Mastering Subordinate Clauses with Pip the Bookworm

Learning objective: To identify and use subordinate clauses to add detail and complexity to sentences.

Read the story below about Pip the Bookworm. Identify the subordinate clauses and complete the tasks to show your understanding of complex sentences.

Pip the Bookworm spent his afternoon in the grand library, where the shelves reached all the way to the ceiling. Although he was quite small, Pip had a giant appetite for adventure. He nibbled through a dusty atlas while he dreamt of distant mountains. Because he loved collecting words, he kept a tiny notebook tucked under his leaf. If Pip found a new word, he would write it down immediately. When the sun began to set, he curled up inside his favourite book to rest.

Word bank: subordinate · main clause · conjunction · complex sentence · relative clause

1. Identify the subordinate clause in the sentence: 'Although he was quite small, Pip had a giant appetite for adventure.' (1 mark)

2. Underline the conjunction used in the final sentence of the passage and explain why the clause starting with this word is 'subordinate'. (2 marks)

3. Combine these two sentences into one complex sentence using a subordinating conjunction: 'Pip studied the map. He wanted to learn about geography.' (2 marks)

4. Write your own sentence about Pip using a subordinate clause at the beginning of the sentence. Remember to use a comma correctly. (2 marks)

5. Why does a subordinate clause need a main clause to make sense? Use an example from the text to support your answer. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw Pip the Bookworm sitting on a giant pile of books. Include a speech bubble showing him using a complex sentence containing a subordinate clause about his favourite story.

Extension challenge: Write a short paragraph (3-4 sentences) describing a library of the future. You must include at least two subordinate clauses beginning with the words 'since', 'until', or 'whereas'.