

Max's Masterclass: Conquering Word Problems

Don't panic, just plan! Decode the puzzle, find the path, and solve with precision.

■ **Identify the Operation:** Scan the text for keywords. 'Total', 'altogether', and 'sum' suggest addition, while 'difference', 'how many more', and 'reduce' signal subtraction.

■ **The Multi-step Method:** Many Year 5 problems require more than one calculation. Always solve the first part of the story before moving on to the final answer.

■ **Visualise the Narrative:** Max the monkey suggests drawing a 'bar model' to represent the quantities. Seeing the relationship between the numbers makes the maths much clearer.

■ **The Power of Estimation:** Before calculating, round your numbers to the nearest ten or hundred to find an approximate answer. If your final result is miles away from your estimate, check your work!

■ **Check the Units:** Does your answer require £, grams, metres, or minutes? A calculation is only truly complete when the correct unit is attached to the final figure.

■ **Use the Inverse:** To check if your solution is accurate, perform the inverse operation. If you added to solve it, try subtracting your answer from the total to see if you return to the starting number.

Did you know? Did you know? The term 'algebra' comes from the Arabic word 'al-jabr', which means 'the reuniting of broken parts'. When you solve a tricky word problem, you are essentially acting as a detective to reunite all the scattered numerical parts of a story into one perfect solution!

Key vocabulary: Calculation · Operation · Multi-step · Inverse · Difference · Product · Quotient · Estimate