Mastering the Playscript: A Day at the Library

Learning objective: To identify and use the structural features of a playscript, including character names, stage directions, and dialogue.

Read the short playscript below featuring Pip the bookworm and Max the monkey. Then, answer the questions to show your understanding of how playscripts are written and formatted.

Setting: The Whispering Woods Library. Sunlight streams through the oak-leaf window. Pip is perched on a high bookshelf, while Max is counting stacks of books on the floor.

PIP: (Excitedly) Max, I have finally found the rarest book in the collection! It has gold-leaf pages.

MAX: (Looking up and scratching his head) That is brilliant, Pip! But how many books are in that pile? I have counted thirty-two, but my maths brain thinks there should be thirty-five.

PIP: (Gently patting a spine) Don’t worry about the numbers for a second. Just look at the beautiful illustrations!

MAX: (Adjusting his glasses) I will help you organise them by size first, then we can count the illustrations later.

Word bank: Dialogue · Stage directions · Character names · Setting · Parentheses · Cast list

1. Identify one example of a stage direction in the passage. Why are stage directions included in a playscript? (2 marks)

2. How are the character names presented in this playscript, and why is this layout important for actors? (2 marks)

3. Look at the dialogue between Pip and Max. How does the author show the reader that the characters are speaking in different ways? (2 marks)

4. Why is the 'Setting' section included at the very beginning of the playscript? (1 mark)

5. If you were writing this scene, what extra detail would you add to the stage directions to help the actors understand how the characters are feeling? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a scene of the Whispering Woods Library based on the description in the playscript. Include Pip on the high shelf and Max counting his books on the floor.

Extension challenge: Write a short continuation of the script (4-6 lines) where a third character, Nova the owl, enters the library to ask a science question about the books.