

Max's Math Fair Debate: Structuring a Discussion Text

Learning objective: To identify and order the structural components of a formal discussion text.

Max the monkey is organising a Math Fair, but he has mixed up the paragraphs of his persuasive discussion text about whether pupils should use calculators in class. Look at the numbered statements below. Your task is to sort them into the correct order for a balanced discussion text: Introduction, Arguments For, Arguments Against, and Conclusion/Recommendation. Write the numbers in the correct sequence and then complete the questions.

Word bank: Introduction · Balanced view · Arguments for · Arguments against · Formal tone · Conclusion · Evidence · Conjunctions

1. 1. Some people believe calculators help us solve complex problems quickly. 2. In conclusion, calculators are useful tools, provided we master basic mental math first. 3. Should primary school children be allowed to use calculators in every math lesson? This is a topic that sparks much debate. 4. Conversely, others argue that relying on technology might stop children from learning essential arithmetic skills. Please write the numbers in the order they should appear in a discussion text: (2 marks)

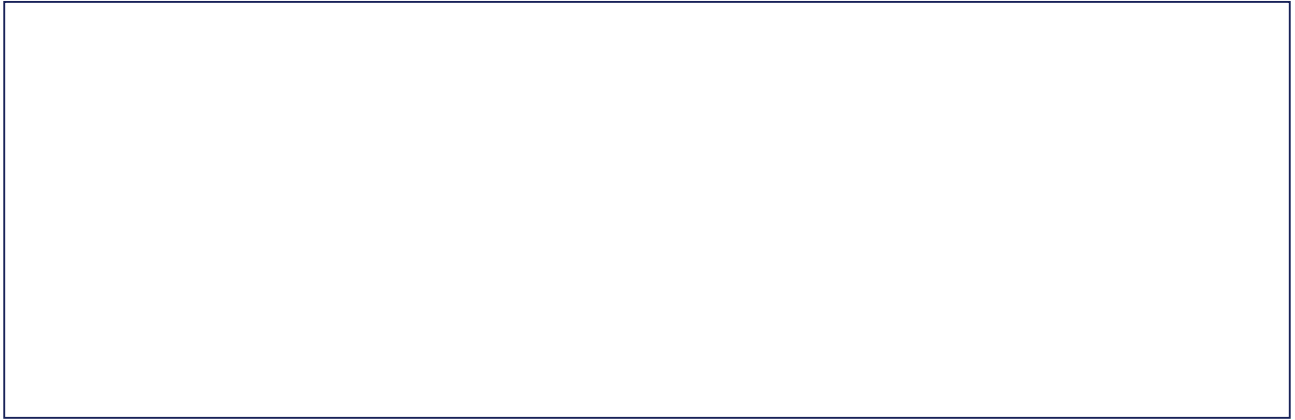
2. Why must a discussion text include both sides of an argument rather than just one opinion? (2 marks)

3. Which formal conjunctions could you use to transition between an argument for and an argument against? (e.g., 'However') (2 marks)

4. If a calculator costs £4.50 and a math set costs £2.75, write a sentence using a formal tone to introduce a point about the cost of school equipment. (2 marks)

5. Look at sentence number 2. Why is the word 'conclusion' important to include at the end of your writing? (1 mark)

Draw: Draw a 'Balanced Scale' to represent a discussion text. On one side of the scale, draw a symbol representing 'Arguments For', and on the other side, draw a symbol for 'Arguments Against'. In the middle, draw a book to show that the final decision is based on the information provided.



Extension challenge: Write a short paragraph (3-4 sentences) acting as a 'Conclusion' for a new debate topic: 'Should every child in Grade 4 learn to play a musical instrument?' Use at least one formal conjunction like 'therefore' or 'consequently'.