The Great School Debate: The Library or The Playground?

Learning objective: To identify and use rhetorical devices and persuasive language to construct a balanced argument.

Read the debate script featuring Max the monkey and Nova the owl. Analyse their use of persuasive techniques and then answer the questions below to test your understanding of rhetoric.

Max the monkey stood at the podium, his tail twitching with excitement. 'Fellow students,' he began, 'why should we spend our precious break times sitting still? A playground is a place of energy, movement, and joy! If we keep children stuck behind desks, are we not stifling their natural creativity? We must have more time to run, climb, and leap!'

Nova the owl ruffled her feathers thoughtfully before stepping forward. 'Max makes a valid point about movement,' she replied softly, 'but we must consider the sanctuary of the mind. Our library is a treasure chest of discovery, a quiet haven for imagination, and a bridge to distant worlds. While exercise is vital, surely we should prioritise a space where students can broaden their horizons through reading? Could we not find a compromise where both spaces are cherished equally?'

Word bank: Rhetorical question · Emotive language · Rule of three · Modal verb · Counter-argument · Persuasive

1. Identify one rhetorical question used by Max in his opening statement and explain why he chose to use it. (2 marks)

2. Find an example of the 'rule of three' in Nova's speech. Why is this technique effective in persuasive writing? (2 marks)

3. Which emotive language does Max use to describe the playground? How does this influence the reader's opinion? (2 marks)

4. Explain how Nova uses a 'counter-argument' to make her speech sound more balanced and reasonable. (2 marks)

5. Choose one modal verb used by either character and explain how it strengthens their argument. (2 marks)

Draw: Draw a split image: one side showing Max's energetic playground with movement and play, and the other side showing Nova's peaceful, magical library filled with books and wonder.

Extension challenge: Write a short paragraph (four to six sentences) using at least two rhetorical devices to persuade your teacher that your favourite school subject is the most important one to learn.