

Mastering Character Description with Max the Monkey

Learning objective: To use expanded noun phrases and precise adjectives to describe a character's appearance and personality.

Read the passage below about Max, our mathematical monkey. Use the word bank and your own creative vocabulary to answer the questions, focusing on the Year 4 expectation of using fronted adverbials and expanded noun phrases.

Max is not your average monkey. While others spend their time swinging aimlessly through the canopy, Max is often found perched on a sturdy branch, squinting through a pair of homemade spectacles at a complex pattern of autumn leaves. His fur is a deep, mahogany brown, which contrasts sharply against his bright, amber eyes that seem to be constantly calculating the distance between the trees. He wears a small, woven satchel filled with pebbles and twigs, which he uses to solve equations about the forest floor. Max moves with a deliberate, rhythmic grace, his long tail acting as a perfect counterbalance whenever he pauses to ponder a new discovery.

Word bank: inquisitive · meticulous · vibrant · shrewd · calculated · agile · expressive · gleaming · analytical

1. Identify two expanded noun phrases used in the text to describe Max's physical appearance. Explain why these choices help the reader visualise him better. (2 marks)

2. Max is described as 'calculating the distance between the trees'. What does this suggest about his personality? Justify your answer using evidence from the text. (2 marks)

3. Compare and contrast Max's behaviour with the 'other' monkeys mentioned in the text. Why does the author make this distinction? (2 marks)

4. Find a word in the text that means 'careful and precise'. Use it in a new sentence about Max solving a maths problem. (2 marks)

5. What might happen if Max lost his woven satchel? How would it affect his daily routine and his identity as a mathematician? (3 marks)

Draw: Draw Max the Monkey in his natural habitat. Include his woven satchel and the spectacles he uses to study the forest patterns. Label your drawing with three powerful adjectives from the word bank.



Extension challenge: Write a short paragraph (50-80 words) describing a new character who is Max's rival. This character should be equally intelligent but have a different hobby, such as art or history. Use at least two fronted adverbials to start your sentences.