Max’s Market Mystery

Learning objective: To develop verbal reasoning skills by identifying patterns, finding analogies, and inferring meaning from context.

Read the short story carefully. Look for the connections between the words and the clues Max uses to solve his math puzzles. Answer the questions in full sentences.

Max the monkey sat at his wooden desk, surrounded by piles of shiny conkers and smooth pebbles. He loved turning everything into a puzzle. Today, he was helping the local market stallholders organize their produce. Max noticed a pattern: 'Apple is to Orchard as Fish is to Ocean.' He tapped his chin, thinking hard about how things belong together.

Next, Max looked at the price tags. A bunch of bananas cost £2.50, and a bag of oranges cost £1.20. 'If the bananas are more expensive than the oranges, then the oranges must be the cheaper item,' Max muttered. He loved using logic to sort out the messy stalls. His friend Pip the caterpillar crawled over to watch. 'Why are you grouping those items?' Pip asked. Max smiled, 'Because understanding how words and numbers link together helps us solve the biggest mysteries!' He quickly scribbled a note: 'Petal is to Flower as Leaf is to Tree.' Max felt proud. Using his brain to find the hidden links made the market a much tidier place for everyone.

Word bank: analogy · pattern · reasoning · clue · logic

1. According to the passage, what is the cost of the bag of oranges? (1 mark)

2. What does Max use to help him sort out the messy market stalls? (1 mark)

3. Why does Max think that oranges are the 'cheaper item'? (2 marks)

4. What does the phrase 'Apple is to Orchard' tell us about where apples come from? (2 marks)

5. Do you think Max enjoys his work at the market? Use evidence from the text to explain your opinion. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a picture of Max the monkey sitting at his desk with his items, and draw the 'Apple is to Orchard' puzzle as a colorful diagram.

Extension challenge: Create your own 'is to' puzzle (analogy) using animals and their homes, just like Max did. For example: 'Lion is to Den as Bird is to...'