

Detective Work: Mastering Inference with Max

Learning objective: To develop the ability to infer meaning by using clues from the text and personal knowledge to explain a character's feelings and actions.

Read the short story below carefully. Max the monkey is trying to solve a puzzle, but he hasn't told us everything directly. Use the clues in the text to answer the questions. Remember: inference is about reading between the lines!

Max sat at his wooden desk, his brow furrowed as he stared at the pile of scattered wooden blocks. He had been trying to build the tower for over an hour, but every time he placed the final piece, it wobbled and tipped over with a loud clatter. He let out a long, heavy sigh and glanced at the clock on the wall; it was nearly time for his friends to arrive for their afternoon tea. Max quickly brushed the fallen blocks aside, straightened his apron, and began arranging the tea cups with extra care, making sure each one was perfectly aligned with a saucer. He checked his reflection in the polished silver teapot and smoothed down his fur, though his ears remained slightly drooped.

Word bank: anxious · determined · calculate · frustrated · meticulous · observation

1. How does Max feel about his attempt to build the tower? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (2 marks)

2. Why do you think Max stopped building the tower when he heard the time? (2 marks)

3. What does the phrase 'his ears remained slightly drooped' tell us about Max's mood, even though he is preparing for tea? (2 marks)

4. Find a word or phrase in the text that suggests Max is trying to make a good impression on his guests. (1 mark)

5. Based on the text, would you describe Max as a patient character? Explain your reasoning. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a picture of Max's tea table. Based on the clues in the passage, what kind of atmosphere is he trying to create?



Extension challenge: Write a short paragraph (3-4 sentences) describing what happens when his friends arrive. How does Max change his behaviour when he greets them? Use inference to show his feelings.