Explaining How Things Work: An Investigation with Nova

Learning objective: To understand the structure and linguistic features of an explanation text.

Read the following questions carefully. Use your knowledge of how explanation texts are structured to answer each one. Remember to use formal, clear language.

Nova the owl is writing an explanation text about how a telescope works. She knows that explanation texts must be clear, factual, and easy for the reader to follow. She uses subheadings to organize her ideas and causal conjunctions to show how one part of the machine affects another.

Word bank: chronological order · technical vocabulary · present tense · conjunctions · causal · subheadings · diagrams

1. Nova wants to write an explanation text. Why should she use subheadings in her writing? Explain how they help the reader. (2 marks)

2. Explanation texts often use the present tense. Write one sentence in the present tense that Nova might use to describe how a telescope lens works. (1 mark)

3. Which of these words is a 'causal' conjunction that explains why something happens? Circle your choice: 'because', 'yesterday', 'quickly'. Explain your choice. (2 marks)

4. Why is it important for an explanation text to be written in chronological order? (2 marks)

5. Nova needs to include a diagram. Why are diagrams useful when explaining a complex process? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a diagram of a simple machine (like a bicycle or a pair of scissors) and add two labels with arrows to explain how a specific part moves.

Extension challenge: Write a short paragraph (3-4 sentences) explaining how a honeybee collects nectar. Use at least two causal conjunctions (such as 'so', 'because', or 'as a result').