

The Archivist's Dilemma: Comprehension and Analysis

Learning objective: To develop higher-order reading comprehension skills by inferring character motives, analysing authorial intent, and evaluating the impact of descriptive language.

Read the following scenario carefully. Use your analytical skills to answer the questions, ensuring you justify your points with evidence or logical reasoning.

Ellie the elephant, the forest's appointed archivist, stood before a crumbling scroll found in the hollow of an ancient oak. The ink was faded, yet the symbols remained clear: a map leading not to gold, but to the 'Library of Whispers'. Max the monkey, ever the strategist, argued that they should calculate the exact trajectory of the path based on the sun's position. Pip the caterpillar, however, noticed that the scroll's edges were charred, suggesting it had been rescued from a long-forgotten hearth. Ellie hesitated. To follow the map meant leaving the archives unattended, but the history contained within the library could rewrite everything they knew about the forest's origins. She looked at her trunk, dusted with the chalk of a thousand dates, and sighed. The weight of the past felt heavy, yet the promise of new knowledge was an irresistible gravity.

Word bank: Infer · Justify · Authorial intent · Subtext · Ambiguity · Nuance · Perspective · Chronology

1. Explain why Ellie experiences an internal conflict when deciding whether to pursue the map. Use evidence from the text to support your reasoning. (3 marks)

2. Compare and contrast the approaches of Max and Pip. How do their differing perspectives contribute to the group's problem-solving process? (3 marks)

3. What might the author imply by describing the ink as 'faded' but the symbols as 'clear'? Discuss the significance of this detail. (2 marks)

4. Justify the author's use of the metaphor 'irresistible gravity' in the final sentence. What does this tell us about Ellie's character? (3 marks)

5. If the 'Library of Whispers' contained information that contradicted the history Ellie had spent her life curating, how might she react? Explain your answer. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a detailed scene of the 'Library of Whispers' as you imagine it. Include architectural elements that suggest it has been hidden for centuries, focusing on how the environment has reclaimed the space.



Extension challenge: Write a short diary entry from Ellie's perspective, dated the evening after she discovers the scroll. Focus on the tension between her duty as an archivist and her curiosity as a scholar. Use at least three words from the word bank in your writing.