

## Section 1

**#1: "The horizon rises before my eyes, the sun gleaming with euphoria and wonder. 7-year-old me, barely able to draw a decent picture, watches the sky."**

### Strengths:

- You've created a strong opening image that sets the scene well with the horizon and sun
- The detail about being 7 years old helps readers understand your perspective

**Unclear Connection Between Ideas** → The link between watching the horizon and then suddenly turning to the forest feels quite abrupt. You move from looking at the sky to walking into the forest without helping readers understand why you made this choice or what pulled you towards it. Adding a sentence that shows what made you turn around or what caught your attention would make the flow much smoother.

**Exemplar:** *"The horizon rises before my eyes, the sun gleaming with euphoria and wonder. But behind me, something rustles—the forest calls, dark and mysterious, making my 7-year-old self turn away from the bright sky."*

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**#2: "The salt and bitterness bombarded my tongue and taste buds, making me puke out of disgust. The trees laugh at me, then rustle their leaves. The grass teases my foolishness, then they groan in discomfort as the vomit that I spat out lands on their beautiful faces and bodies."**

### Strengths:

- The personification of trees and grass adds creativity to your description
- You use sensory details effectively with the taste description

**Pronoun Agreement Problem** → When you write "the grass teases my foolishness, then they groan," you switch from singular (grass) to plural (they), which creates confusion. Since grass is treated as one thing, you should stick with singular pronouns throughout. This kind of consistency helps readers follow your ideas without getting distracted by grammar bumps.

**Exemplar:** *"The grass teases my foolishness, then it groans in discomfort as the vomit I spat out lands on its beautiful blades."*

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**#3: "Inside the thicket, every step sinks into a carpet of rotting leaves, spongy underfoot, the scent rising heavier with each movement. The air clings to my skin, damp with the memory of last night's rain."**

**Strengths:**

- Your sensory language here is quite vivid and immersive, especially with "carpet of rotting leaves"
- The phrase "damp with the memory of last night's rain" shows sophisticated word choice

**Fragmentary Sentence Structure** → The phrase "spongy underfoot" sits awkwardly between two complete ideas, making the sentence feel choppy and disconnected. When you have descriptive details like this, they work better when fully woven into the sentence structure rather than dropped in as fragments. Connecting your ideas more smoothly will help the whole paragraph flow better and keep readers engaged.

**Exemplar:** *"Inside the thicket, every step sinks into a carpet of rotting leaves that feels spongy underfoot, and the scent rises heavier with each movement."*

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■ Your piece shows real promise in creating atmosphere and using descriptive language. The forest setting comes alive through your sensory details, and your use of personification adds personality to the natural world around you. However, your writing would benefit from smoother connections between paragraphs. Notice how you jump from the opening scene to the coin toss memory, then back to the forest—these shifts need clearer bridges to help readers follow along without confusion.

Additionally, think about the logical flow of events. You describe being inside the forest in great detail, then suddenly flashback to the coin toss, then return to being deep in the woods again. Reorganising these sections so the story moves forward in a clearer order would strengthen your narrative significantly. Also, work on maintaining consistency in your grammar, particularly with pronoun agreement and sentence completeness.

Your strongest paragraphs are the ones where you stay focused on the present moment in the forest, like when you discover the mushroom ring. These sections show depth because you're not just describing what you see, but also what it means to you. Try bringing this same thoughtfulness to your earlier paragraphs—instead of just listing what happens, explore why it matters or how it changes your understanding.

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**Overall Score: 43/50**

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## Section 2

#1 The horizon rises before my eyes, the sun gleaming with euphoria and wonder. 7-year-old me, barely able to draw a decent picture, watches the sky. ~~I turn around to the forest. Then I walk in. Just one step. Then another.~~ [Something pulls my attention away from the bright sky—I turn around to face the forest. My feet move almost on their own as I take one step towards the shadowy trees. Then another.]

~~The foul smell of mossy fungi envelops my nose, making it impossible to breathe freely.~~ [The foul smell of mossy fungi envelops my nose, making it nearly impossible to breathe freely.] I watch the trees and plants with my mouth wide open, until I realise [realise] that it was a mistake. 1 drop. 2 drops. 3 drops. Rainwater fell into my mouth before I could process what was happening. The salt and bitterness bombarded my tongue and taste buds, making me puke [vomit] out of disgust. #2 The trees laugh at me, then rustle their leaves. ~~The grass teases my foolishness, then they groan in discomfort as the vomit that I spat out lands on their beautiful faces and bodies.~~ [The grass teases my foolishness, then it groans in discomfort as the vomit I spat out lands on its beautiful blades.] I want to cry. But I don't. I hold the burden within me, hardly being able to keep it in a second longer. I guess you shouldn't gamble with your decisions, should you?

"If this lands on heads, I'll venture into that cursed forest for a whole day! But if it lands on tails, you have to do it, not me, OK?" I dared my friend with supreme confidence. He agreed, but maybe Lady Luck wasn't on my side that day. It landed on heads. I didn't want to do it, but my friend didn't care. He watched me go into that forest. Fate himself is laughing his head off at my stupidity!

~~#3 Inside the thicket, every step sinks into a carpet of rotting leaves, spongy underfoot, the scent rising heavier with each movement.~~ [every step sinks into a carpet of rotting leaves that feels spongy underfoot, and the scent rises heavier with each movement.] The air clings to my skin, damp with the memory of last night's rain. Droplets bead on the leaves above, trembling awake with my shuffling and sending a cold shiver down my back when they land. My tongue still tingles from that first assault, but curiosity fights through the discomfort, urging me deeper. My eyes, straining to pierce the green gloom, latch onto a faint patch of sunlight where the canopy parts, a golden promise painted across the forest floor.

~~The silence now grows, punctuated only by the persistent thump of my own heart and the distant caw of a magpie.~~ [The silence deepens, punctuated only by the persistent thump of my own heart and the distant caw of a magpie.] Branches twist overhead, some drooping low enough to brush my cheeks, slick and clammy. With every breath, the taste of the forest changes, earthy and acrid, mingling with the iron tang of fear. I try to make sense of the shapes around me, half expecting a beast to emerge, but what I find instead is a tiny mushroom ring, so perfectly symmetrical it looks unnatural, almost like a crown left for a fairy king.

For a moment, unease falls away. I kneel, ignoring the squelch of wet grass against my knees, and gently touch the ring. The damp earth is cool and yields to my finger's pressure. In that instant, the line between horror and awe blurs [—]the forest is not just a test or a punishment, but a hidden world, one that laughs, yes, but also accepts, witnesses, and forgives. I listen as the wind moves, whispering secrets through the leaves: "Every explorer is frightened. Every explorer is brave."

As I stumble back ~~toward~~ [towards] the edge of the woods, the sun glances off the horizon, its angle changed, but its colour still bursting with promise. The foul air is behind me. My hands are dirty, my knees stained, and my mouth is cleansed not by water, but by wonder. I see the same horizon again, but this time, instead of only euphoria and wonder, there is knowledge, a secret applause echoing from root to sky, a silent agreement between child and forest. The same sun that shone is now shining, once again, in the same sky.