

Detective Work: Mastering Inference with Max and Zara

Learning objective: To develop the ability to infer meaning by using evidence from a text and applying background knowledge to 'read between the lines'.

Read each scenario carefully. Use the clues provided to make a logical inference about what is happening. Remember, your answer must be supported by evidence from the text.

Max the monkey sat in the centre of his workshop, surrounded by scattered blueprints and empty tea mugs. He stared at the ticking clock, his fur slightly ruffled, and tapped his pencil rhythmically against the desk. Across the room, Zara the zebra stood perfectly still, tilting her head as she observed the intricate geometric pattern Max had drawn on the chalkboard. She sighed softly, adjusted her glasses, and reached for her charcoal stick to add a single, decisive line to the bottom corner of his work.

Word bank: deduction · clue · evidence · implication · context · inference · reasoning · atmosphere

1. What is the atmosphere in the workshop? Use evidence from the text to justify your answer. (2 marks)

2. Explain why Max might be feeling frustrated or pressured. What clues suggest this? (2 marks)

3. Based on Zara's reaction to the chalkboard, what can you infer about her relationship with Max's work? (2 marks)

4. Compare and contrast how Max and Zara are interacting with the task. Why might they have different approaches? (3 marks)

5. What might happen if Zara had chosen not to add that final line? Justify your prediction. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a sketch of the workshop from Max and Zara's perspective. Include details that suggest they have been working for a long time, such as the messy desk or the dimming light from a window.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are a third character entering the room. Write a short paragraph describing what you see. Use 'show, don't tell' techniques to help the reader infer that Max and Zara are exhausted, without using the word 'tired'.