

Mastering the Stage: Playscript Skills

Learning objective: To identify, understand, and apply the specific features of a playscript, including stage directions, character names, and dialogue.

Read each question carefully. Use your knowledge of dramatic writing to complete the tasks below. Ensure you use correct punctuation and layout for your script writing.

N/A - This resource focuses on the application of structural features rather than reading comprehension.

Word bank: stage directions · dialogue · character name · colons · brackets · setting · act · scene

1. Explain why stage directions are enclosed in brackets and often written in italics. What purpose do they serve for the actors and the director? (2 marks)

2. Max the monkey is writing a scene where he tries to solve a maths puzzle. Write a short snippet of dialogue (two lines each for Max and his friend Pip) ensuring you use the correct playscript layout, including colons. (4 marks)

3. Compare and contrast a playscript with a narrative story. Why might a playwright choose not to use speech marks in their work? (2 marks)

4. Zara is designing a set for a play. Write a paragraph of stage directions that describes a magical, patterned forest. Remember to use descriptive vocabulary to set the scene. (3 marks)

5. Justify your answer: If a character's name is written in the centre of the page, does this change how the script is read compared to having it on the left-hand margin? Why or why not? (2 marks)

6. What might happen if a playwright forgot to include stage directions in their script? Discuss the potential confusion for the audience and the cast. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a stage layout for a scene featuring Nova the owl in a library. Use labels to show where the 'props' and 'characters' are placed, and include one example of where you would place a stage direction.



Extension challenge: Write an opening scene for a play involving Finn the dolphin and Bea the honeybee meeting for the first time. You must include at least two distinct changes in tone through your stage directions (e.g., from excited to serious) and ensure the dialogue reveals their different personalities.