

The Winter Solstice Market

Learning objective: To develop reading comprehension skills by retrieving information, making inferences, and evaluating themes within a festive narrative.

Read the passage below carefully. Answer the questions in full sentences, ensuring you refer back to the text to support your ideas.

The village of Oakhaven was draped in a blanket of frost as the annual Winter Solstice Market began. Pip the caterpillar, bundled in a tiny hand-knitted scarf, navigated the bustling stalls. The air smelled of cinnamon and toasted hazelnuts. At the centre of the square stood a grand, towering spruce tree, its branches adorned with handmade wooden ornaments. Max the monkey was busy calculating the total cost of the stallholders' wares. 'If each lantern costs £4.50 and the star-shaped biscuits are £1.20, we must ensure our budget is balanced,' he chirped excitedly. Nearby, Leo the lion stood by the communal fire, reciting a poem about the warmth of friendship during the longest night of the year. The market was not merely about trade; it was a celebration of community. As the sun dipped below the horizon, the villagers gathered to share stories and warm drinks. For Pip, the joy was not in the trinkets, but in seeing the town united under the glow of a thousand flickering lanterns, proving that even in the deepest winter, kindness could make the world feel bright.

Word bank: solstice · festive · generosity · tradition · atmosphere

1. Identify two items being sold at the market and their respective prices. (2 marks)

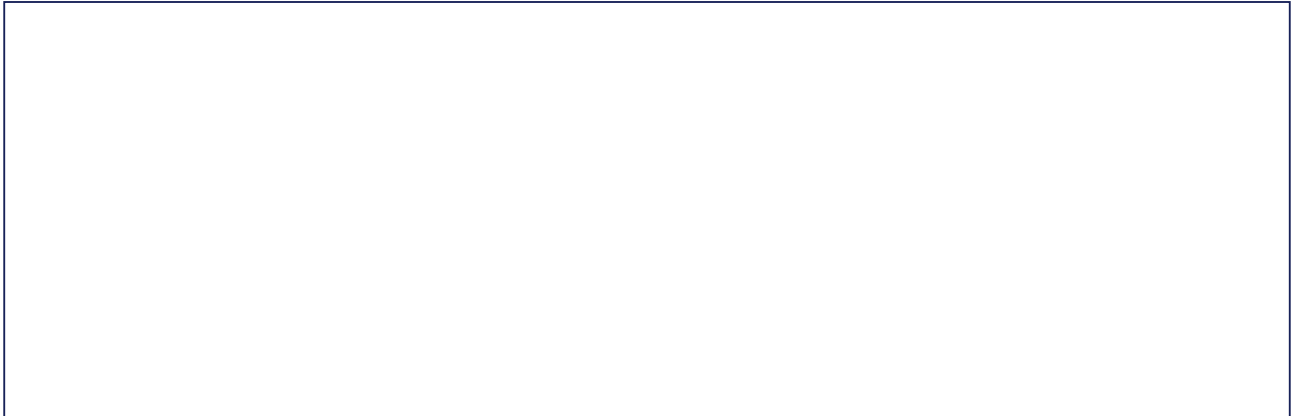
2. What is Leo the lion doing at the market, and why does he choose that specific theme for his poem? (2 marks)

3. What evidence is there in the text that suggests the market is an important tradition for the villagers? (2 marks)

4. How does the author use the setting of the 'longest night of the year' to contrast with the atmosphere of the market? (2 marks)

5. Do you agree with Pip's view that the market is more about community than physical items? Explain your answer using evidence from the text. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene of the Oakhaven market at night, including the central spruce tree, the flickering lanterns, and Pip the caterpillar wearing his scarf.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are a stallholder at the market. Write a short diary entry describing what you are selling and why you enjoy the Winter Solstice celebration.