

Should We Have Longer School Breaks?

Learning objective: To identify the features of a discussion text and understand how authors present balanced arguments.

Read the text carefully and answer the questions below. Remember to use evidence from the text to support your answers.

In our school, a lively debate has started: should our lunch break be extended from one hour to ninety minutes? Max the monkey suggests that extra time would allow children to engage in more complex mathematical games on the playground, which he believes would help with mental agility. Furthermore, others argue that a longer break would provide more time for socialising and relaxing, potentially leading to better focus during afternoon lessons. Conversely, some teachers feel that a longer break might make it harder for pupils to settle back into their learning. They worry that momentum could be lost, and the school day would need to finish later to make up for the lost teaching time. This would mean students arriving home much closer to sunset. Ultimately, there are valid points on both sides. While more free time sounds appealing, we must weigh the benefits of recreation against the necessity of academic progress. Perhaps a trial period is the best way to gather evidence before we decide if a change is truly beneficial for everyone in our community.

Word bank: balanced · perspective · argument · conclusion · evidence · opinion · advantage · disadvantage

1. According to Max the monkey, what is one potential advantage of having a longer lunch break? (2 marks)

2. What is the main concern that teachers have about extending the lunch break? (2 marks)

3. Why does the author suggest that the school day might have to finish later if the lunch break is extended? (2 marks)

4. What does the phrase 'weigh the benefits' suggest about the decision-making process? (2 marks)

5. Do you agree with the author's suggestion of a 'trial period'? Give a reason for your answer. (3 marks)

Draw: Draw a picture showing two sides of a balanced scale. On one side, draw a clock representing extra play time, and on the other, draw a stack of books representing school work.



Extension challenge: Write a short paragraph (3-4 sentences) presenting your own 'balanced' argument on a different school topic, such as whether homework should be optional.