Nova’s Guide to the Digestive Journey

Learning objective: To explain the main stages of the human digestive system and the function of each organ.

Use this writing frame to describe the path food takes through the body. Remember to explain what happens at each stage of the process.

Nova the owl observed that when we eat, our bodies begin a remarkable process of breaking down food into the energy we need to fly, think, and play.

Word bank: oesophagus · stomach acid · nutrients · small intestine · large intestine · absorption · subsequently · furthermore · consequently · as a result

1. Introduction: Start by defining digestion and explaining why the body needs to break down food. You could begin with: 'Digestion is the essential process where...' (2 marks)

2. The Mouth and Oesophagus: Describe the initial breakdown of food. How do teeth and saliva play a role? Use the sentence starter: 'The journey begins in the mouth, where mechanical and chemical digestion starts as...' (3 marks)

3. The Stomach: Explain how the stomach turns food into a liquid mixture. Use the sentence starter: 'Once the food travels down the oesophagus, it enters the stomach, which acts like a...' (3 marks)

4. The Small and Large Intestines: Describe how nutrients are absorbed into the bloodstream. Use the sentence starter: 'In the small intestine, the body absorbs vital nutrients, whereas the large intestine's primary role is to...' (3 marks)

5. Conclusion: Summarise the importance of the digestive system for human health. You could begin with: 'In conclusion, the digestive system is a complex network that ensures...' (2 marks)

Extension challenge: Research and describe the role of the liver or the pancreas in the digestive process. How do these organs assist the small intestine?