

Section 1:

#1 "I found the photograph tucked between the pages of an old book. It was faded, with edges curling from time, but the image captured a moment that seemed alive despite the years. Two children sat on a wooden swing, their faces glowing with laughter, hair tousled by the wind. I could almost hear their joy echoing across the page."

Strengths: Your opening immediately draws readers in with vivid imagery. The sensory detail of the "edges curling from time" and "hair tousled by the wind" helps readers picture the scene clearly.

Vague Connection → You write "I could almost hear their joy echoing across the page," but this shifts unexpectedly from describing what you see to what you hear. The phrase "across the page" is confusing because photographs aren't pages—they sit on or between pages. This makes your description less clear than it could be.

Exemplar: *I could almost hear their laughter carried on the same wind that once tousled their hair.*

#2 "I remembered the first time I had truly noticed the power of a photograph. I was ten, sitting at the kitchen table with my grandmother. She had pulled out a small box, worn and scratched, and inside were dozens of black and white photographs."

Strengths: Your transition to the memory works well, and the detail about the "worn and scratched" box helps readers understand this is a treasured collection.

Telling Rather Than Showing → You state "the power of a photograph" directly, but you don't show readers what this power looks like in the moment. The paragraph simply lists what happened (sitting, pulling out a box, finding photographs) without capturing the emotions or reactions that would demonstrate this power.

Exemplar: *My breath caught when Grandma opened the worn, scratched box. Inside lay dozens of black and white photographs, each one holding a world I'd never known existed.*

#3 "I placed the photograph back on the table. A breeze from the open window rustled the pages of the book, and I imagined the children on the swing, still laughing, still flying just above the ground."

Strengths: The image of the breeze rustling pages creates a gentle, reflective mood that suits your ending.

Repetitive Thinking → Your piece returns to imagining the children on the swing multiple times throughout the writing. You've already explored this idea in earlier paragraphs, so repeating it here doesn't add new understanding or depth to your reflection.

Exemplar: *A breeze from the open window rustled the pages, and I wondered whose hands would find this photograph next, what story they would imagine from a single frozen moment.*

■ Your piece captures the emotional weight of photographs and memory effectively through your personal narrative. The conversation with your grandmother provides a strong emotional centre. However, your writing would benefit from deeper exploration of your ideas rather than circling back to the same observations. For instance, when you write about the children's laughter being "suspended, eternal," you could push further by exploring *why* this matters or what it reveals about how we remember our own lives. Additionally, your final paragraphs repeat the idea that photographs preserve moments without adding fresh insight—consider what new understanding you've gained by the end. You could also develop the middle section where you're ten years old by showing us more of your reaction to seeing your great-grandparents' photograph, rather than simply moving through the conversation.

Score: 44/50

Section 2:

#1 I found the photograph tucked between the pages of an old book. It was faded, with edges curling from time, but the image captured a moment that seemed alive despite the years. Two children sat on a wooden swing, their faces glowing with laughter, hair tousled by the wind. I could almost hear their joy echoing across the page.

I held the photograph closer. The memories it carried were invisible yet palpable. I did not know these children, yet something about the image felt familiar, as if I had walked in that park long ago, under the same sun, beneath the same sky.

#2 I remembered the first time I had truly noticed the power of a photograph. I was ten, sitting at the kitchen table with my grandmother. She had pulled out a small box, worn and scratched, and inside were dozens of black and white photographs.

"Who are these, Grandma?" I asked, picking up a picture of a woman in a wide-brimmed hat, standing beside a man with a kind smile.

"Your great-grandparents," she said softly. Her fingers traced the edges of the photo. "This is the day they met. I was just a little girl running behind them."

I leaned closer, studying the photograph. There was something magical in how it froze a moment in time yet seemed to carry life within it.

"Do you think they knew how happy they would be?" I asked, my voice barely above a whisper.

Grandma laughed, a sound warm and gentle. "Perhaps not. That is the secret of photographs. They capture what is and leave the rest to imagination."

I thought about the children on the swing again. Their laughter seemed suspended, eternal. I imagined their lives, the paths they had taken, the memories they would carry forward, just like this photograph would carry them to anyone who found it years later.

The photograph reminded me that life was made up of fleeting moments. A smile, a glance, a simple touch, all could disappear in an instant. Yet a photograph could hold them, quiet and patient, waiting for someone to see them again.

#3 I placed the photograph back on the table. A breeze from the open window rustled the pages of the book, and I imagined the children on the swing, still laughing, still flying just above the ground.

"Maybe one day," I whispered, "someone will find a photograph of me and remember this moment."

And in that quiet thought, I felt connected to all the people who had ever held a photograph and let it speak for them. I ~~realized~~ [realised] that a photograph is not just a picture. It is a story. A memory. A small fragment of life preserved forever.

I walked away from the table, leaving the photograph where it was, knowing that it would wait patiently for the next person to discover it, to breathe life into a moment long past.