

Section 1

#1: "The sun glittered on the water as Liam splashed into the shallows. The waves rolled in with a steady rhythm, their smell sharp with salt and seaweed."

Strengths:

- You've created a clear picture of the beach setting using senses like sight and smell
- The rhythm of your sentences matches the steady rhythm of the waves you're describing

Weakness: Limited Character Connection → Whilst you've painted the beach beautifully, we don't yet understand how Liam feels about being there. Is he excited? Nervous? Has he been looking forward to this all week? Without knowing what's going on in Liam's mind, it's harder for readers to care about what happens to him later. Consider phrases like "their smell sharp with salt and seaweed" – this is what *you* notice as the writer, but does Liam notice it? What catches *his* attention specifically?

Exemplar: *The sun glittered on the water as Liam splashed into the shallows, grinning at the thought of having the whole afternoon to himself.*

#2: "Then came the shadow. Out of the corner of his eye, something large slid through the water. His ears filled with the pounding of his own heartbeat, louder than the surf."

Strengths:

- You've built tension effectively by describing what Liam senses rather than immediately revealing what it is
- The comparison between his heartbeat and the surf helps readers understand how frightened he feels

Weakness: Underdeveloped Threat → The shadow appears and disappears very quickly in your writing. Whilst this creates fear, it doesn't give readers enough time to truly worry alongside Liam. You mention "for one awful moment he thought he was staring at a shark" and then it's gone. This moment could be stretched out – what exactly does the shape look like? How close does it come? Does it circle

more than once? The fear feels a bit rushed when it could be the most gripping part of your entire piece.

Exemplar: *The shadow circled again, closer this time, and Liam's breath caught as he glimpsed the sleek, grey outline cutting through the water barely two metres away.*

#3: "When he finally staggered onto the beach, the air was thick with the familiar smell of chips and coconut oil. The roar of the sea faded into the background, but its taste still clung to his lips."

Strengths:

- You've shown how the normal beach smells now feel different to Liam after his frightening experience
- The contrast between the dangerous ocean and the everyday beach activities is powerful

Weakness: Rushed Emotional Resolution → After such a terrifying experience, Liam's thoughts and feelings at the end feel a bit too tidy. You tell us "It was no longer just a place for fun, but a reminder of how quickly beauty could turn to danger," but this sounds more like a lesson from a textbook than what a real person would think after nearly drowning. What's actually going through Liam's mind as he sits there shaking? Is he replaying what happened? Feeling angry at himself? Wondering if he'll ever want to swim again? Your ending wraps things up too neatly when this moment could show us more about how the experience has truly affected him.

Exemplar: *Liam dropped onto the hot sand, shaking, his legs still wobbly. Every time he closed his eyes, he saw that dark shape circling beneath him.*

■ Your piece demonstrates solid control of sensory writing – you've woven together sights, sounds, smells, and tastes to bring the beach to life. The technical structure of your narrative is sound, moving clearly from the peaceful beginning through the danger and into the resolution. However, the real opportunity for improvement lies in deepening the emotional substance of your writing. Right now, your story focuses heavily on *what* happens to Liam, but spends less time exploring *who* Liam is and how he truly feels. Consider slowing down key moments, particularly the shark scare, to let tension build properly. Additionally, think about showing Liam's thoughts and reactions more specifically

rather than summarising them. For instance, in your second paragraph, you could expand on the exact moment Liam realises he's in a rip current – what does that realisation feel like in his body and mind? Also, your final paragraph could be strengthened by replacing the general reflection about beauty and danger with more specific, personal thoughts that reveal how this experience has changed Liam. The bones of your story are strong; now it's about adding flesh to those bones by diving deeper into your character's inner world.

Overall Score: 43/50

Section 2

Beach Disaster

#1 The sun glittered on the water as Liam splashed into the shallows. The waves rolled in with a steady rhythm, their smell sharp with salt and seaweed. He dove under the first breaker, the water closing over his head like a cold blanket. When he came up again, he tasted brine on his lips, bitter and metallic, and wiped his stinging eyes. Around him, the cries of gulls blended with the crash and suck of waves pulling back into the deep.

#2 He swam further, the water tightening its grip on his body. At first it was exciting, the sea rocking him like a wild ride, but then he noticed the pull was stronger than before. Each kick seemed to move him ~~farther~~ [further] from the shore, not closer. Panic spread through him as he realised he was caught in a rip current. The beach was still visible, but the smell of sunscreen and hot sand seemed impossibly far away now. His arms ached as he tried to fight, the water scraping at his skin like icy fingers.

Then came the shadow. Out of the corner of his eye, something large slid through the water. His ears filled with the pounding of his own heartbeat, louder than the surf. He twisted to see, and for one awful moment he thought he was staring at a shark. Its shape cut through the waves, smooth and deliberate, circling once before sliding out of sight. His mouth filled with salt water as he gasped, the taste of fear as sharp as blood.

He wanted to scream, but the ocean swallowed his voice. For a few desperate seconds, he thrashed against the current, certain he would be pulled under. Then, in the blur of sun and spray, he

remembered the surf lifesaving posters tacked on the clubhouse wall: Don't fight the rip. Swim sideways. Forcing himself to slow, he turned, pushing across the pull instead of against it. His muscles burned, but at last the grip loosened, and he broke free into calmer water.

#3 When he finally staggered onto the beach, the air was thick with the familiar smell of chips and coconut oil. The roar of the sea faded into the background, but its taste still clung to his lips. Liam dropped onto the hot sand, shaking but alive. He glanced back at the endless blue. It was no longer just a place for fun, but a reminder of how quickly beauty could turn to danger.