

The Winter Solstice Market: A Festive Narrative Challenge

Learning objective: To analyse descriptive language and infer character motivations within a festive narrative, applying Year 5 vocabulary and creative writing techniques.

Read the passage below carefully. Use your knowledge of descriptive techniques and character development to answer the questions. For the greater depth tasks, ensure you provide evidence from the text to justify your opinions.

Max the monkey stood in the centre of the bustling Winter Solstice Market, his eyes wide as he calculated the cost of the roasted chestnuts. Beside him, Pip the caterpillar was busy observing the intricate patterns of the frost on the wooden stalls. The air was thick with the scent of cinnamon and pine. Suddenly, they spotted an elderly merchant sitting alone, his stall filled with handmade wooden toys that no one seemed to notice. The merchant sighed, looking at his unsold stock with a touch of melancholy. 'Every toy has a mathematical precision in its design,' Max noted, his brow furrowed. 'Yet, people pass by without a glance.' Pip looked up, his tiny legs moving rhythmically. 'Perhaps they do not see the story behind the wood, Max. We must help them see the magic.' Together, they devised a plan to turn the quiet corner into a place of wonder, using their unique talents to draw a crowd before the evening star rose.

Word bank: kaleidoscope · anticipation · bountiful · resilient · festivity · melancholy · whimsical

1. Identify two pieces of evidence from the text that suggest the market atmosphere is busy and festive. Explain how these phrases affect the reader. (2 marks)

2. Why does Max view the toys through a mathematical lens? How does this reflect his specific personality as a character? (2 marks)

3. Compare and contrast the internal motivations of Max and Pip regarding the elderly merchant. Justify your answer using the text. (3 marks)

4. Explain why the author chose to describe the merchant's feeling as 'melancholy' rather than simply 'sad'. What does this word choice tell us about his character? (2 marks)

5. What might happen if the market visitors fail to notice Max and Pip's intervention? Predict the outcome for the merchant. (2 marks)

Draw: Illustrate the scene where Max and Pip are transforming the merchant's quiet stall. Include details that represent the 'whimsical' nature of the toys and the 'festive' atmosphere of the market.



Extension challenge: Write a diary entry from the perspective of the elderly merchant describing the moment Max and Pip approached his stall. Use at least three words from the word bank and include a complex sentence using a subordinate clause to describe your change in mood.