Max’s Market Math: Mastering Subtraction

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

Read the scenario below and use your column subtraction skills to help Max calculate the change. Remember to align your place value columns carefully and exchange where necessary.

Max the monkey is helping out at the local community market. He is in charge of the fruit stall. Today, he has £2,500 in his cash box to start the day. A customer buys a large crate of organic apples for £485. Later, a baker visits and buys a supply of pears for £1,276. Max needs to ensure his records are perfectly accurate so he can present the final total to the stallholders. He uses his sharp math skills to subtract these sales from his starting balance to see how much money is left in the box.

Word bank: difference · exchange · column subtraction · remainder · total · place value

1. Calculate the amount of money remaining in Max’s cash box after the sale of the apples (£2,500 - £485). Show your working out. (2 marks)

2. After the apples were sold, Max had £2,015. How much money remains after the pears are sold for £1,276? Show your column subtraction. (2 marks)

3. Explain why it is essential to align the digits in the correct place value columns when subtracting numbers like 2,500 and 485. (2 marks)

4. Justify your answer: If Max had started with £3,000, would he have more or less than £1,500 left after these two sales? Provide your calculation to support your reasoning. (3 marks)

5. Compare and contrast the process of subtracting money compared to subtracting standard whole numbers. Is there any difference in the method? (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a picture of Max the monkey standing at a market stall filled with colorful fruit, holding a calculator and a notebook to track his sums.

Extension challenge: What might happen if Max accidentally recorded the sale of the pears as £1,726 instead of £1,276? Calculate the difference between these two potential totals and explain how this error would affect the accuracy of the stall's final accounts.