does he want to be my friend, or is it just a prank?

I pushed my ominous thoughts into the back of my head and replied. Soon, our conversation was a runaway freight train, and not even the heavy resistance of the school bell could stop us. As I got home, I noticed the sunflower had its head drooped in shame, dispersing its seeds of rebirth. Like a phoenix, the sunflower would soon rise back to life, just like me. ~~A friend, and happy school days.~~ [I had found a friend, and happy school days lay ahead.]