

Section 1

#1: Opening Paragraph "When the curtain rose that Friday night, the air in Crestwood High's auditorium pulsed with anticipation. The annual school talent show had always been a cheerful mix of singing, dancing, and comedy, but no one expected this year's event to spiral into such delicious chaos."*

Strengths:

- Your opening immediately sets the scene and creates excitement by using vivid words like "pulsed with anticipation"
- You establish the setting clearly (time, place, and event) whilst building curiosity about what will happen

Vague Stage Directions → Your phrase "the curtain rose" tells us the show started, but you haven't shown us what the audience actually saw or heard in that moment. What did the stage look like? Were there decorations? What sounds filled the room besides whispers? Adding sensory details about what people noticed when the curtain lifted would help readers picture the scene more clearly.

Exemplar: *When the curtain rose that Friday night, revealing a stage draped in shimmering gold streamers, the air in Crestwood High's auditorium pulsed with anticipation.*

#2: The Surprise Section "Music thudded through the speakers, and Liam began a slick dance routine: precise, fast, impressive. But the real drama began when he activated his 'surprise.'"

Strengths:

- Your use of short, punchy words ("precise, fast, impressive") creates a quick rhythm that matches the dance itself
- The paragraph builds tension well by hinting at the surprise before revealing it

Underdeveloped Action Sequence → When you write "the speakers crackled and faded, the music warped and died, and the curtain twitched like it had a life of its own," you're listing what happened without showing how people reacted in that exact moment. What did Liam's face look like when

things started going wrong? Did someone in the front row jump? Did the judges look at each other? Including immediate reactions would make the chaos feel more real and exciting.

Exemplar: *The speakers crackled and faded, and Liam's confident smile vanished as the music warped into a distorted screech before dying completely.*

#3: Highlight of the Show Section *"The mishap quickly became the night's highlight. No one remembered the flawless singers or polished pianists as clearly as the wild light show gone wrong."*

Strengths:

- You've chosen an interesting angle by showing that mistakes can become memorable moments
- The comparison between "flawless singers" and the "wild light show" emphasises your main message

Shallow Reflection → Your ending tells us the mishap became legendary, but you haven't explored why this matters or what anyone learnt from it. Did Liam feel differently about taking risks? Did the school change any rules about technology in performances? Did students see talent shows differently afterwards? Your final paragraph simply states what happened on Monday without digging into the deeper meaning or lasting impact of the event.

Exemplar: *Though Liam's face still flushed whenever someone mentioned "the great blackout," he discovered something valuable that night: audiences don't just want perfection—they want to feel something real.*

■ Your piece tells an entertaining story with a clear beginning, middle, and end, and you've chosen a relatable setting that many students would recognise. The main events flow logically from Liam's big entrance to the technical disaster to the resolution. However, your writing would benefit from adding more depth to your characters and their feelings. Right now, we see what happens but don't fully understand why readers should care beyond the surface-level excitement.

Your descriptions sometimes tell us information rather than showing us scenes through specific details. For instance, when you write "students whispered in the dark," you could instead show us what they actually whispered or how their voices sounded. Additionally, your dialogue appears only twice in the entire piece, which makes the characters feel distant. Adding a few more snippets of

conversation—perhaps between Liam and Zoe before the show, or amongst students watching—would bring your characters to life.

The structure of your story could also be strengthened by developing the middle section more fully. The chaos happens very quickly in just one paragraph, but this is your story's most exciting moment and deserves more space. Also, your conclusion wraps up quite suddenly without giving readers time to reflect on what made this experience meaningful. Consider expanding your final paragraphs to explore the lasting effects of this event on Liam, Zoe, or the school community as a whole.

Overall Score: 43/50

Section 2:

#1 When the curtain rose that Friday night, the air in Crestwood High's auditorium pulsed with anticipation. The annual school talent show had always been a cheerful mix of singing, dancing, and comedy, but no one expected this year's event to spiral into such delicious chaos. Teachers leaned forward in their seats, students whispered in the dark, and a hush fell as the next act strode confidently onto the stage.

Something Spectacular

Year Nine student Liam Turner had promised something "spectacular." Rumours had spread all week about his mysterious act involving light, sound, and a secret prop. As he positioned himself centre stage, spotlights gleaming off his silver jacket, even the judges exchanged curious looks.

"This one's going to be good," someone whispered.

#2 The Surprise

Music thudded through the speakers, and Liam began a slick dance routine: ~~precise, fast, impressive~~ [precise, fast, and impressive]. But the real drama began when he activated his "surprise." With a flourish, he pressed a button on a small remote. Instantly, a series of flashing LED strips lit up around the stage, forming glowing patterns that pulsed with the rhythm of the song. The audience cheered, until the lights began to blink uncontrollably.

Within seconds, the stage erupted in chaos. The speakers crackled and faded, the music warped and died, and the curtain twitched like it had a life of its own. Liam froze, then tried pressing the remote again, but the system had gone rogue. The lights danced wildly, spilling over the crowd, turning the whole hall into an uninvited disco. Some screamed, some laughed, and Mr ~~Perkins~~ [Perkins], the drama teacher, ran backstage yelling, "Pull the plug!"

Zoe's Rescue

Through the confusion, one person kept her cool: Liam's best friend, Zoe. She sprinted to the control panel, scanned the cables, then pulled out the main one and plunged the room into darkness. For a long, breathless moment, there was silence. Then, the crowd broke into applause. [—a thunderous wave of relief and admiration.]

When the lights returned, Liam stood embarrassed under the spotlight, his face flushed. "Guess I made it too spectacular," he said, grinning weakly. Even the principal laughed, and the tension melted into cheers.

#3 Highlight of the Show

The mishap quickly became the night's highlight. No one remembered the flawless singers or polished pianists as clearly as the wild light show gone wrong. The following Monday, students still buzzed about "the great blackout," replaying videos of flashing lights and Liam's stunned expression.

Though his act didn't win first place, it certainly won the crowd's heart; [—]and a permanent place in school legend. Sometimes, it turns out, the best performances are the ones that don't go according to plan.