

Mastering Speech Marks: An Assessment for Year 4

Learning objective: To accurately punctuate direct speech using inverted commas and appropriate internal punctuation.

Read each question carefully. Ensure your speech marks (inverted commas) are correctly placed and that you include the necessary punctuation before closing the speech. Remember: speech often starts with a capital letter!

Max the monkey sat in the jungle canopy, carefully counting his collection of shiny pebbles. He looked down at Pip the caterpillar, who was nibbling on a leaf. 'How many pebbles do you have today, Max?' asked Pip curiously. Max grinned and held up a large, smooth stone. 'I have collected exactly forty-two pebbles,' Max exclaimed with delight. 'That is a wonderful collection,' Pip replied, 'but be careful not to drop them!'

Word bank: inverted commas · comma · full stop · question mark · exclamation mark · direct speech · reporting clause

1. Identify one example of direct speech from the passage and explain the function of the inverted commas used. (2 marks)

2. Rewrite the following sentence by adding the missing speech marks and punctuation: Max shouted Look out for the falling branch! (2 marks)

3. Explain why we place a comma inside the speech marks when the reporting clause follows the spoken words. (3 marks)

4. Convert this indirect speech into direct speech: Ellie the elephant said that she remembered where the water hole was hidden. Remember to include a reporting clause. (3 marks)

5. Compare and contrast the punctuation needed for a statement versus a question within speech marks. Justify why the punctuation mark changes. (4 marks)

6. What might happen to the meaning of a sentence if the speech marks were placed incorrectly? Provide an example to support your argument. (4 marks)

7. Write a short dialogue (minimum 4 lines) between Nova the owl and Kit the fox about a discovery they made in the woods. Use a variety of reporting verbs (e.g., whispered, shrieked, suggested) and ensure all punctuation is placed accurately. (5 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene featuring Max the monkey and Pip the caterpillar having a conversation. In a speech bubble above them, write one line of their dialogue using correct speech marks.



Extension challenge: Total: /25. Challenge: Rewrite your dialogue from the final question, but this time invert the structure so the reporting clause comes before the speech in two of the lines. Explain why an author might choose to place the reporting clause at the beginning rather than the end.