Max’s Market Maths: Subtraction Challenges

Learning objective: To subtract numbers with up to four digits using formal written methods (column subtraction) and solve multi-step problems.

Help Max the monkey solve these subtraction puzzles. Remember to align your place value columns carefully, including the thousands, hundreds, tens, and ones. Show your working out clearly.

Word bank: difference · exchange · column method · regrouping · total · remainder · place value

1. Max has 4,528 shiny pebbles in his collection. He gives 1,365 pebbles to his friends. How many pebbles does Max have left? Show your column subtraction. (2 marks)

2. Calculate the difference between 8,000 and 4,637. Explain why you need to exchange across the thousands, hundreds, and tens columns. (3 marks)

3. A local market stall has 2,500 apples. They sell 842 apples in the morning and 675 in the afternoon. How many apples remain at the end of the day? Justify your calculation steps. (4 marks)

4. Compare and contrast: Is it easier to subtract 1,999 from 5,000 using a column method or by subtracting 2,000 and adding 1 back? Justify your reasoning. (3 marks)

5. Max spends £12.50 at the fruit stall. If he pays with a £20 note, how much change should he receive? Show your decimal point alignment. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw Max the monkey standing at a market stall with a sign showing a subtraction sum. Include some fruit baskets labelled with prices in Australian dollars and cents.

Extension challenge: Create your own 'missing digit' subtraction puzzle for a partner. For example: 5_2_ - 24_1 = 3,085. What might happen if you accidentally forget to exchange when the bottom digit is larger than the top digit? Write a short guide explaining the importance of place value when subtracting.