

Scriptwriter's Studio: Crafting the Stage

Learning objective: To understand and apply the technical features of a playscript, including stage directions, character names, and dialogue formatting.

Max the monkey is writing a play about a chaotic day at the local library, but he has forgotten to include the essential technical features. Using the scene provided in your imagination, rewrite the following narrative paragraph into a formal playscript. Ensure you use capital letters for character names, colons, and parentheses for stage directions. Then, answer the analytical questions below to demonstrate your mastery of scriptwriting.

Word bank: Stage directions · Dialogue · Character names · Setting description · Parentheses · Colons · Performance · Audience

1. Rewrite this narrative snippet as a playscript: 'Pip the caterpillar crawled slowly across the desk, looking for a dictionary. Max the monkey suddenly swung down from the rafters, knocking over a stack of books and shouting, "I have calculated the exact falling velocity of these encyclopaedias!" Pip sighed, adjusted his glasses, and muttered that they were in a library, not a laboratory.' (4 marks)

2. Explain why stage directions are vital for an actor. How do they change the way a line of dialogue is interpreted by the audience? (3 marks)

3. Compare and contrast a playscript with a traditional prose story. Why do playscripts omit descriptive adjectives about the characters' internal thoughts? (3 marks)

4. Justify your answer: If you were directing this scene, would you have Max speak loudly or whisper? Use evidence from the text to support your choice. (2 marks)

5. What might happen if a playwright accidentally omitted the stage directions from a script? How would the final performance be affected? (2 marks)

6. Create a short 'dramatic reveal' using only stage directions. How can you show that a character is hiding something without using any dialogue? (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a bird's-eye view of the stage for your play. Label where Pip and Max are standing and indicate where the 'library' props (bookshelves, desk, ladders) are placed to guide the actors.



Extension challenge: Imagine a third character enters the scene: Nova the owl. Write a short script segment where Nova uses a scientific observation to resolve the conflict between Pip and Max. Ensure your formatting is flawless.