

Crafting Descriptive Settings with Nova

Learning objective: To use expanded noun phrases and sensory language to create a vivid atmosphere in creative writing.

Read the passage below about Nova the owl's favourite stargazing spot. Use the vocabulary provided to help you answer the questions about descriptive techniques.

Perched high upon the ancient oak tree, Nova the owl surveyed the woodland. Above, the night sky was a vast, velvet blanket, punctured by a thousand luminous stars that pulsed like distant beacons. The air was cool and crisp, carrying the faint, earthy scent of pine needles. Below, the forest floor lay in a tranquil silence, broken only by the occasional rustle of dry leaves as a hedgehog scurried through the undergrowth. A silver moon cast long, twisting shadows across the meadow, turning the familiar landscape into an ethereal kingdom of light and dark.

Word bank: ethereal · silhouette · luminous · cacophony · velvet · shimmering · tranquil

1. Identify two adjectives Nova might use to describe the appearance of the stars in the passage. How do these words help the reader visualise the scene? (2 marks)

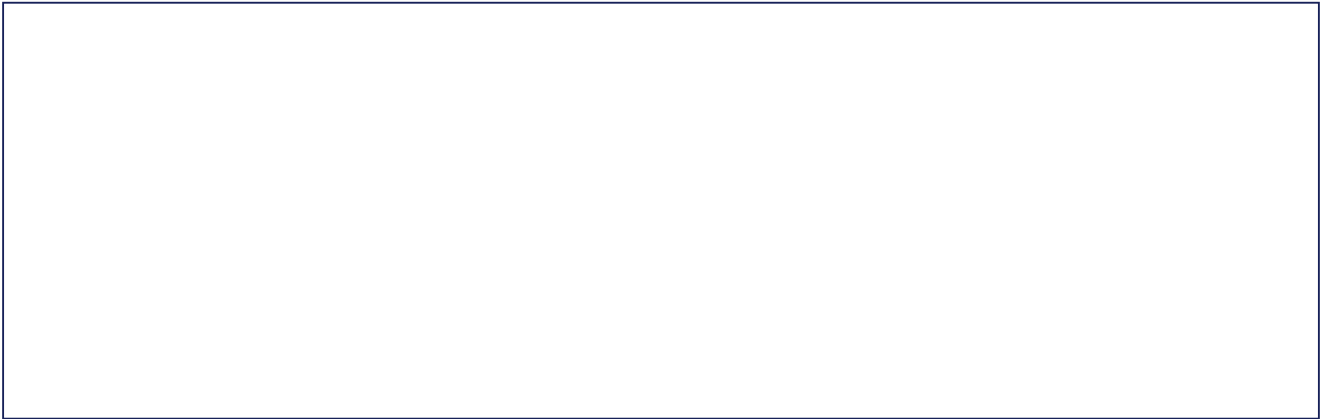
2. Find an example of a simile in the text. Why has the author chosen to compare the stars to beacons? (2 marks)

3. Look at the phrase 'velvet blanket'. What does this metaphor tell us about the texture and colour of the night sky? (1 mark)

4. Nova wants to describe the sounds of the forest. Using the word 'cacophony', write one sentence describing a noisy environment that contrasts with the 'tranquil' forest. (2 marks)

5. Rewrite this simple sentence using an expanded noun phrase: 'The owl watched the moon.' (2 marks)

Draw: Draw the forest as Nova sees it from her oak tree, including the 'velvet' sky and the 'twisting shadows' mentioned in the text.



Extension challenge: Imagine you are standing in the meadow with Nova. Write a short paragraph (3-4 sentences) describing what you can hear, smell, and feel using at least two words from the word bank.