

Section 1:

#1: Opening Paragraph "Mark stood silently on the bottom of the hiking trail, his finger tapping relentlessly as he waited for his best friend, Jack to arrive... bringing back pleasant memories of their first hike together."

Strengths:

- Your descriptive details create a vivid picture of the setting and Mark's emotions
- The compass as a meaningful object between the two friends is a strong symbolic element

Awkward Phrasing → The phrase "stood silently on the bottom of the hiking trail" sounds unnatural. In English, we typically say someone stands "at" the base or start of a trail, not "on the bottom." Additionally, the sentence "his finger tapping relentlessly" is unclear—which finger? What is it tapping on? This vague description confuses the reader. You've also written that the compass "felt like a heat pack in his shivering hands," which creates confusion because heat packs are warm, yet Mark is cold and shivering. Consider whether the compass would actually feel warm or if it would be cold like everything else.

Exemplar: *Mark stood silently at the base of the hiking trail, his fingers drumming nervously against his leg as he waited for his best friend, Jack, to arrive.*

#2: Midpoint Crisis "Halfway throughout the treacherous hike, Mark felt a sense of agony engulf him... The signal was lost. He was hopeless, abandoned and utterly lost."

Strengths:

- Your description of Mark's emotional state shows his dependence on Jack effectively

Shallow Character Development → This section tells us Mark feels tired and hopeless, but it doesn't show us why these feelings are so powerful. What specific thoughts run through his mind? What does the landscape look like around him that makes him feel so alone? You mention the "awful sight of Jack betraying him," but Jack simply ran ahead—this doesn't seem like a true betrayal. The connection between Jack running ahead and Mark calling it a betrayal needs more explanation. Why does Mark see

this as such a serious problem? You need to develop Mark's perspective more deeply so readers understand his reaction.

Exemplar: *Mark's legs ached with every step. Without Jack's cheerful voice urging him forward, the silent forest felt suffocating. He remembered how Jack had always noticed when he needed a break, how he'd crack a joke to lift his spirits. Now, staring at the endless white path ahead, Mark realised he'd relied on Jack's energy like a torch in the darkness.*

#3: Resolution "One week later, Mark's knuckles knocked on Jack's door, praying for a response... Ever since that, they have avoided each other."

Strengths:

- Your ending shows consequences for the characters' actions

Rushed and Underdeveloped Conclusion → The ending feels hurried and incomplete. You write "His mouth threw offenses and accusations at Jack, who replied equally as hard," but you don't tell us what they actually said to each other. What were the accusations? What was Jack's side of the story? Did Jack explain why he ran ahead? Did Mark explain why he felt abandoned? The phrase "threw offenses" is also awkward—people don't throw offenses. The argument and its aftermath are summarised in just a few sentences when this should be the most important part of your story. Your readers need to see the actual conversation to understand why their friendship ended. Right now, the conclusion feels like you rushed to finish rather than properly exploring the conflict.

Exemplar: *"You left me there!" Mark shouted, his voice shaking. "I was scared and alone, and you didn't even look back!" Jack's face crumpled. "I thought you were right behind me! I waited at the top for an hour. When you didn't come, I got worried and headed back down, but it was getting dark. I thought you'd turned back safely." Mark fell silent, realising his phone had died before Jack could have called.*

■ Your piece has an interesting foundation about friendship and different approaches to adventure, but it needs more depth in several areas. The main problem is that you're telling readers what happens rather than showing them the details that make the story come alive. Think about each important moment in your story—what do the characters see, hear, smell, and feel? What exact words do they say? When Mark feels abandoned, what goes through his mind? When Jack runs ahead, what is he thinking? Your story would be much stronger if you developed these moments more fully.

Additionally, your conflict needs clearer motivation. Jack running ahead during a hike doesn't seem serious enough to destroy a friendship, especially since Mark had a map, a compass, and a rescue phone. You need to help readers understand why Mark reacted so strongly. Perhaps Jack had promised to stay together? Perhaps Mark had explained he was frightened? Building up the promises or expectations before the hike would make the breaking point feel more believable. Also, consider showing Jack's perspective—was he truly careless, or was this a misunderstanding? Right now, we only see Mark's view, which makes the story feel one-sided.

The ending needs the most work because it's where your main conflict should be explored and resolved. Instead of writing "His mouth threw offenses and accusations," show us the actual argument. Write the dialogue between the two friends. Let readers hear Mark's hurt feelings and Jack's possible explanations or apologies. This conversation is the heart of your story, yet it's currently missing. Finally, think about whether you want to end with them avoiding each other or whether there might be hope for understanding. A story about friendship usually benefits from showing characters learning something, even if they don't immediately make up.

Overall Score: 43/50

Section 2:

The Broken Compass

Mark stood silently ~~on the bottom~~ [at the base] of the hiking trail, his ~~finger~~ [fingers] tapping relentlessly ~~as he waited~~ [against his leg as he waited] for his best friend, Jack ~~to~~ [, to] arrive. Mark clutched an ancient compass as his body quivered uncontrollably in the cold. The exquisite artefact, a special gift from Jack, felt like a heat pack in his shivering hands, bringing back pleasant memories of their first hike together. As Mark desperately scanned his crumbled map, double-checking the route he was going to take, a shadowy figure shrouded in cold mist approached him, waving his hand energetically. A smile beamed on the person's face as he sprinted towards Mark, wrapping his arms ~~as~~ ~~he gave~~ [around him in] a warm embrace. Mark recognised him ~~spontaneously~~ [instantly]. It was Jack.

#1 Jack skipped onto the trail cheerfully as Mark sat on a frozen rock, his eyes still fixated on the map.

Jack impatiently exclaimed, "C'mon Mark! We don't have a lot of time. Don't waste our time looking at maps."

Mark muffled, "We must remain safe." He curled into a tight ball as his body quivered under layers of thick clothing. "I don't want to get lost, so that's why I'm prioritising safety first."

Jack groaned, as if he ~~lost~~ [had lost] all his energy. He questioned, "What is the point of hiking if there is no fun? If we make sure we are all safe, then there wouldn't even be any adventure!"

Mark stood up, stretching as he yawned tiredly, clearly fatigued. He searched for Jack, his eyes scanning the frozen land until a voice reverberated across the forest, saying "First to reach the peak wins!"

Worries of dread overwhelmed Mark as he thought about the insecurities of hiking alone. Throughout his entire life hiking, he ~~has~~ [had] always been with Jack, relying on his energy and support. Mark sighed deeply as his puffy boots touched the beginning of the endless hike, spanning farther than the eye could see. He wished Jack would understand him – his feelings, his fears, everything.

#2 Halfway ~~throughout~~ [through] the treacherous hike, Mark felt a sense of agony engulf him. He felt tired without his partner's enthusiasm and could not advance further. He lay on the ground, his face filled with fright and despair. Melancholy surrounded ~~as~~ [him as] he remembered the ~~awful~~ [awful] sight of Jack betraying him, abandoning him in this desolate wasteland. He reached for his emergency rescue phone but his hope was shattered as he spotted the system setup stuck at 50%. Back, before he started the hike, the signal was stable, but now? The signal was lost. He was hopeless, abandoned and utterly lost.

He stared at his bronze compass, the gift from Jack. Its glass face was cracked and its needle froze and twitched randomly between north and west. Mark's mind spun around, still surprised by his friend's choice. He asked himself, 'Was Jack a true friend? Was he loyal for leaving him isolated? Is this what friends do?'

His only option now, was to head back and go home. If he could make it.

#3 One week later, Mark's knuckles knocked on Jack's door, praying for a response. He was greeted with a familiar person, but a different face – one with a sorry look. Mark settled down onto a wooden chair, a scowl plastered onto his infuriated face. His mouth threw ~~offenses~~ [offences] and accusations at Jack, who replied equally as hard. Jack yelled at him to go away, and Mark headed towards the door, stomping furiously. He gave Jack one final nasty glare and slammed it shut, huffing and puffing. Ever since ~~that~~ [then], they have avoided each other.