

COMPOCOACH

Composition Grading Report

TOPIC

Being Courageous

TOTAL SCORE

24 /36

604 words

STUDENT

Aiden Lee

GENERATED

14 June 2026

SUBMITTED

8 May 2026



Being Courageous

PSLE English Composition Feedback from cher.ai

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CONTENT

10 /18

Band 3

LANGUAGE & ORG

14 /18

Band 4

TOTAL

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604 words

SNAPSHOT

Overall summary

You have a wonderful command of vocabulary and you clearly know how to set up an engaging, high-stakes conflict! The single most impactful change you can make is to ensure your main character drives the theme of the story, rather than relying on a passer-by to save the day. When the topic is "Being Courageous," let your protagonist be the one to show courage and solve the problem, even if they are terrified while doing it. Keep up the fantastic effort—your descriptive writing is a joy to read!



BANDS

Assessment by area

AREA 1 Topic & Relevance BAND 2	AREA 2 Interest & Development BAND 3	AREA 3 Accuracy of Language BAND 4	AREA 4 Vocabulary & Sentence Structures BAND 4	AREA 5 Organisation BAND 3
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2

BAND

AREA 1

Topic & Relevance

STRENGTHS

You clearly understood what courage looks like in the context of school bullying. The threat from Hugh sets up a compelling situation where courage is desperately needed, and Jimmy's internal thoughts ("How I wish I could grow a spine and stand up to that bully") show that he understands what is required of him.

WHY THIS BAND

Your story falls into the **"convenient stranger" trap**. For the topic to be fully addressed, your main character (Jimmy) needs to be the one grappling with the theme. Because a passer-by appears out of nowhere at the end to save the day, Jimmy never actually has to be courageous. In fact, you gave the theme explicitly to the passer-by at the end: **"Thank you for being courageous"**. Because the protagonist doesn't drive the theme, the topic isn't meaningfully developed.

HOW TO IMPROVE

Let Jimmy be the hero of his own story! Instead of a passer-by intervening, show Jimmy finding his voice when he is cornered at the playground.

Even with his knees trembling and a stinging pain in his cheek, Jimmy looked Hugh in the eye. "No," he said, his voice surprisingly steady. "I'm not giving you my money, and I'm not letting you bully me anymore."

LITMUS TEST

PROBLEMATIC

I (Jimmy) demonstrated courage by standing by while a passer-by bravely chased the bullies away.

The main character is completely passive during the climax. The theme of courage is acted out by a random passer-by, meaning the protagonist never actually grapples with the topic himself.



IMAGE INTEGRATION

IMAGE	STATUS	EVIDENCE
A boy standing over another boy	INTEGRAL	The image perfectly matches the climax where Hugh stands over Jimmy at the playground, slaps him, and demands the money. It effectively drives the central conflict of your story.

3

BAND

AREA 2

Interest & Development

STRENGTHS

You build up excellent tension in the beginning. The scene where Hugh threatens Jimmy during recess sets clear, believable stakes (thirty dollars) and makes the reader genuinely worry about what will happen after school.

WHY THIS BAND

The climax is resolved by a coincidence—a passer-by who just happens to be watching. This makes the ending feel a bit unearned because the conflict is solved *for* Jimmy, not *by* him. Jimmy's reaction to the slap (breaking into loud wails) also makes him feel very passive right at the emotional turning point of the story.

HOW TO IMPROVE

Give the climax more weight by making it a real turning point for Jimmy. If he is too scared to fight back, maybe his true courage is standing his ground and refusing to cry, or deciding to sprint straight to the discipline master's office despite Hugh's threats. This gives your character a complete journey from fear to bravery.

4

BAND

AREA 3

Accuracy of Language

STRENGTHS

Your writing is mostly accurate, and you have strong control over your tenses. Your sentences flow well, and the few errors present do not make it difficult to follow your story.

WHY THIS BAND

You have a few **dialogue punctuation errors**, particularly when the dialogue tag comes after the quote (e.g., **"go." Hugh snapped.**). You also confused the phrasal verb "stood me up" with "stood up for me", which changes the meaning of your ending completely!



HOW TO IMPROVE

Remember that when a dialogue tag comes after a quote, the full stop changes to a comma inside the quotation marks.

Incorrect: "Once I receive it, I will let you go." Hugh snapped. **Correct:** "Once I receive it, I will let you go," Hugh snapped.

Also, always double-check phrasal verbs! "Stood me up" means a friend failed to show up for a meeting, while "stood up for me" means someone protected you.

4

BAND

AREA 4

Vocabulary & Sentence Structures

STRENGTHS

You used some excellent, expressive vocabulary! Phrases like "**raucous name-calling**", "**stealing furtive glances**", and "**immobilised his vocal chords**" paint a vivid picture and elevate your writing to a high standard.

WHY THIS BAND

While your vocabulary is strong, there are a few moments where you could use "**show, don't tell**" to make Jimmy's emotions even more visceral, instead of just naming his reactions (like "**withered there and then**").

HOW TO IMPROVE

Instead of telling us Jimmy felt terror using abstract words, show us his physical reactions. For example, instead of "**terror immobilised his vocal chords**", you could write:

His throat tightened, and the words he wanted to say dissolved into a dry croak.

This makes the fear feel immediate and real to the reader!

3

BAND

AREA 5

Organisation

STRENGTHS

You used paragraphs to signal changes in time and scene, such as moving from recess to dismissal. Your opening drops us right into the conflict, which is a great hook that grabs the reader's attention immediately.



WHY THIS BAND

There is a **sequencing error** between Paragraphs 5 and 6. In Paragraph 5, Jimmy is already at the playground (“**He paced up and down at the playground**”), but the very next sentence in Paragraph 6 says, “**Once he reached the playground...**” Also, Paragraph 4 is a single sentence split awkwardly from the rest of Jimmy's continuous thought in Paragraph 5.

HOW TO IMPROVE

Read through your composition to check the logical flow of character movements. If Jimmy is already pacing at the playground in Paragraph 5, Paragraph 6 should focus purely on the bullies arriving:

Suddenly, three familiar shadows stretched across the sand. Jimmy's heart skipped a beat upon seeing their arrival.



MARKED COMPOSITION

Annotated writing

11 errors and 3 suggestions are shown inline.

■ Error ■ Correction ■ Suggestion

"There goes the Wimp! What a loser!" Hugh and his friends would call out whenever Jimmy walked by. The rest of his friends would cackle and join in the raucous name-calling. There was nothing else Jimmy could do but sigh and chide himself for not having been vigilant enough to avoid Hugh and his gang. "How I wish I could grow a spine and stand up to that bully," Jimmy muttered to himself, wondering despairingly if the victimisation would ever come to an end.

It was time for recess. Jimmy sat on his seat quietly reading a book when he suddenly saw three shadows appearing on his table that looked like Hugh and the rest of his friends. "Why must it always be me? Can't it be someone else?" Jimmy thought to himself. His head hung low in disappointment. Hugh leaned over and glared at him with bulging eyes. Baring his teeth in an ugly snarl, he hissed, "Meet me at the playground after school. Do not come without thirty dollars. Understand?" Jimmy would have withered there and then SHOW-NOT-TELL. His quickening breaths caught in his chest.

"Ringgg!" the school bell rang. It was dismissal. Jimmy remembered what Hugh had said to him during recess. "I only have ten dollars now. What if I just go back home now and pretend that nothing happened?" Jimmy muttered to himself. another Another PUNCTUATION voice came in, 'I would be dead meat tomorrow if I do not meet Hugh at the playground later, though.' Jimmy was in a dilemma.

After a while, Jimmy finally made his decision. "I will just tell Hugh that I will pay him the twenty dollars tomorrow. tomorrow. DIALOGUE-PUNCT

It is better late than never. Right? he "Right?" he DIALOGUE-PUNCT muttered to himself. His heart pounded hard and fast as every step brought him closer to the playground. He paced up and down at the playground, stealing furtive glances for Hugh glances at Hugh GRAMMAR and his friends.



Once he reached the playground, Jimmy's heart skipped a beat upon seeing their arrival. "Where is my thirty dollars? Once I receive it, I will let you go." Hugh go," Hugh **DIALOGUE-PUNCT** snapped.

"Oh no, I only have ten dollars with me now... but I will return you the remaining twenty dollars to-tomorrow!" Jimmy's voice frozen froze **TENSE** in his throat as terror immobilised his vocal chords. Hugh's face turned red with anger. He clenched his fist and the veins on his arm and hand showed. He raised one hand and dealt a stinging blow on Jimmy's face. A red palm print appeared instantly.

"Ouch!" Jimmy holwed howled **SPELLING** in pain. His eyes reddened and turned moist. He broke out into loud uncontrollable sobs which escalated into wails.

Little did they know there had been a passer-by who had watched the whole entire scene **SENTENCE-VARIETY**. She was completely bewildered by the sight. "Hey! Stop what you are doing now before I report this incident to your teachers!" bellowed the passer-by.

Hugh and his friends blinked continuously and stopped whatever they were doing. The passer-by unblinking passer-by's unblinking **GRAMMAR** eyes flashed with anger. "What are you doing to the poor boy? People your age should not be bullying others. Instead, you should go home and focus on your studies! Now, go home and leave this boy alone!" she snapped.

The three boys lowered their eyes and scampered off. After seeing them gone, Jimmy heaved a sigh of relief and could breathe more easily. "Are you ok-ay okay **SPELLING**? Your face seems very red." the red," the **DIALOGUE-PUNCT** passer-by questioned. "Yes, I am all right, all thanks to you. If you had not stood me up stood up for me **PHRASAL-VERB**, I wonder what they would do to me! Thank you for being courageous **WORD-CHOICE** and your help!" Jimmy said.

Error breakdown

Dialogue-Punct **4**

Spelling **2**

Grammar **2**

Tense **1**

Phrasal-Verb **1**

Punctuation **1**



PART TWO

A*Star Model Composition

A complete model composition for the same topic, with craft notes, vocabulary, and suggestions on how to adapt it for adjacent topics.

TOPIC

Being Courageous

MODEL LENGTH

438 words



438-WORD MODEL COMPOSITION

A*Star model composition with detailed annotations

TOPIC

Being Courageous

IMAGES USED

- ① A boy standing over another boy

ANNOTATED MODEL COMPO

Composition with craft notes

- 1 The school field was baking under the **merciless** afternoon sun. I sat on my usual bench, perfectly content to remain invisible. Blending into the background was my speciality, especially when Rex was prowling the compound.

OPENING-HOOK “The school field was baking under the merciless afternoon sun.” - Starts immediately with setting and atmosphere, using an evocative adjective-noun pairing.

CHARACTERISATION “perfectly content to remain invisible” - Establishes the protagonist's cowardly or timid nature, setting up a clear character arc.

VOCABULARY “prowling the compound” - Compares the bully to a predatory animal, creating immediate tension.

- 2 A sudden **commotion** near the bicycle shed shattered the quiet. I squinted against the glare and spotted a familiar, **hulking** figure. It was Rex. He had cornered Toby, a **scrawny** Primary Four boy who was clutching his wallet to his chest.

VOCABULARY “shattered the quiet” - A strong, violent verb choice to interrupt the peaceful opening scene.

CHARACTERISATION “clutching his wallet to his chest” - Shows the younger boy's vulnerability and fear through a physical action.



3 My stomach tied itself into a tight knot.

DRAMATIC-SHORT “My stomach tied itself into a tight knot.” - A short paragraph dedicated to a single physical sensation, marking the shift from observation to personal distress.

SHOW-NOT-TELL “My stomach tied itself into a tight knot.” - Shows fear physically rather than simply stating 'I was afraid'.

4 Every instinct screamed at me to look away. If I interfered, I would become his next target. I gathered my bag, ready to slink back to the safety of the classroom. Then, Rex shoved Toby hard. The younger boy stumbled backwards, his hands flailing, before hitting the rough concrete with a sickening thud.

TENSION “ready to slink back to the safety of the classroom” - Shows the protagonist's internal conflict and initial choice to be a bystander, making his eventual intervention more impactful.

VOCABULARY “sickening thud” - An evocative sensory pairing that makes the violence feel visceral and real.

5 Rex loomed over the fallen boy, his face contorted into a ferocious scowl. He jabbed a thick finger at Toby.

IMAGE-INTEGRATION “Rex loomed over the fallen boy” - Directly incorporates the exam image of a boy standing over another, using it as the catalyst for the protagonist's intervention.

VOCABULARY “contorted into a ferocious scowl” - Vivid physical description that escalates the threat level.

6 “Hand it over, before I make you,” Rex snarled, his voice dripping with malice.

DIALOGUE ““Hand it over, before I make you,” Rex snarled” - Uses a strong dialogue tag to convey aggression.

LITERARY-DEVICE “dripping with malice” - A metaphor that makes the threat feel heavy, wet, and poisonous.

7 Toby was trembling like a leaf in the wind, tears welling in his eyes. Seeing him so helpless sparked something unexpected inside me. The fear was still there, but indignation flared hotter. My legs moved before my brain could stop them. I sprinted across the concrete and forced myself between the two of them.

LITERARY-DEVICE “trembling like a leaf in the wind” - A simile that emphasises Toby's extreme physical fear and fragility.

CHARACTERISATION “The fear was still there, but indignation flared hotter.” - Bridges the emotional shift. The protagonist does not magically stop being afraid; his anger at the injustice simply outweighs his fear.



8 "Leave him alone," I demanded.

DIALOGUE *"Leave him alone," I demanded.* - A direct, simple line of dialogue that marks the protagonist's point of no return.

9 My voice cracked, betraying my terror, but I planted my feet firmly. Rex blinked, clearly taken aback by this sudden intrusion. He sized me up, his fists clenching and unclenching. My palms were slick with sweat. I could feel my pulse drumming in my ears, deafeningly loud. I braced myself for the inevitable blow.

SHOW-NOT-TELL *"My voice cracked, betraying my terror"* - Reveals fear through an involuntary physical reaction (voice cracking) despite the brave action.

SHOW-NOT-TELL *"pulse drumming in my ears, deafeningly loud"* - A metaphor for a racing heart that puts the reader inside the protagonist's panicked sensory experience.

10 "Are you going to be a problem, Leo?" he sneered, taking half a step forward.

DIALOGUE *"Are you going to be a problem, Leo?"* - Rex's dialogue is manipulative and challenging, escalating the tension before the resolution.

11 I did not flinch. Instead, I stared straight into his eyes and raised my chin. A few passing students had stopped, their eyes fixed on the unfolding drama. Sensing the growing audience, Rex scoffed loudly. He muttered a string of insults under his breath, spun on his heel, and stalked off towards the canteen.

CHARACTERISATION *"stared straight into his eyes and raised my chin"* - A physical gesture of defiance that contrasts completely with the boy who wanted to be invisible in paragraph one.

TENSION *"Sensing the growing audience, Rex scoffed loudly."* - Provides a logical reason for the bully to back down, keeping the plot realistic.



- 12 The breath I had been holding rushed out of me, and my shoulders sagged. My legs wobbled dangerously as the adrenaline drained away. I turned to Toby and offered him a hand, pulling him up from the unforgiving ground. He brushed the dust off his uniform and mumbled a quick word of thanks.

SHOW-NOT-TELL “The breath I had been holding rushed out of me, and my shoulders sagged.” - Shows immense relief physically. The tension leaves the character’s body.

LITERARY-DEVICE “unforgiving ground” - Personification of the concrete, subtly highlighting the harshness of the situation Toby was in.

- 13 As we walked back to the classroom together, I realised something important. Being courageous did not mean being unafraid. It meant feeling completely terrified, yet choosing to do the right thing anyway.

RESOLUTION “It meant feeling completely terrified, yet choosing to do the right thing anyway.” - A mature, unpretentious reflection that perfectly defines the theme based on the actions just shown.

THEME-WORD “Being courageous did not mean being unafraid.” - Integrates the exact theme word into the concluding thoughts naturally.

VOCABULARY

Words and phrases to learn

NO.	WORD / PHRASE	DEFINITION
1	merciless	showing no pity; in this context, unpleasantly hot and glaring
2	speciality	something a person is particularly good at doing
3	prowling	moving about restlessly and stealthily, especially in search of prey
4	commotion	a state of confused and noisy disturbance
5	hulking	large, heavy, or clumsy in a threatening way
6	scrawny	unattractively thin and bony
7	tied itself into a tight knot	a sensation of extreme nervousness or anxiety felt in the stomach
8	slink	to move quietly with gliding steps, in a way that suggests fear or a desire to escape attention



NO.	WORD / PHRASE	DEFINITION
9	sickening thud	a heavy sound of impact that is so forceful it causes distress to the listener
10	loomed	appeared as a large, threatening shape
11	ferocious scowl	a facial expression showing extreme anger and aggression
12	dripping with malice	spoken with obvious, concentrated evil intent
13	trembling like a leaf in the wind	shaking uncontrollably due to intense fear
14	indignation	anger or annoyance provoked by what is perceived as unfair treatment
15	pulse drumming in my ears	a heartbeat so fast and forceful that the sound echoes in one's head
16	spun on his heel	turned around abruptly to walk away
17	stalked off	walked away in a stiff, angry, or proud manner
18	unforgiving ground	describing a hard surface that offers no comfort or softness upon impact



OTHER TOPICS

Adapt for other topics

Doing What is Right

This composition requires almost no structural changes. Swap the theme word in the final paragraph: "I realised something important. Doing what was right did not mean being unafraid. It meant feeling completely terrified, yet taking a stand anyway." The plot of intervening in a bullying incident perfectly illustrates this theme.

Overcoming Fear

Keep the plot identical but slightly amplify the protagonist's fearful nature in the opening paragraph (e.g., "Fear had dictated my entire primary school life..."). In the final paragraph, adjust the reflection: "I had finally overcome my fear. It did not magically disappear, but for the first time, I had refused to let it control me."

A Time I Helped Someone

The core action is already about helping Toby. Change the concluding paragraph to focus on the impact of the assistance rather than the nature of courage: "As Toby smiled and thanked me, I realised that helping someone in need was always worth the risk. It was a choice I would never regret."

An Unforgettable Incident in School

Modify the opening hook to introduce it as a memory: "Whenever I pass by the school bicycle shed, the memory of that sweltering Tuesday afternoon comes rushing back." The climax remains the same. Adjust the ending to state why it was unforgettable: "That afternoon changed me forever. I was no longer the boy who blended into the background."