

Section 1

#1: "A rusted swing set softly creaked. The peeling yellow paint on the small slide. The dilapidated monkey bars."

Strengths: Your piece uses vivid, specific vocabulary like "rusted," "peeling," and "dilapidated" that creates a strong visual picture of decay. These word choices effectively convey the neglected state of the playground without needing to tell readers directly how Susan feels about it.

→ Fragmented Structure: Your opening uses sentence fragments rather than complete sentences. Whilst fragments can be stylistically effective, the lack of a main verb makes these lines feel disconnected. The sentences "The peeling yellow paint on the small slide. The dilapidated monkey bars" function as lists rather than flowing descriptions that pull readers into the scene.

Exemplar: "A rusted swing set softly creaked as peeling yellow paint flaked from the small slide, and the dilapidated monkey bars stood silent against the fading light."

#2: "In the morning, Susan browsed through her memories. 'Must have been the horror movie I watched that day.' she shrugged."

Strengths: Your piece attempts to show Susan's emotional state through her rationalisation rather than stating it directly, which aligns well with the task requirement. The dialogue provides character voice and suggests she's trying to dismiss something unsettling.

→ Weak Causal Connection: The transition between Susan's physical reaction (shuddering, closing her eyes) and her morning rationalisation feels rushed. Readers don't understand what happened during the night or why she's suddenly trying to explain away her fear. The leap from terror to dismissal needs more scaffolding to feel believable.

Exemplar: "By morning, Susan had convinced herself it was nothing more than lingering fear from the horror film she'd watched. She shrugged at her own foolishness, yet something about the playground still gnawed at her."

#3: "Susan furrowed her brow. A deserted playground. Her twin sister. Jigsaw puzzle pieces clicked inside her brain. Susan's face suddenly lost all its colour."

Strengths: Your piece uses the metaphor of "jigsaw puzzle pieces clicked inside her brain" to show a moment of realisation without explicitly stating Susan is remembering something. The physical

description of colour draining from her face effectively conveys shock through action rather than emotion words.

→ Inconsistent Pacing: Your piece shifts rapidly between short, punchy sentences and longer ones, which disrupts the rhythm. The fragments "A deserted playground. Her twin sister" work for emphasis, but when combined with longer sentences immediately after, the effect becomes disjointed rather than building suspense effectively.

Exemplar: "As the jigsaw pieces clicked into place—the deserted playground, her twin sister—Susan's face lost all its colour, and the realisation hit her like a physical blow."

■ Your piece tackles an ambitious and emotionally complex story. You've woven together the prompt's requirements by making the playground central to a revelation about trauma and memory. However, your narrative would benefit from smoother transitions between scenes and clearer connections between events. The jump from Susan's initial fear at the playground to her dream revelation feels sudden; readers need more bridge moments to follow her emotional journey. Additionally, when you introduce the childhood flashback, consider spending more time there so readers experience the accident's horror alongside Susan rather than hearing about it in summary. Your ending is touching, but it arrives quite quickly—giving yourself more space to explore Susan's emotional processing before she disappears would deepen the impact. Finally, ensure your sentence structures work together to create rhythm; mixing fragments with longer sentences is effective, but do so intentionally to build tension rather than by accident.

SCORE: 40/50

Section 2

A rusted swing set softly creaked. The peeling yellow paint on the small slide. The dilapidated monkey bars.

Susan shuddered. She shook her head and closed her eyes again.

~~In the morning, Susan browsed through her memories.~~ [The following morning, Susan tried to make sense of her memories.] "Must [must] have been the horror movie I watched that day." ~~she~~ [She] shrugged.

...

A dark cloak covered the sky and night arrived. ~~Susan curled up in bed, playing with the green crochet scarf her aunt made for her. She then slid into her heavy blanket and drifted off into sleep.~~ [Susan curled

up in bed, the green crochet scarf her aunt made wrapped around her shoulders. She pulled the heavy blanket close and drifted into sleep.]

...

"Oh, little sister it's so good to see you again."

"I-i..."

Susan gaped at the silvery outline of a girl. The other child looked exactly like her. Same dark, maroon eyes, same silky blonde hair, same long, reproachful eyelashes, same smooth, perfect face.

"Who—"

~~"Did you really forget?"~~[How could you forget?]"

Susan furrowed her brow. A deserted playground. Her twin sister. Jigsaw puzzle pieces clicked inside her brain. Susan's face suddenly lost all its colour. A once flawless feature now looked pale and shocked. Susan's eyes spun and seconds later, she appeared where she once was eight years ago.

"You'll never catch me Sarah!" two infants that were identical chased each other around the playground, both of their faces plastered with ear to ear grins. ~~The shorter of the two zigzagged between equipment, running away from her sister.~~ [The shorter twin zigzagged between the equipment, fleeing from her sister.] With a squeal, she leapt off a platform and landed confidently on the sawdust pit. Her twin gulped and stared down from the stand.

"Come on Sarah, don't be a wimp!"

"Okay Susan." The taller girl clumsily jumped off...

CRACK!

Screams of agony.

Ambulance sirens.

Trauma made her forget. Sarah's death. Tears streamed out of Susan's eyes.

"It's okay Susan," whispered Sarah, smiling slightly. "I can go to Heaven now. My only regret is that I will miss running in the playground with you." With a flash of light, the ghost of the girl disappeared down a glowing door.

Susan beamed at where her sister stood, and she too disappeared. Now she was back in bed, with the green crochet scarf.