Writing for the Stage with Max the Monkey

Learning objective: To understand the features of a playscript and how to format dialogue and stage directions correctly.

Read the instructions for each question carefully. Use the word bank to help you complete the tasks. Remember, in a playscript, we use colons to show who is speaking and brackets for stage directions.

Max the Monkey is creating a short play about a math mystery in the jungle. He needs your help to make sure his script is written correctly for the actors to follow.

Word bank: Character · Dialogue · Stage directions · Scene · Setting · Colon · Brackets

1. What punctuation mark should we use immediately after a character's name to show they are about to speak? (1 mark)

2. Explain why we use brackets ( ) in a playscript. What information do they give the actors? (2 marks)

3. Max wants his character, 'Leo', to whisper a secret. Write a line of dialogue for Leo, including a stage direction in brackets to show he is whispering. (2 marks)

4. Look at this line: 'Zara: (jumping with excitement) I have found the pattern!' Identify which part of this line is the stage direction. (1 mark)

5. Why do playscripts include a 'Setting' description at the very start of a scene? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a stage set for Max the Monkey's play. Include a sign that says 'The Math Mystery' and show where the characters would stand.

Extension challenge: Write a short scene (4-6 lines) between Pip the bookworm and Nova the owl where they discuss what book they should read next. Remember to use character names, colons, and stage directions.