Grade 5 ELA Assessment: The Art of Character Description

Learning objective: To demonstrate the ability to use expanded noun phrases, relative clauses, and precise adjectives to create vivid, multi-layered character descriptions.

Read the character profile below carefully. Answer the questions that follow using your knowledge of descriptive techniques, focusing on show-don't-tell, vocabulary choices, and grammatical accuracy.

Max the monkey sat perched upon the highest branch of the ancient oak tree, his brow furrowed in deep concentration. He held a small, weathered notebook, its pages filled with complex equations written in frantic, swirling ink. His fur, a deep shade of mahogany, was slightly matted from his morning trek through the dense forest, yet his eyes—bright, amber orbs—darted around the clearing with restless energy. Every time he spotted a pattern in the falling leaves, he would let out a sharp, joyful chitter, his long tail twitching rhythmically like a metronome keeping time for a silent symphony.

Word bank: Resilient · Metaphor · Simile · Relative clause · Atmospheric · Expanded noun phrase · Auditory imagery · Personification

1. Identify one simile used in the passage to describe Max’s tail. Explain why this simile is effective in suggesting Max’s personality. (2 marks)

2. Find and copy an example of an expanded noun phrase from the text. Explain how the adjectives used in this phrase help the reader visualise the character. (3 marks)

3. The author describes Max’s eyes as 'bright, amber orbs'. Rewrite this using a relative clause to add more information about what he is looking for. (3 marks)

4. Identify one piece of 'auditory imagery' (a sound description) in the text. How does this contribute to the overall tone of the passage? (3 marks)

5. Why does the author choose to use the word 'frantic' to describe the ink in Max's notebook? What does this reveal about his character? (4 marks)

6. Writing Task: Write a short paragraph (50-75 words) describing a new character, Pip the caterpillar. You must include: one relative clause, one metaphor, and at least two sophisticated adjectives. Focus on her love for reading. (5 marks)

7. Explain the difference between 'telling' the reader that a character is smart, and 'showing' it through their actions, as demonstrated by Max. (5 marks)

Draw: In the space provided, draw a detailed sketch of Max based on the text. Include one 'hidden' mathematical symbol in the background of your drawing to represent his love for math.

Extension challenge: Total: /25. Extension: Choose one of the BookFlik characters (e.g., Nova or Ellie) and write a three-sentence character sketch using only passive voice to describe their physical appearance.