Crafting Vivid Characters: A Descriptive Writing Workshop

Learning objective: To use expanded noun phrases, precise adjectives, and relative clauses to describe a character's appearance and personality.

Read the passage about Max the monkey below. Use the information provided to help you answer the questions. Focus on how the author uses descriptive language to bring the character to life.

Max is not your average monkey; he is an enthusiastic mathematician who views the jungle as one giant equation waiting to be solved. With fur the colour of toasted chestnuts and bright, inquisitive eyes that dart around like flickering fireflies, he is constantly scanning his surroundings for patterns. Max wears a small, practical satchel across his chest, which is stuffed to the brim with notebooks and a polished wooden abacus. He moves with an agile grace, swinging from branch to branch with a rhythmic precision that suggests he is calculating the exact arc of every jump. Though he is often seen scribbling furiously in his ledger, he is never too busy to stop and share a clever puzzle with his friends.

Word bank: meticulous · agile · mischievous · calculate · determined · vibrant · observant

1. Identify two adjectives the author uses to describe Max's fur and eyes. How do these words help you visualise him? (2 marks)

2. Find and copy one relative clause from the text that provides extra information about Max's movements. (1 mark)

3. Explain what the author means when they say Max views the jungle as 'one giant equation'. What does this tell us about his personality? (2 marks)

4. Look at the phrase 'stuffed to the brim'. Is this an example of a metaphor, a simile, or hyperbole? Explain your choice. (2 marks)

5. If Max were to go to the market to buy new stationery, he might spend £4.50 on a notepad and £2.75 on a set of pencils. How much would he spend in total? (1 mark)

Draw: Draw Max the monkey based on the description in the passage. Make sure to include his satchel and his inquisitive expression.

Extension challenge: Write a short paragraph (3-4 sentences) describing a new character. You must include one relative clause and at least two pieces of vocabulary from the word bank to describe their appearance or personality.