

Mastering Parenthesis with Max the Maths Monkey

Learning objective: To use brackets, dashes, or commas to indicate parenthesis, adding extra detail to sentences without changing the main meaning.

Today, we are writing a short descriptive piece about Max the Monkey's latest jungle adventure. Your challenge is to include extra information using parenthesis. Remember: if you remove the words inside the brackets, dashes, or commas, the sentence should still make perfect sense!

Max, who was carrying his trusty abacus, swung gracefully through the dense, emerald canopy.

Word bank: furthermore · incidentally · which was · a talented mathematician · incredibly · as a matter of fact · nevertheless · without a doubt

1. Setting the Scene: Describe where Max is exploring. Use commas to add an extra detail about the environment. Start with: The jungle path—[extra detail]—was overgrown with giant ferns... (2 marks)

2. Character Insight: Introduce a problem Max faces. Use brackets to include his inner thoughts or a specific detail about his mood. Start with: Max felt quite nervous (which was unusual for him) because... (2 marks)

3. The Discovery: Max finds something mysterious. Use a pair of dashes to interrupt your sentence with a sudden observation. Start with: He stumbled upon a stone tablet—covered in ancient, dusty carvings—that... (2 marks)

4. Explain why: Why is it important that the information inside the parenthesis can be removed without the sentence losing its grammatical meaning? (2 marks)

5. Compare and contrast: Compare the effect of using dashes versus using brackets. How does the 'feeling' of the sentence change for the reader? (2 marks)

6. Justify your answer: If you were writing a formal report about Max's discovery, would you prefer to use commas or brackets for parenthesis? Justify your choice. (2 marks)

Extension challenge: Imagine a new character joins Max. Write a paragraph describing their arrival. You must include at least two different types of parenthesis (e.g., one set of commas and one set of dashes) to describe their appearance and their purpose in the jungle.