

Mastering the Art of Inference with Max the Monkey

Learning objective: To draw inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts, and motives from their actions, and justifying these with evidence from the text.

Read the following short story carefully. Look for clues that tell you how the characters are feeling, even when the author does not tell you directly. Answer the questions below using full sentences and evidence from the text.

Max the monkey sat at his wooden desk, his brow furrowed in deep concentration. He had spent the last three hours rearranging his collection of shiny pebbles, lining them up in precise mathematical sequences. Every few minutes, he glanced toward the window, tapping his pencil against his chin. When a sudden gust of wind rattled the shutters, Max jumped, his tail twitching nervously, and he quickly pulled his notebook closer to his chest. He took a deep breath, checked his pocket watch, and began to scribble a new calculation with renewed, frantic energy. He didn't hear Ellie the elephant approach until her shadow fell across his desk.

Word bank: anxious · meticulous · hesitant · jubilant · atmosphere · deduce · evidence

1. How is Max feeling at the beginning of the passage? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (2 marks)

2. Why might Max be glancing at the window and checking his pocket watch? What does this suggest about his plans? (2 marks)

3. Explain why Max jumped when the wind rattled the shutters. What does this tell us about his current state of mind? (2 marks)

4. Compare and contrast Max's behaviour when he is working with his pebbles versus when the wind rattles the shutters. Justify your answer. (3 marks)

5. What might happen if Ellie had not approached the desk? Predict how Max's behaviour would have changed. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene showing Max's desk. Include the items mentioned in the text and draw Max's facial expression to reflect the mood you have inferred from the passage.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are the author. Write a short paragraph describing Ellie's arrival. Describe her body language and explain why she might have approached Max in that specific way. Use at least two words from the word bank in your response.