Max’s Monday Mystery

Learning objective: To analyse the features of diary writing, including the use of first-person perspective, chronological order, and emotive language.

Read the diary entry written by Max the monkey below. Pay close attention to how he describes his day and his feelings. Answer the questions that follow in full sentences.

Monday 12th October

Dear Diary,

Today was, without a shadow of a doubt, the most perplexing day I have ever encountered in the jungle. I woke up before the sun, feeling an itch to solve a brand-new puzzle. While wandering near the riverbank, I spotted a series of strange, geometric shapes pressed into the soft mud. They looked like perfect triangles and squares!

I spent hours measuring the gaps between them, convinced that a secret code was hidden in the clay. My heart raced with excitement as I calculated the area of each shape. However, just as I reached the final piece of the puzzle, a heavy rainstorm arrived, washing my hard work away. I felt utterly deflated, sitting under a large palm leaf while the mud turned into a soup. Yet, as I watched the water create new, swirling patterns, I realised that nature is the greatest mathematician of all. Even though my data was lost, I learned that some puzzles aren't meant to be solved; they are meant to be admired. I’ll bring a waterproof notepad tomorrow!

Word bank: chronological · reflection · anecdote · perspective · emotive · observation

1. What specific discovery did Max make near the riverbank at the beginning of his day? (2 marks)

2. What item does Max plan to bring with him tomorrow, and why? (2 marks)

3. How does Max feel when the rainstorm washes away his work? Use evidence from the text to support your answer. (2 marks)

4. Why does Max conclude that 'nature is the greatest mathematician of all'? (2 marks)

5. Do you think Max is a person who gives up easily? Justify your opinion using the text. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw the geometric shapes Max found in the riverbank mud, showing how he might have measured them.

Extension challenge: Write a short diary entry from the perspective of another character, such as Nova the owl, describing how she observed Max from the treetops during his 'maths mystery' day.