
Term 4 – 2025: Week 4 Writing Homework | Year 5 Scholarship

Section 1:

#1: "It was just before the last bit of sunlight seeped through, waving a last goodbye. 'Don't you think it's too dangerous?' father had said, his eyes were tense with worry."

Strengths: Your opening line creates a vivid moment in time with sensory detail—the image of sunlight "seeping through" and "waving a last goodbye" immediately sets a reflective, somewhat ominous tone. Your dialogue introduction is natural and grounds us in a specific family conflict that feels genuine.

→ Unclear pronoun reference and tense inconsistency. The phrase "waving a last goodbye" lacks a clear subject—is it the sunlight waving, or something else? Additionally, "his eyes were tense" uses an imprecise verb; eyes themselves cannot be tense. Your writing would be stronger if you clarified what is doing the waving and chose a verb that more accurately describes the emotional state you're conveying.

Exemplar: *It was just before the last bit of sunlight seeped through, casting a final farewell across the horizon. "Don't you think it's too dangerous?" father had said, his gaze sharp with worry.*

#2: "The park was a monument to decay; the stench of unknown rotting objects was unbearable. Everything looked as if it was stopped in time. The seesaw stayed motionless, as the swing swayed in the wind, an endless pattern of going back and forth. Back and forth, back and forth."

Strengths: Your sensory description is compelling—the stench and visual imagery create an unsettling atmosphere. The repetition of "back and forth, back and forth" is an effective technique that builds tension and unease.

→ Repetition without thematic deepening. While the repetition of "back and forth" creates mood, it doesn't meaningfully advance your story or connect to the larger narrative about Blake or the narrator's internal struggle. The phrase feels inserted for effect rather than serving a clear purpose within the overall arc. Consider whether this repetition reveals something about the character's state of mind or foreshadows what's to come.

Exemplar: *The seesaw remained still, but the swing swayed endlessly—back and forth, back and forth—a rhythm that mirrored the anxiety building inside me.*

#3: "As I slowly fell to the bottom of the lake, the lake whispered into my ears that they did not kill Blake. He killed himself. I went to ease and let the pain trapped in my heart free."

Strengths: Your twist—the revelation that Blake's death was suicide rather than an accident—is a striking emotional turning point. The concept of the lake "whispering" the truth is an imaginative way to convey how the narrator receives this knowledge.

→ Unclear cause and effect, and grammatical confusion. It's unclear why the narrator falls into the lake or what triggers this moment. Additionally, "I went to ease" is grammatically unclear—do you mean the narrator surrendered to something, or accepted the truth? The final phrase "let the pain trapped in my heart free" needs restructuring for clarity. Your conclusion feels rushed; the narrator moves from drowning to acceptance without showing us the emotional journey between these two moments.

Exemplar: *As I sank deeper, the water seemed to carry a truth I'd never known: Blake had chosen to end his own life. In that moment, I stopped fighting—I surrendered to the weight of understanding, and finally released the anguish I'd been holding.*

■ Your piece grasps at something profound—a teenager discovering a painful family secret at the moment of their own crisis—but the connection between these elements needs strengthening. Right now, the story jumps between different moments and ideas without helping your reader understand why each part matters. You've created an atmospheric setting and an intriguing mystery, yet you haven't fully shown us how the narrator's actions, thoughts, and feelings connect to one another. Additionally, the final moment feels sudden; you've taken your reader through a drowning and a revelation but haven't given them time to sit with what it all means. Your writing would deepen significantly if you slowed down in key moments to explore your character's inner thoughts, especially around why they went to the lake and what the discovery about Blake truly changes for them. Also, clarify the sequence of events so your reader can follow the logic of what's happening and why it matters to the story you're telling.

Overall Score: 41/50

Section 2:

It was just before the last bit of sunlight seeped through, ~~waving a last goodbye~~ [casting one final farewell]. ~~"Don't you think it's too dangerous?" father had said, his eyes were tense with worry.~~ ["Don't you think it's too dangerous?" Father had said, his gaze sharp with worry.]

I had asked to take a nighttime stroll, a simple question that filled every crease in my parents' brain with doubt.

"At this time? When you can see nearly nothing? What happens if you make the wrong step?"

I insisted on going, pushing past the door and past the picture of Blake.

Blake had died due to drowning in a lake. That's all I know. My parents would never sell information about him to other people, not even me.

"Be careful, James!" my mother called out from behind me.

I walked all the way to a nearby park.

The park was a monument to decay; the stench of unknown rotting objects was unbearable. Everything looked as if ~~it was stopped~~ [it had stopped] in time. The seesaw stayed motionless, as the swing swayed in the wind, an endless pattern of going back and forth.

Back and forth, back and forth.

Near the park was a lake, the imposing water ~~gushing down in a rush~~ [flowing with quiet power]. The surface was impossibly perfect, as if the shine of the stars had been given to the water.

I was drawn to the entrancing lake, slowly making my way towards the water.

It was deep. Probably about 2 metres.

I suddenly fell in, my whole body flailing around.

Or that was what I thought.

It was my heart. My heart was trying to burst out of my chest.

My legs and arms had gone numb.

This is the end.

As I slowly fell to the bottom of the lake, the lake whispered into my ears that they did not kill Blake. He killed himself.

~~I went to ease and let the pain trapped in my heart free.~~ [I surrendered to the weight of this truth, releasing the anguish I'd held for so long.]