

## Section 1

**#1: "An empty playground at dusk. The playground now seemed barren and unfamiliar, desolate, unlike the thriving, full of laughter playground Darren recognized."**

### Strengths:

- Your opening establishes a clear contrast between past and present, which helps the reader understand Darren's emotional state through the physical setting.
- The word choices like "barren" and "desolate" effectively convey the mood you're aiming for.

→ **Repetition and sentence structure clarity** — Your piece uses "playground" three times in quick succession ("empty playground," "The playground now," "playground Darren recognized"), which makes the sentences feel cluttered. Additionally, the phrase "full of laughter playground" is awkward—readers stumble over it because the adjective placement disrupts the flow. When you repeat key words this frequently, it weakens the impact of your description.

*Exemplar: "An empty playground at dusk. The playground now seemed barren and unfamiliar, desolate, unlike the thriving place full of laughter that Darren once knew."*

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**#2: "Cracked glass sat on the floor, too weak to move, robbed of its strength by the elements. It had seen people walk passed, but never one crouched and healed it, everyone who skipped, jumped, or walked passed it had seen it, but all pretended to ignore it."**

### Strengths:

- Your personification of the cracked glass creates an emotional connection and mirrors Darren's isolation effectively.
- The layering of details (people walking past, skipping, jumping) builds a sense of abandonment.

→ **Sentence construction and clarity** — Your piece contains a long, complicated sentence that becomes hard to follow: "It had seen people walk passed, but never one crouched and healed it, everyone who skipped, jumped, or walked passed it had seen it, but all pretended to ignore it." The sentence repeats ideas ("people walk passed" appears twice, "had seen it" appears twice), and the structure is confusing. Breaking this into clearer sentences would help your meaning shine through without losing the power of your idea.

*Exemplar: "It had seen people walk past, but none had ever stopped to heal it. Everyone who skipped, jumped, or walked by saw the cracked glass, yet all chose to ignore it."*

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**#3: "But when the sun rose the next day , as time passed, the posters were remade, more colourful than ever, children came, making the playground colourful yet again, the creaks became delightful squeals, jumpers were picked up, brushed off, and put on again."**

**Strengths:**

- Your shift in tone here effectively signals hope and renewal—a counterpoint to the despair in earlier sections.
- The parallel structure (posters remade, children came, creaks became squeals, jumpers picked up) creates rhythm and momentum.

→ **Clarity of connection to Darren's journey** — Your piece introduces recovery at the playground but doesn't clearly show how this connects to Darren's personal transformation. The sentence moves quickly through these positive changes without explaining whether Darren witnesses them, whether he participates, or whether this is symbolic of his own internal change. The reader is left wondering: is this literal or metaphorical? This ambiguity weakens the emotional impact of your turning point.

*Exemplar: "But when the sun rose the next day, as time passed, the playground transformed. The posters were remade, more colourful than ever. Children returned, their laughter filling the space. The creaks became delightful squeals, and abandoned jumpers were brushed off and worn again. Darren watched, beginning to understand."*

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■ Your piece shows strong instincts for using setting to reflect character emotion, and your descriptions are vivid. However, your writing would benefit from clearer sentence structure—some of your sentences are doing too much work, which makes them hard for readers to follow. Also, the connection between the playground's transformation and Darren's own growth needs to be more explicit. Right now, it feels like two separate ideas happening at the same time rather than one meaningful change. Finally, consider whether every comparison in your writing is doing essential work; sometimes stepping back helps readers feel the emotion more directly. Work on breaking complicated sentences into shorter ones, and make sure each idea connects clearly to Darren's story.

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**Score: 40/50**

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## **Section 2**

An empty playground at dusk. The playground now seemed barren and unfamiliar, desolate, ~~unlike the thriving, full of laughter playground Darren recognized~~ [unlike the thriving, joyful playground Darren once knew]. It was almost unrecognisable, a hollow gale blowing past him in an eerie way. He gazed upon the abandoned structures, which were now empty after school. The gloomy environment created a ~~sombre~~ [sombre] mood, reminding Darren of what he had done.

The swing creaked in the wind like a moan. A chorus of snaps and creaks joined it. Soon, a symphony of groans started. The sunlight was already fading, "another day wasted, another day gone," thought Darren, reflecting on the events of today. He had ruined it all. If not for him, things would not have been this way. ~~Cracked glass sat on the floor, too weak to move, robbed of its strength by the elements. It had seen people walk passed, but never one crouched and healed it, everyone who skipped, jumped, or walked passed it had seen it, but all pretended to ignore it.~~ [Cracked glass lay scattered on the floor, drained of strength by the elements. It had witnessed countless passers-by—those who skipped, jumped, or walked past—yet none had ever stopped to mend it; all had chosen to ignore it.]

Abandoned school hats and jumpers sat lonely on the ground, mourning to be used again, crying out to Darren to use them. Strewn across them ~~grass~~ [were] grass and rocks, covering what may have used to be useful, hopeful, or remembered. Posters lay beaten and ripped on the ground, hunched over ~~an~~ [like] old man, finally succumbing to the endless assaults of rain, storm, or sun. Just like Darren's life. A pathway strayed from the school, the start polished, cared for, perfect, but as Darren walked and walked, the smooth stone split, grass protruded from it, and cobblestone eventually replaced it. Sharp rocks spiked from the ground, like the comforts of youth before adulthood.

~~But~~ [Then] when the sun rose the next day[,] as time passed, the posters were remade, more colourful than ever, children came, making the playground colourful yet again, the creaks became delightful squeals, jumpers were picked up, brushed off, and put on again. Sunlight filled the entire playground, and as days passed, the road was rejuvenated once again, tar filling the cracks. And Darren would realise-but not from revisiting the playground, but seeing his own playground. [—not from revisiting the playground, but from seeing his own.]

The last rays of sunlight, the last rays of hope were shining through the hollow, useless frame of the slide. The sign that was hammered crookedly to the bricks of the withered school office that read "Keep going! You can do it!" was now on the brim of collapse, rusty and rotten. The final rays of sunlight faded, leaving Darren to consider for himself, as the thick blanket of darkness folded over the world to start another endless cycle of suffering-or [—]would it change?