

The Night of Shadows and Sparks: A Bonfire Night Analysis

Learning objective: To analyse descriptive language and historical context within a narrative text, focusing on vocabulary choice and inference.

Read the passage below carefully. Use the word bank to help you understand the descriptive language used. Answer the questions in full sentences, ensuring you refer back to the text for evidence.

The sky above the village was a dark, velvet tapestry, waiting to be illuminated. Max the monkey clutched his notebook, his eyes fixed on the horizon where the bonfire crackled. It was a resplendent sight; the orange flames danced like jagged teeth, biting at the cool November air. Suddenly, a cacophony of whistles and pops erupted as the first firework breached the clouds. Streaks of neon emerald and ruby red painted the darkness, creating ephemeral patterns that vanished as quickly as they appeared. The crowd gasped in unison, their faces aglow with the reflected warmth of the embers. For a moment, the historical memory of the evening faded, replaced by the sheer spectacle of light conquering the shadows of the night.

Word bank: Resplendent: Attractive and impressive through being colourful or sumptuous. · Cacophony: A harsh, discordant mixture of sounds. · Ephemeral: Lasting for a very short time. · Breach: To break through or make a gap in something. · Tapestry: A piece of thick textile fabric with pictures or designs.

1. Identify two adjectives the author uses to describe the fireworks and explain why these specific words are effective in creating a sense of wonder. (2 marks)

2. In the text, the bonfire is described as having flames that 'danced like jagged teeth'. What technique is being used here, and what does it suggest about the movement of the fire? (2 marks)

3. Explain why the author describes the patterns created by the fireworks as 'ephemeral'. Why might this word be chosen over the word 'short'? (3 marks)

4. Compare and contrast the atmosphere of the 'dark, velvet tapestry' of the sky with the 'cacophony' of the fireworks. How does the author transition between these two states? (3 marks)

5. Justify why the author might have chosen to include Max the monkey in this scene. Does his presence change the tone of the narrative? Explain your reasoning. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene inspired by the passage, focusing on the contrast between the dark, velvet night sky and the vibrant, neon colours of the fireworks reflected on the faces of the crowd.



Extension challenge: What might happen if the village bonfire suddenly failed to ignite? Write a short, evocative paragraph (50-70 words) describing the change in the atmosphere using at least three of the words from the word bank.