

Year 5 Reading Comprehension: The Great Stargazing Expedition

Learning objective: To retrieve information, infer meaning, and analyse the author's use of language within a literary text.

Read the passage carefully before attempting to answer the questions. Use full sentences where appropriate. Ensure your spelling and grammar are accurate.

Nova the barn owl adjusted her spectacles, her talons gripping the branch of the ancient oak tree. Below her, the forest floor was cloaked in shadows, but above, the sky was a velvet canvas of infinite depth. Tonight was the night of the Great Alignment. Nova had spent weeks calculating the trajectory of the stars, her notes scribbled on parchment with meticulous care. Beside her, Leo the lion sat patiently, his golden mane catching the faint light of the crescent moon. 'Do you think they will appear exactly as the ancient charts suggest?' Leo asked, his voice a low rumble. Nova peered through her brass telescope. 'The mathematics of the universe are precise, Leo,' she replied, her eyes bright with anticipation. 'When the celestial bodies align, they will illuminate the valley with a glow that we have not witnessed for a decade.' Suddenly, a shimmer of silver light began to dance across the horizon, casting a luminous trail over the treetops.

Word bank: celestial · anticipation · illuminate · vast · constellation · luminous

1. Identify two specific items Nova uses to help her with her stargazing. (2 marks) (2 marks)

2. Find and copy a phrase from the text that describes how the sky looked to Nova. (1 mark) (1 mark)

3. Explain why Nova is so confident that the stars will appear as expected. Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (3 marks) (3 marks)

4. Compare how Nova and Leo feel about the upcoming event. Use the text to justify your answer. (4 marks) (4 marks)

5. What does the author mean by the phrase 'velvet canvas of infinite depth'? Why might they have chosen these specific words? (4 marks) (4 marks)

6. What might happen if the weather suddenly turned cloudy during the Great Alignment? Predict the impact on Nova and Leo. (3 marks) (3 marks)

7. Extended Writing Task: Describe the 'luminous trail' mentioned at the end of the story. Use descriptive language, including at least two words from the word bank, to paint a picture for the reader. (5 marks) (5 marks)

Draw: Draw a detailed illustration of Nova looking through her telescope from the oak tree, with Leo watching the sky beside her. Include the luminous trail mentioned in the text.



Extension challenge: Total: /25. Challenge: Rewrite the final paragraph from Leo's perspective, focusing on his sensory experiences—what he hears, smells, and feels—as the light begins to appear.