

Mastering Character Portraits with Max the Monkey

Learning objective: To use expanded noun phrases and precise vocabulary to create vivid character descriptions.

Max the Monkey is planning a jungle adventure but has forgotten who he invited! Help him identify his friends by completing the descriptive portraits. Use the adjectives and nouns provided in the word bank to build 'expanded noun phrases' (e.g., 'the shimmering, emerald wings of the dragonfly'). Then, answer the challenge questions to help Max refine his character writing.

Word bank: glistening · sprightly · velvety · astute · tangled · vibrant · obsidian · magnificent · curious · weathered · prowess · silhouette

1. Max is describing Ellie the Elephant. Write an expanded noun phrase to describe her ears, using at least two adjectives from the word bank. Explain why using precise adjectives helps the reader visualise the character better. (2 marks)

2. Look at Kit the Fox. Write a sentence using the word 'astute' to describe his problem-solving skills. How does this word change the way we perceive Kit's personality compared to using the word 'clever'? (2 marks)

3. Compare and contrast the physical appearance of Nova the Owl and Pip the Caterpillar. Use at least one expanded noun phrase for each character to justify your description. (2 marks)

4. What might happen if you replaced all the adjectives in a character description with generic words like 'nice' or 'big'? Justify why vocabulary choice is essential for creative writing. (2 marks)

5. Imagine Zara the Zebra is attending a formal jungle gala. Write a descriptive sentence of her appearance using the word 'silhouette'. (2 marks)

6. If Max wanted to describe Leo the Lion as 'brave but gentle', what specific physical actions or features could he include to show this, rather than just telling the reader? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a portrait of one of the BookFlik characters in their natural habitat. Around the drawing, write three labels using expanded noun phrases to highlight their unique physical features.



Extension challenge: Choose a character you have created. Write a short paragraph (4-6 sentences) describing them entering a room. Focus on 'showing, not telling'—instead of saying they are nervous, describe how their hands tremble or how they avoid eye contact.