

Mastering Character Description: The Explorer's Journal

Learning objective: To use expanded noun phrases, relative clauses, and precise adjectives to create vivid, multi-dimensional character descriptions.

Read the following passage about Nova the owl. Use the vocabulary in the word bank to help you answer the questions. Focus on showing the reader what the character is like through their actions and appearance, rather than just telling them.

Nova perched upon the highest branch of the ancient oak tree, her large, amber eyes scanning the horizon. She was a barn owl of remarkable intellect, whose feathers were as soft as brushed velvet and speckled with shades of cream and burnt umber. Around her neck hung a small, tarnished brass locket, a relic from her grandfather's travels, which she touched whenever she pondered a difficult scientific question. Unlike the other woodland creatures who slept soundly under the moon, Nova was a nocturnal scholar. She spent her nights mapping the constellations and observing the delicate dance of the stars, her gaze fixed on the infinite mysteries of the cosmos.

Word bank: luminous · meticulous · inquisitive · glistening · astute · tarnished · brilliant · observant · nocturnal

1. Identify two expanded noun phrases used to describe Nova. Explain how these phrases help the reader visualise her appearance. (2 marks)

2. The author describes Nova as a 'nocturnal scholar'. What does this tell us about her personality and her daily routine? (2 marks)

3. Find and copy a sentence that uses a relative clause. Why do you think the author chose to include this extra information? (2 marks)

4. Compare and contrast Nova's nocturnal nature with that of a typical woodland animal. Why might her choice of lifestyle be an advantage for her hobby? (3 marks)

5. Justify why the author chose the word 'tarnished' to describe the locket rather than simply calling it 'old'. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw Nova in her natural habitat. Ensure you include at least three details mentioned in the text, such as her locket or the starry sky she is observing.



Extension challenge: Write a short paragraph introducing a new companion for Nova. Use at least two relative clauses and three adjectives from the word bank to describe this character's appearance and their specific interest or talent.