

Year 4 Reading Comprehension: The Mystery of the Star-Chart

Learning objective: To analyse and infer meaning from a narrative text, identifying character motivations and descriptive techniques.

Read the passage below carefully. Answer all questions in full sentences, using evidence from the text where possible. You have 45 minutes to complete this assessment.

Nova the owl adjusted her spectacles, her talons tapping rhythmically against the sturdy oak branch. Above, the night sky was a sprawling velvet canvas, punctured by the brilliant, flickering light of a thousand distant suns. Tonight was the night of the Great Alignment. Beside her, Max the monkey was frantically scribbling numbers onto a scrap of parchment, his brow furrowed in concentration. 'If the stars shift by three degrees to the west, Nova,' Max chattered, 'then the hidden path must appear near the whispering waterfall!' Nova hooted softly, a sound of gentle amusement. She knew that the stars did not just follow simple arithmetic; they told stories of ancient travellers and forgotten maps. She carefully unfolded a weathered scroll, its edges frayed like old lace. It was a map of the heavens, passed down through generations of sky-watchers. As she pointed a wing toward a cluster of shimmering lights, she felt a thrill of anticipation. The puzzle was not merely about numbers; it was about understanding the secret language of the universe.

Word bank: cautious · anticipation · constellation · unravel · meticulous

1. Identify two pieces of evidence from the text that show Nova is prepared for her stargazing session. (2 marks)

2. How does the author use the metaphor of a 'velvet canvas' to describe the night sky? What does this suggest about the setting? (3 marks)

3. Compare and contrast the approaches of Nova and Max when trying to solve the mystery of the stars. Justify your answer using the text. (4 marks)

4. Why does Nova believe that the stars are more than just 'simple arithmetic'? Explain your reasoning. (3 marks)

5. Find a word or phrase in the text that describes how Max is feeling. Explain how this contrasts with Nova's behaviour. (3 marks)

6. What might happen if Max and Nova decide to stop working together? Consider the strengths each character brings to the task. (5 marks)

Draw: Draw your own interpretation of the 'whispering waterfall' mentioned by Max, including at least one constellation hidden in the night sky above it.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are the author. Write a diary entry from the perspective of either Nova or Max describing their feelings after the 'Great Alignment' concludes. Use at least three words from the word bank in your writing. Total: /25