

### Section 1:

**#1: "The water felt cool and soft against my skin as I waded farther into the deep blue, sunlight scattering across the waves in millions of tiny shards of gold."**

#### Strengths:

- Your opening creates a peaceful, inviting atmosphere that draws readers in with gentle sensory details
- The image of sunlight as "shards of gold" is vivid and helps us picture the scene clearly

**Underdeveloped sensory layering** → While you've included visual details effectively, this opening moment could benefit from weaving in more varied senses immediately. You mention "cool and soft" water, but consider what sounds surrounded you in that initial moment, or whether there were any scents even before you went deeper. The phrase "waded farther into the deep blue" tells us movement but doesn't show us how your body felt moving through the resistance of the water.

**Exemplar:** *The water felt cool and soft against my skin as I waded farther, each step pushing through the gentle resistance. Sunlight scattered across the waves in millions of tiny shards of gold, while the distant calls of gulls mixed with children's laughter from the shore.*

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**#2: "A wave slammed over my head, icy water burning my skin and filling my mouth with salt. Panic surged through my chest, my lungs gasping for air while the sea pressed down on me."**

#### Strengths:

- Your writing effectively shows the sudden shift from calm to danger, making readers feel the change
- The contrast between "icy water burning" creates a powerful contradiction that captures the painful sensation

**Incomplete emotional progression** → Your piece moves from calm to panic very quickly, but we don't experience the crucial in-between emotions. The phrase "panic surged through my chest" names the feeling rather than showing us how panic actually took hold of your body and mind. What

thoughts raced through your head in those seconds? Did confusion come before panic? The sentence "my lungs gasping for air while the sea pressed down on me" describes physical reactions, but misses the opportunity to show us your internal experience—perhaps a desperate thought, a flash of fear, or a split-second decision.

**Exemplar:** *A wave slammed over my head, icy water burning my skin and filling my mouth with salt. For a heartbeat, I felt only confusion—wasn't I just standing?—before panic gripped my chest, squeezing tight as my lungs screamed for air that wouldn't come.*

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**#3:** "Gasping in sweet, raw air, I felt the hard sand beneath my knees, the sharp scent of salt and sunscreen filling my senses. My heart was racing, but I was safe, alive, and for the first time that day, I could breathe freely."

**Strengths:**

- The physical details like "hard sand beneath my knees" ground us in the moment of safety
- Your use of "sweet, raw air" effectively conveys relief and the preciousness of breathing again

**Missing reflective depth** → The conclusion wraps up the physical event but doesn't take us deeper into what this experience meant. The phrase "for the first time that day, I could breathe freely" is interesting but underdeveloped—it hints at something bigger but doesn't explore it. Your final sentence "The ocean had tried to take me, but it had let me go" reads as a neat summary rather than a genuine insight. What changed in how you understood the ocean, yourself, or the world around you? The experience of nearly drowning usually leaves people with profound realisations, but your ending stays at the surface level of "I survived."

**Exemplar:** *Gasping in sweet, raw air, I felt the hard sand beneath my knees, the sharp scent of salt and sunscreen filling my senses. My heart was racing, but I was safe, alive. The ocean I'd trusted to hold me gently had shown me something else—its power wasn't just in its beauty, but in its indifference to my smallness.*

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■ Your piece demonstrates solid sensory writing and effectively captures the physical experience of a dangerous moment in the ocean. Your imagery works well, particularly when describing the transition from peace to danger. However, your writing would benefit from pushing beyond surface-level

descriptions into deeper emotional and reflective territory. Think about the moments between events—not just what happened, but what you thought, felt, and understood as it happened. Additionally, consider building your conclusion more thoughtfully. Right now, it feels rushed, as though you wanted to finish quickly after the rescue. Instead, take time to show us what lingered after the event—perhaps the way the beach looked different, or how the sounds around you seemed sharper or stranger. Also, watch for places where you tell us emotions rather than showing them through specific thoughts or physical sensations. When you write "panic surged," ask yourself: what does panic actually feel like in the body? Does your vision narrow? Do your thoughts scatter? These specific details will make your writing more powerful and help readers truly experience the moment with you.

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**Overall Score: 40/50**

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## **Section 2:**

**#1** The water felt cool and soft against my skin as I waded ~~farther~~ **[further]** into the deep blue, sunlight scattering across the waves in millions of tiny shards of gold. Salt lingered on my tongue, sharp and bitter, and every now and then the wind carried the smell of seaweed mixed with sunscreen. Gulls cried above me, their calls blending with the roar of waves crashing all around, and I felt suspended, almost as if the sea itself was welcoming me, holding me in its embrace.

**#2** Then the current changed. At first, it was just a gentle tug, playful, like a friend teasing me, but it quickly grew stronger, pulling me ~~farther~~ **[further]** and ~~farther~~ **[further]** from the safety of the shore. A wave slammed over my head, icy water burning my skin and filling my mouth with salt. Panic surged through my chest, my lungs gasping for air while the sea pressed down on me. I kicked and flailed, tasting the sharp salt and feeling the water pull roughly at me, but the roar of the ocean in my ears only grew louder.

**#3** Just when I thought I might be dragged under for good, a warm, strong hand grabbed my arm. A lifeguard pulled me up, steadying me against the relentless waves. Gasping in sweet, raw air, I felt the hard sand beneath my knees, the sharp scent of salt and sunscreen filling my senses. My heart was racing, but I was safe, alive, and for the first time that day, I could breathe freely. The ocean had tried to take me, but it had let me go.

