

Section 1

#1: Opening paragraph (first five sentences)

Strengths:

- You create a strong sense of place with sensory details like "dust exploded into the air" and "floorboards creaked," which helps readers picture the scene.
- The unusual discovery of the golden clock creates immediate curiosity and mystery.

Unclear purpose and setting → Your opening introduces a Year 8 psychology study, but then suddenly mentions a clock made by Julius Caesar in 50 BCE. This creates confusion because how would you know this detailed historical fact just by looking at it? Additionally, searching for a book about psychology doesn't connect clearly to discovering an ancient Roman artefact. The jump between these ideas feels disconnected and makes it hard for readers to understand what your story is really about.

Exemplar: *As I walked into my grandmother's room, dust swirled through the air and the floorboards groaned beneath my feet. I was searching for an old psychology textbook when a gleaming object on the top drawer caught my eye—a small, heavy clock that looked ancient and valuable.*

#2: Middle section (discovery underground)

Strengths:

- The teleportation creates an exciting twist that changes the direction of your story.
- You build tension effectively with the boulder falling and trapping the exit.

Missing descriptive detail → When you write "Deep underground dark and thithy," you're trying to describe the setting, but the description is too brief and contains a spelling error (thithy). You also mention "tonnes of money and other valuables" but don't help readers picture what this actually looks like. Are there gold coins scattered everywhere? Jewellery in piles? Old paintings against walls? Without these specific details, readers can't imagine the scene properly. The same problem appears when you

mention your great grandfather's secret—you tell us about him but don't show us anything about this hideout or why it matters.

Exemplar: *I found myself deep underground in a dark, musty chamber that smelled of old earth. The walls were lined with dusty shelves holding stacks of cash, gold bars, and ancient artefacts glinting in the dim light.*

#3: Ending (rushing home and realising it's morning)

Strengths:

- The cliffhanger ending with "I had no SLEEP NOOOOO!" shows emotion and creates drama.

Rushed conclusion without explanation → Your ending happens too quickly. You write "Desperately I pressed two buttons which teleported straight back home I was so out of breath but the it's morning already." This leaves too many questions unanswered. Which two buttons? Where were they? How did you know to press them? Why is it suddenly morning? The time jump doesn't make sense because you just arrived underground. You also don't explain what happens to the book you originally needed for your psychology project, which was the whole reason for your search. The story feels unfinished because you haven't tied these pieces together.

Exemplar: *I spotted a small panel on the clock with two buttons. My hands shaking, I pressed them both, hoping desperately they would take me home. In a flash of light, I was back in my bedroom—but when I looked outside, the sun was rising. Somehow, the entire night had vanished.*

■ Your story has an interesting idea at its centre—a magical clock that reveals family secrets—but the pieces don't quite fit together yet. The biggest challenge is making your details believable and connected. For example, in your first paragraph, think about whether a Year 8 student would really know that Julius Caesar carved a specific clock in 50 BCE just by picking it up. Instead, you could describe mysterious symbols or markings that make you curious about its history.

Additionally, your story jumps between ideas without fully developing them. You mention needing a psychology book about dreams, but this disappears from your story after the first paragraph. When you're underground, you tell us facts about your great grandfather being a crime boss, but you don't

show us discovering evidence of this or feeling surprised by it. Try slowing down and adding moments where you react to what's happening—are you scared? Confused? Amazed?

Your writing would also benefit from smoother connections between paragraphs. Right now, sentences like "So, after my project I decided to spend time with the ancient clock" come out of nowhere. We don't know what happened with your project or how much time passed. Using phrases like "Later that evening" or "After I finished my homework" would help readers follow along more easily. Also, your second paragraph needs clearer scene-setting—when the clock teleports you, describe the moment of transportation and your first reactions to being underground. This would make the adventure feel more real and exciting for your readers.

Score: 39/50

Section 2

As I walked into my grandmother's room, dust exploded into the air like fireworks [and] ~~and~~ floorboards creaked in a high-pitched tone with every quiet, gentle footstep. ~~I was looking for an old but important and precious book for my final year 8 psychology [Year 8 Psychology] study. However, the moment I got to the shelf,~~ a bright light beamed at me from behind blinding me completely for a few seconds. On the top ~~draw-layed~~ [drawer lay] an old small palm-sized clock, ~~[.] when [When] I turned to pick it up,~~ it was heavy[.] [—] I realised that it was made from solid gold carved into this shape by Julius Caesar himself in late 50 BCE. I kept this in my pocket and continued my search for the book. I reached into the untouched bookshelf and felt the ~~sooty~~ [sooty] remains on the shelf[.] [;] ~~there~~ [there,] I found it sitting seemingly priceless in the middle, ~~[.] that's [That's] what it may look [have looked] like,~~ but that was secretly the key to psychology specifically dreams. On the way out, I felt the clock vibrate softly ~~non-the-lest-demandingly~~ [yet demandingly]. I took the metro home but all I could think of was [:] ~~what is~~ [What is] so special about the clock? Why was it vibrating? Why was it...: [?] When I got home, I knew that I had to stay focused and work on my project as it was the most important thing ~~of~~ [in] my life[.] [;] still, I was not able ~~shack~~ [to shake] the feeling ~~off my head~~ [from my mind—] ~~it~~ [it] was like magnets were stuck inside my head. So, after my project I decided to spend time with the ancient clock.

~~When I said something about family history~~ [#2 When I said something about family history,] the clock buzzes, hums and ~~takes teleports~~ [teleports] me to a place I never knew. Deep underground dark and ~~thithy~~, [musty,] it ~~seems~~ [seemed] like no one ~~has~~ [had] been here for years. As I ~~walk~~ [walked] deeper, I saw tonnes of money and other valuables,~~[—] I didn't know [I didn't know] what the meaning of this was. Why here out of anywhere? What's so—~~ [—] THUMP! For a second there was only silence[.] [;] ~~the~~ [then] ~~boulder~~ [boulders] were falling like ~~meters~~ [meteors,] closing the one exit. I knew where I ~~am~~[—] [was—] ~~I'm~~ [I was] at my great-grandfather's ~~secret assassin hideout. He was the most notorious criminal,~~ [—] the only major crime boss ~~that~~ [who] was never caught in his lifetime. You know the robberies in Iraq[?] [?] ~~well...~~ [Well,] he was the mastermind behind it all. You know El Chapo[?] [?] ~~you~~ [You] think he's the biggest crime lord[?] [?] ~~well...~~ [Well,] ~~lets~~ [let's] just say he ~~commends~~ [commands] El Chapo. No one was ever to know about this. Desperately I pressed two buttons which teleported ~~straight~~ [me straight] back home[.] [.] ~~I was so out of breath but the~~ [#3 I was so out of breath, but then] ~~it's~~ [it was] morning already[.] [—] ~~I had no SLEEP~~ [I had had no sleep!] NOOOOO!