

Section 1

#1: "I should have known that the parcel wasn't meant for me the moment I saw my mother's neat but rushed handwriting, the unmistakable handwriting of my mother."

Strengths:

- Your opening creates immediate mystery and emotional weight by connecting the parcel to your deceased mother
- The specific detail of "neat but rushed handwriting" helps readers picture the writing clearly

Repetitive phrasing → You've written "handwriting of my mother" twice in the same sentence, which makes it feel clunky and unnecessarily wordy. The phrase "unmistakable handwriting of my mother" doesn't add new information since you've already told us it's your mother's handwriting in the first part of the sentence.

Exemplar: *I should have known that the parcel wasn't meant for me the moment I saw my mother's neat but rushed handwriting—unmistakable, even two years after her death.*

#2: "The parcel had been sitting on the ebony countertop for three days – I had walked past it 38 times and considered opening it 29 times – I had counted – before I decided to open it."

Strengths:

- The precise counting (38 times, 29 times) cleverly shows your character's personality without directly stating it
- Your use of dashes creates a nice rhythm that mirrors the stopping and starting of indecision

Unclear logic → The numbers you've given don't quite make sense when you think about them. If the parcel was there for three days and you walked past it 38 times, that means you walked past it about 12-13 times per day. This seems like too many times unless you're constantly pacing around your kitchen. The detail draws attention to itself but doesn't feel believable, which can pull readers out of the story.

Exemplar: *The parcel had been sitting on the ebony countertop for three days—I had walked past it countless times, each time feeling the pull to open it, before I finally gave in.*

#3: "This was hand-drawn on cartography paper, and the first thing I noticed were the detailed decorations: The scrawly words: for Annie, a compass shaped like a four-leafed clover, A sea serpent coiling itself around the scale and the key as if it were guarding it. mountains rendered in the distance, illustrated with such detail you could almost feel their granite faces and rough rock cliffs."

Strengths:

- Your descriptions of the map decorations are vivid and create a magical feeling
- The specific images (sea serpent, four-leafed clover compass) help readers visualise the map

Inconsistent capitalisation and punctuation → Your sentence has capital letters appearing in random places ("The scrawly words", "A sea serpent") and lowercase letters where capitals should be ("mountains rendered"). This makes the list confusing to read. You've also mixed colons with commas in ways that don't follow standard punctuation rules, which breaks up the flow of your description.

Exemplar: *This was hand-drawn on cartography paper, and the first thing I noticed were the detailed decorations: the scrawly words "for Annie," a compass shaped like a four-leafed clover, a sea serpent coiling itself around the scale and key as if guarding it, and mountains rendered in the distance with such detail you could almost feel their granite faces and rough rock cliffs.*

■ Your piece has a lovely emotional centre—the idea of discovering how your mother saw the world after she's gone is genuinely moving and original. The map concept is creative and works as a beautiful symbol for different ways of seeing. However, your writing would become stronger if you tightened up some of your sentences and removed unnecessary repetition. For example, in your opening paragraph, you explain that serious errors rarely happen and miracles don't happen to you, but then you immediately contradict this by saying neither is likely—this creates confusion rather than clarity. Additionally, some of your descriptive passages would benefit from smoother punctuation and more consistent grammar. The fourth paragraph, where you describe the map details, tries to cram too many images into one sentence, making it hard to follow. Consider breaking longer sentences into shorter ones so each image gets proper attention. Also, think about your narrator's voice throughout—you've

created a character who counts things and values order, but sometimes your descriptions become flowery in ways that don't quite match this personality. Your strongest moments are when the precise, observant narrator shines through, like when you notice the map shows "every aspect of our neighbourhood had been reimagined." Focus on developing this voice more consistently throughout your piece.

Overall Score: 41/50

Section 2:

~~I should have known that the parcel wasn't meant for me the moment I saw my mother's neat but rushed handwriting, the unmistakable handwriting of my mother. [~~**#1** ~~I should have known that the parcel wasn't meant for me the moment I saw my mother's neat but rushed handwriting—unmistakable, even two years after her death.] It felt unnerving to see an instance of my mum – she had died two years ago, so it was either a miracle or a serious error. I decided that neither was likely; serious errors rarely happened, and I am never the person that miracles happen to. [I decided neither was likely: serious errors rarely happened, and I was never the person that miracles happened to.] I'm the sort who cleans my [her] room when I am [she is] bored and keeps everything I possess [she possesses] in a neat, ordered fashion.~~

~~The parcel had been sitting on the ebony countertop for three days – I had walked past it 38 times and considered opening it 29 times – I had counted – before I decided to open it. [~~**#2** ~~The parcel had been sitting on the ebony countertop for three days—I had walked past it countless times, each time feeling the pull to open it, before I finally gave in.] My mother would have quickly opened the box, shredding the packaging and leaving tiny scraps on [of] cardboard lying idly on the floor like leftover confetti, but I am [was] not my mother. I inherited her hazel eyes and her quick thinking, but not her capacity for spontaneous joy.~~

I didn't know where the scissors had gone, so I carefully ~~slitted~~ [slit] the duct tape with a kitchen knife (it was the closest thing to a ~~scissor~~ [pair of scissors] I could see), and the tape was cut cleanly in half as if it were made of butter.

Inside the packaging was a parchment. Unrolling it, I brushed my fingers over the rough, leathery texture ~~of the parchment~~. It turned out to be a map, not a regular map like the ones on GPS ~~maps~~ or the ones you get ~~on~~ [in] brochures, but ~~the~~ [an] old-fashioned map, like the one Captain Cook made when he voyaged around Australia.

~~This was hand-drawn on cartography paper, and the first thing I noticed were the detailed decorations: The scrawly words: for Annie, a compass shaped like a four-leafed clover, A sea serpent coiling itself around the scale and the key as if it were guarding it. mountains rendered in the distance, illustrated with such detail you could almost feel their granite faces and rough rock cliffs. [#3~~ This was hand-drawn on cartography paper, and the first thing I noticed were the detailed decorations: the scrawly words "for Annie," a compass shaped like a four-leafed clover, a sea serpent coiling itself around the scale and key as if guarding it, and mountains rendered in the distance with such detail you could almost feel their granite faces and rough rock cliffs.]

It was a map of our town, but this map was from my mother's perspective. Her cartography workshop was labelled as 'The Room of World Creation', my school labelled as 'The Academy of High Expectations'. Every aspect of our neighbourhood had been reimagined and transformed into something mythical.

At the back of the map, I ~~realised~~ [realised] my mother had left a note for me. It read: "For Annie: This is the real map. The rest are just guides to where things are."

As I scrutinised the map more, I noticed more and more. The way the oak trees had grown together, making an arch overhead, the way our school had playgrounds of different themes, the way the roads were built in a criss-cross pattern. She had noticed everything.