

Mastering the Art of the Book Review with Pip

Learning objective: To evaluate a piece of literature by constructing a critical review, using formal language and persuasive techniques to justify an opinion.

Read the short story excerpt below. Imagine you are Pip the bookworm. Your task is to write a compelling review that encourages other readers to pick up the book, while demonstrating your understanding of the author's craft.

The Great Library of Oakhaven was not a building of stone and mortar, but a living cathedral of ancient oaks. Elara climbed the spiral bark-staircase, her heart thumping against her ribs like a trapped bird. Below her, the forest floor was obscured by a shimmering, silver mist. She reached the topmost bough and found the Silver Scroll, just as the legends promised. It pulsed with a soft, rhythmic light, humming a tune that felt older than the wind itself. Elara knew that once she touched the parchment, the secret history of the woods would be hers, but the shadows in the canopy seemed to lengthen, whispering warnings of the cost of such knowledge.

Word bank: compelling · characterisation · evocative · narrative · perspective · atmosphere · rhetorical · recommendation · pacing

1. Identify one piece of evocative imagery used by the author to describe the library. Explain why this choice of language creates a sense of wonder. (2 marks)

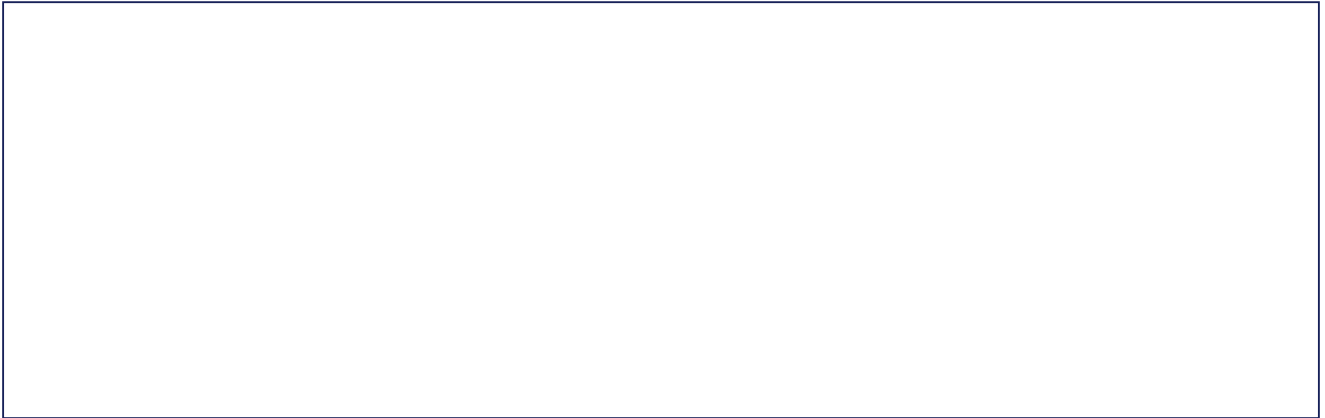
2. How does the author build suspense in the final sentence? Refer to the text in your explanation. (2 marks)

3. Compare Elara's internal feelings with her physical actions. What does this suggest about her character? (2 marks)

4. Justify whether this story would appeal to a reader who enjoys high-stakes adventure. Use evidence from the passage to support your view. (3 marks)

5. Write a persuasive 'blurb' for this book, using at least two words from the word bank to entice a potential reader. (3 marks)

Draw: Illustrate the Great Library of Oakhaven as described in the text. Focus on the contrast between the 'living cathedral of oaks' and the 'shimmering, silver mist'.



Extension challenge: What might happen if Elara chooses not to touch the Silver Scroll? Write a paragraph explaining the potential consequences for the forest, ensuring you maintain the mysterious and atmospheric tone of the original passage.