

Mastering Dialogue: An Adventure with Max and Nova

Learning objective: To use inverted commas (speech marks) correctly to punctuate direct speech in a narrative passage.

Follow the prompts below to write a short dialogue between Max the monkey and Nova the owl. Remember to place speech marks around the words spoken, use a comma after the reporting clause, and ensure the punctuation is inside the closing speech marks.

Max the monkey climbed to the highest branch of the ancient oak tree and looked at Nova the owl, who was adjusting her telescope.

Word bank: exclaimed · whispered · inquired · replied · remarked · hesitantly · enthusiastically · meanwhile · consequently · furthermore

1. Max asks Nova what she is looking at. Start your sentence with Max's name and include his question using speech marks. Remember to add a comma inside your first speech mark. (2 marks)

2. Nova responds by explaining she is tracking a shooting star. Write her reply, ensuring you start with a capital letter and end with the correct punctuation inside the speech marks. (2 marks)

3. Max suggests a mathematical calculation to track the star's path. Write his suggestion, using a reporting clause like 'he proposed' or 'he calculated'. (2 marks)

4. Explain why it is important to include a reporting clause (e.g., 'Nova whispered') after the direct speech. How does it change the reader's understanding of the character's mood? (3 marks)

5. Compare and contrast the way Max and Nova speak. How might their vocabulary choices reflect their different interests in maths and science? (3 marks)

6. Justify your answer: If you removed all speech marks from your story, how would the reader identify the difference between the narrator's voice and the characters' dialogue? (3 marks)

Extension challenge: Imagine Nova discovers a mysterious, glowing object in the sky. Write a new paragraph of dialogue where the characters disagree on what the object could be. Use at least two different synonyms for 'said' and ensure you use a new line for each new speaker.