

Section 1

#1: "The pungent aroma of the whiteboard cleaner evaporated into the tense and heavy atmosphere of the classroom. I had my eye fixed on the clock—frozen in time as my left leg was shaking continuously from apprehension."

Strengths:

- Your opening sentence creates a strong sense of place by appealing to the sense of smell, which helps readers feel like they're in the classroom with you.
- You've shown your nervousness through the physical detail of your shaking leg rather than just saying "I was nervous," which makes the emotion more real.

Weakness: Unclear physical description → The phrase "frozen in time" creates confusion about what is actually frozen. When you write "I had my eye fixed on the clock—frozen in time," it's unclear whether you mean the clock appears frozen or you feel frozen whilst watching it. This makes readers pause and reread, which interrupts the flow of your story. The connection between these two ideas needs to be clearer so readers can picture exactly what's happening.

Exemplar: *I had my eye fixed on the clock, which seemed frozen in time, whilst my left leg shook continuously from apprehension.*

#2: "My almond-shaped amethyst nails were getting chipped by my teeth as I glanced at Felix, clearly just as nervous as me. Outside, the bluebirds were chirping, dancing elegantly from branch to branch on the eucalyptus trees. I let out a faint smile as I knew bluebirds were associated with luck."

Strengths:

- Your description of the nail-biting habit shows your anxiety in a specific, visual way that readers can imagine clearly.
- You've included an interesting detail about bluebirds being lucky, which adds meaning to your observations.

Weakness: Jumping between ideas without connection → Your writing shifts suddenly from looking at Felix to describing birds outside, then to your thoughts about luck. These three separate ideas appear one after another without explaining why your attention moved from one to the next. This makes the paragraph feel choppy and confusing. When you write "Outside, the bluebirds were chirping" right after mentioning Felix, readers don't understand what made you look away or why the birds matter at this exact moment in your story.

Exemplar: *As I glanced at Felix, clearly just as nervous as me, I tried to distract myself by looking outside, where bluebirds were chirping and dancing elegantly from branch to branch on the eucalyptus trees.*

#3: "As I opened my eyes the exam paper was in front of me— inches away from my trembling hands. I closed my eyes, bracing myself as I grasped the corner of the paper, turning it around."

Strengths:

- The physical details of your trembling hands and grasping the corner of the paper build suspense effectively.
- You've created a slow-motion effect by breaking down each small action, which makes this moment feel important.

Weakness: Repetitive eye movements causing confusion → You mention opening your eyes, then immediately write about closing them again in the very next sentence. This creates a confusing sequence of actions that doesn't make logical sense. If you've just opened your eyes to see the paper, why would you close them again before looking at the score? This back-and-forth makes readers wonder what's actually happening and whether you're looking at the paper or not.

Exemplar: *I took a deep breath and opened my eyes. The exam paper sat in front of me—inches away from my trembling hands. I grasped the corner of the paper and slowly turned it around.*

■ Your piece tells an engaging story about competition and reveals an interesting twist at the end when Felix lies about his score. The classroom setting feels real through your sensory details like the whiteboard cleaner smell and the visual of the teacher's silhouette. However, your narrative would be stronger if you developed the relationship between you and Felix earlier in the story. Currently, Felix

appears suddenly without any background, so readers don't understand why beating him matters so much to you or why he would lie. Additionally, your piece would benefit from smoother transitions between your observations. When you shift from watching the teacher to noticing birds to seeing shadows, these jumps happen too quickly without explaining why your attention moved. Try connecting each new observation to the previous one so readers can follow your train of thought. Also, the ending revelation that Felix lied feels rushed—you could build more tension by showing small hints of his deception before the final moment. Consider adding a sentence or two about noticing something odd in Felix's expression or behaviour before he shows his true score. Your descriptive language is sophisticated, but make sure each sentence connects logically to create a smooth flow throughout your story.

Overall Score: 41/50

Section 2

~~The pungent aroma~~ [#1 The pungent aroma] of the whiteboard cleaner evaporated into the tense and heavy atmosphere of the classroom. ~~I had my eye fixed on the clock—frozen in time as my left leg was shaking continuously from apprehension.~~ [I had my eye fixed on the clock, which seemed frozen in time, whilst my left leg shook continuously from apprehension.] Each second was pulling me closer to fate[;] the silence echoed deeper than a cave. I then noticed the teacher was holding up the stack of papers, the papers which would let me know whether I was going to be the highest in the class, a dream of mine which had been brought to life an abundance of times. ~~My almond-shaped amethyst nails were getting chipped by my teeth as I glanced at Felix, clearly just as nervous as me. Outside, the bluebirds were chirping, dancing elegantly from branch to branch on the eucalyptus trees. I let out a faint smile as I knew bluebirds were associated with luck.~~ [#2 My almond-shaped amethyst nails were getting chipped by my teeth as I glanced at Felix, clearly just as nervous as me. Trying to distract myself, I looked outside, where bluebirds were chirping, dancing elegantly from branch to branch on the eucalyptus trees. I let out a faint smile, as I knew bluebirds were associated with luck.] My focus soon shifted as the radiance of the sunlight cast a grey silhouette of my teacher on the desk in front of me. Any second now. I took a deep breath. I just needed to beat Felix. ~~As I opened my eyes the exam paper was in front of me—inches away from my trembling hands. I closed my eyes, bracing myself as I~~

~~grasped the corner of the paper, turning it around.~~ [#3 I opened my eyes, and the exam paper was in front of me—inches away from my trembling hands. I grasped the corner of the paper and slowly turned it around, bracing myself.] Suddenly, I felt a ~~gush~~ [rush] of relief fly past me. There it was[] right next to my name, Autumn, circled in red,[:] 99%. Glee surged through me as I fought the urge to jump out of my seat—there was just one more thing to do, and most likely the hardest thing: get a higher score than Felix. "Hey, Felix, what did you get? Guess who got 99 percent[per cent]?" He looked up from his desk, his face painted with a hue of deception, which my gullible self couldn't see. "That's great! I got 98.[:]" he responded in a hushed voice, slowly turning back to his paper, grinning at his 100.