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**Proof and rhetoric: the structure and origin of proof – from ancient Greece to Abraham Lincoln’s speech in defence of the union and Paul Keating’s Mabo speech.**

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Summary: According to the latest news about declining standards in mathematics learning in Australia, boys, and girls, in particular, need to be more engaged in mathematics learning. Only 30% of mathematics students at university level in Australia are female. Proofs are made up of words and mathematical symbols. One can assume the words would assist understanding but this is not how mathematics students think necessarily, particularly perhaps if English is not their first language. This article discusses proofs, including their origin and structure. (ERIC)

*Classification:* C50 E50

*Keywords:* proof; language usage; mathematical concepts