Vocabulary Masterclass: Painting with Words

Learning objective: To enhance creative writing by selecting precise, ambitious vocabulary to elevate descriptions and engage the reader.

Use this scaffold to build a descriptive character portrait. Pip the bookworm caterpillar has challenged you to replace 'boring' adjectives and verbs with vivid, precise alternatives. Follow the prompts to build your sentences.

As the golden sun dipped below the horizon, the mysterious traveller stepped onto the cobbled path, their silhouette casting a long, dancing shadow.

Word bank: furthermore · consequently · vibrant · meticulously · exquisite · in contrast · mesmerising · nevertheless · formidable · consequently

1. Character Appearance: Instead of saying the character looked 'nice' or 'big', describe their physical presence using ambitious adjectives. Start with: The individual possessed an air of... (2 marks)

2. Sensory Detail: Describe the environment surrounding the character. Use verbs that show, rather than tell. Start with: The atmosphere was thick with the scent of... (2 marks)

3. Action and Movement: How does your character move? Avoid 'walked' or 'ran'. Start with: With a subtle grace, the figure proceeded to... (2 marks)

4. Comparing Perspectives: Explain why choosing a word like 'trudged' instead of 'walked' changes how the reader feels about the character. Justify your reasoning. (3 marks)

5. Creative Synthesis: What might happen if your character discovered a hidden object in this setting? Describe the object using at least three sophisticated adjectives. (3 marks)

6. Deep Analysis: Compare and contrast the effect of using a 'bold' verb versus a 'gentle' verb when describing the character's reaction to the setting. (3 marks)

Extension challenge: Challenge: Rewrite a short paragraph from a story you have read recently, replacing every adjective and verb with a more powerful, evocative alternative. Then, justify your three best vocabulary choices by explaining the specific tone they create.