

Max's Market Mystery

Learning objective: To accurately identify and use inverted commas (speech marks) to demarcate direct speech in a narrative context.

Read the story below carefully, paying close attention to the punctuation used for dialogue. Answer the questions in full sentences, ensuring you use evidence from the text.

Max the monkey sat at his market stall, surrounded by piles of shiny, golden apples. He was busy calculating the total price for a customer when a sudden gust of wind blew his price list away. 'Oh no, my sums have vanished!' Max exclaimed, chasing the fluttering paper through the busy market square. Pip the caterpillar, who was resting on a nearby leaf, watched the spectacle with amusement. 'Do you require some assistance, Max?' Pip inquired, his voice gentle and calm. Max stopped running and brushed the dust from his fur. 'That would be marvellous, Pip,' Max replied gratefully. 'If we work together, we can organise these prices into a perfect sequence.' Pip crawled over to the scattered papers and began to read the numbers aloud. 'Is this the price for the red apples?' Pip asked, pointing to a digit. Max nodded enthusiastically. 'Yes, that is exactly right! Each apple costs £0.50, and I have ten to sell,' Max explained. With the prices back in order, Max felt his confidence return, ready to serve his next customer with a smile.

Word bank: inverted commas · dialogue · punctuation · demarcate · exclaimed · inquired

1. Why was Max running through the market square? (Retrieve) (2 marks)

2. What is the price of one red apple according to the dialogue? (Retrieve) (1 mark)

3. How does the author show that Max is feeling relieved at the end of the story? (Infer) (2 marks)

4. Why might Pip be considered a helpful friend in this narrative? (Infer) (2 marks)

5. Do you think the story would be as effective if the author had not used speech marks? Justify your answer. (Evaluate) (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene of the busy market square showing Max the monkey and Pip the caterpillar working together to pick up the price tags. Include a stall with a sign saying 'Apples: £0.50'.



Extension challenge: Imagine a third character arrives at the stall. Write a short paragraph of dialogue between Max, Pip, and the new character, ensuring you use correct punctuation for speech, including new lines for each new speaker.