

Mastering Punctuation with Max the Math-Monkey

Learning objective: To use a range of punctuation, including brackets, dashes, and commas, to clarify meaning and add detail to a persuasive piece of writing.

Help Max the Math-Monkey write a persuasive letter to the Zoo Director requesting a new, complex puzzle frame for his enclosure. Use the word bank to help connect your ideas and ensure your punctuation is precise.

Dear Director, I am writing to propose an addition to my enclosure that would significantly improve my cognitive development.

Word bank: furthermore · consequently · in addition · notwithstanding · on the contrary · subsequently · which · who · because

1. Introduction: State your purpose for writing. Use a dash to add a dramatic emphasis to your main point. Start with: 'My current environment is adequate, however—' (2 marks)

2. The Proposal: Describe the puzzle frame using brackets to include extra technical information. Start with: 'The apparatus I envision (which is designed to test spatial awareness) will...' (2 marks)

3. Justification: Explain why this is a good investment. Use a comma to separate a clause beginning with 'which'. Start with: 'This investment is vital for my mental stimulation, which...' (2 marks)

4. Comparative Analysis: Compare this to your current puzzles. Explain why your suggestion is superior. Start with: 'Whilst my existing toys are fun, they lack the complexity of...' (2 marks)

5. Conclusion: Summarise your request using a semi-colon to link two independent clauses. Start with: 'I am confident this will be a success; our visitors will surely appreciate...' (2 marks)

6. Critical Thinking: Justify your answer—why is it important for the Director to understand your request clearly? What might happen if punctuation is used incorrectly in a formal letter? (3 marks)

Extension challenge: Rewrite your concluding paragraph using a colon to introduce a list of three specific benefits the new puzzle will provide for the zoo's community.