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Introduction

Top Class is a series that endeavours to combine traditional approaches to the teaching and learning of grammar, punctuation and vocabulary with new techniques and activities that support and encourage good learning.

The three core areas have been separated into three distinct books aimed primarily at Key Stage 2. The three books ought to be used in conjunction with each other in order to provide learners with a wider learning environment and for them to understand that these core elements of Literacy work together and are not to be applied in isolation.

Specific elements of the new Key Stage 3 National Curriculum have also been included in order to introduce Key Stage 2 learners to more complex grammatical constructions and vocabulary as they make their transition from attaining National Standard to Mastery.

Each book, one for each Year group in Key Stage 2, aims to promote discussion about specific areas of Literacy and provides experiences and opportunities to use and apply what they have learnt.

The three books are as follows:

- **Top Class – Grammar**
- **Top Class – Punctuation**
- **Top Class – Vocabulary**

Each book contains lessons that develop a ‘top-down’ approach, allowing learners to see how we use language in context, not simply *when* we use a particular word, punctuation mark or grammatical construct but *how* to use it to its best effect when writing independently.

As such, it actively promotes the core principle that to learn grammar and punctuation well and to extend your personal vocabulary effectively, then you must not only see these particular elements of Literacy within authentic and meaningful context and settings but you must then have the opportunity to apply what you have understood in your own independent writing.

All too often children are taught grammar, punctuation and vocabulary with exercises that aren’t rooted within an authentic experience; and, as a result, although they may gain full marks in their exercise books, they often misapply or omit what has been learnt in their own free writing.

The *Top Class* series seeks to address this problem using a three staged approach, each Lesson Plan being structured so that learners are encouraged to investigate and explore

the English language; initially with support and guidance from their teacher and fellow peers before being asked to apply what they have learnt as individuals.

Think about...

Before undertaking the Guided activity, learners are asked about what they already know about a particular piece of punctuation or grammatical form and where they might have seen it.

This links directly to the Guided text, again helping learners to view grammar, punctuation and vocabulary in context, housing it so that stronger links can be made with prior learning and personal experiences. This can then be used as a springboard to explore and develop this further in a familiar setting.

For example, when looking at our use of capital letters when writing a proper noun, learners may be asked about why people use an atlas or map before looking at a tourist map of London and considering why place names and famous tourist attractions start with a capital letter.

Guided

This is a shared activity that engages the whole class.

Set within a specific and relevant genre of Literacy, it embeds each particular piece of grammar, punctuation or vocabulary being taught in a focused and meaningful way. Moreover, it invites learners to use this information in order to answer a series of questions that are related to the text itself and then begins to move beyond it.

Each of the three questions asked have been carefully formatted so that valuable practice for the end of *Key Stage 2 English grammar, punctuation and spelling test* can be undertaken throughout each Year group. Marks are also available so that pupils gain practice at providing fuller explanations for those questions where two or three marks are being awarded. Answers are provided on the Lesson Plan.

Independent

This activity can be completed as an individual, with a partner or within a small group.

Each Independent activity within the book is also differentiated at an upper and lower level* and offers teachers a range of practical activities that support learners as they practise what they have learnt in the Guided section.

**Differentiated activities can be found on the CD Rom.*

Homework

Included in this section is a homework activity that aims to encourage wider learning outside of the classroom to take place. There are two types of homework activities that are provided, each having been designed to help learners discover and engage with grammar, punctuation and vocabulary in the 'real' world:

A] Specific 'closed' questions may be asked in order that research skills, both modern and traditional, can be employed to find a particular answer.

For example: What is the capital city of Denmark? Who was the first man to walk on the moon? When necessary, answers are provided on the Lesson Plan.

B] Wider 'open' tasks are given in order to afford learners the opportunity to explore the world around them and collect examples that are both pertinent and authentic.

For example, learners may be asked to find three examples where a shop's name uses an apostrophe in their local high street.

Extension

This final stage of the learning journey is an important one and underscores the importance of using a 'top-down' approach to the teaching and learning of grammar, punctuation and vocabulary.

Each Extension activity within the book is also differentiated at an upper and lower level.*

Its aim is to encourage children to apply what they have learnt in a meaningful and purposeful way in order to embed their learning.

For example, learners may be asked to write a shopping list when planning a party that will naturally include a colon or use strong adjectives to describe a certain event in a story.

More importantly, it is this *writing for purpose* (rather than to score arbitrary marks or achieve irrelevant ticks in an exercise book) that provides a meaningful opportunity for individuals to engage with the English language and create their own work that uses grammar, punctuation and vocabulary in a way that brings their work to life.

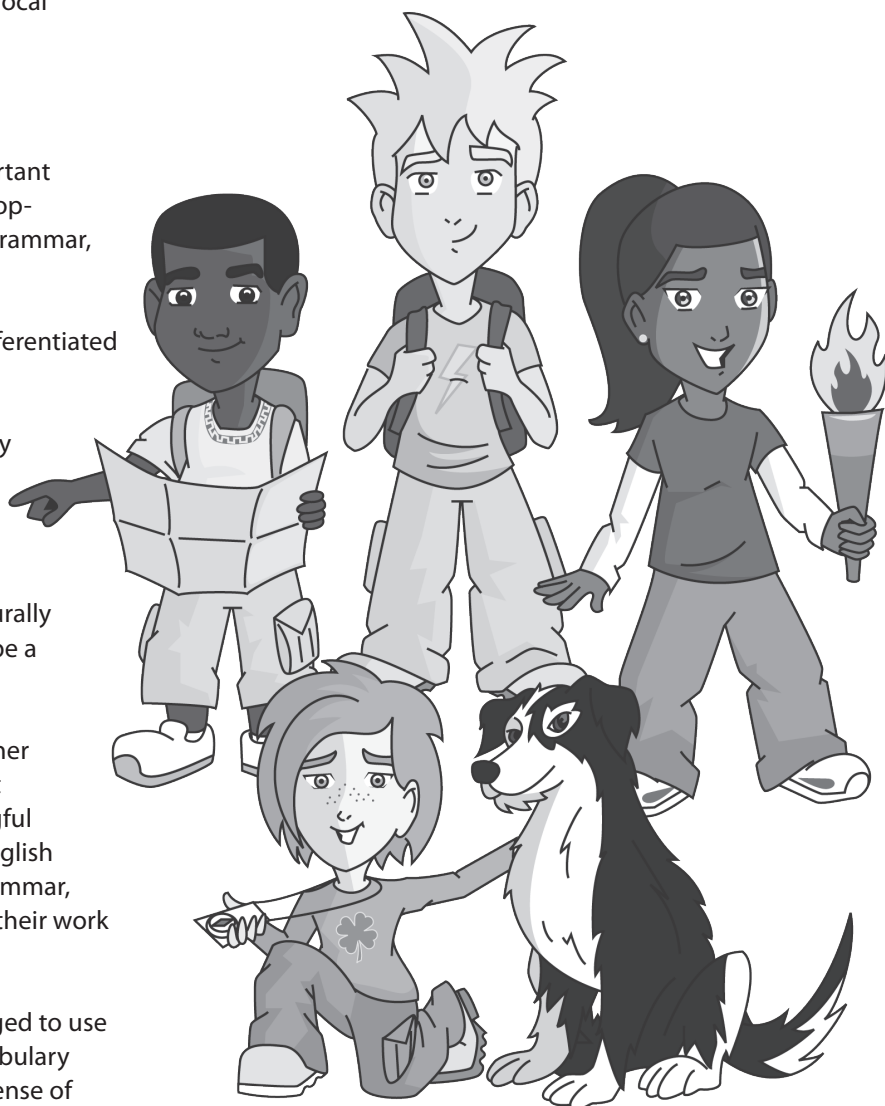
In this way, not only will each learner be encouraged to use particular forms of grammar, punctuation or vocabulary correctly but, essentially, they will gain a strong sense of

themselves taking an active role as a writer. It gives them a valuable sense of what it is like to be an author, one who uses grammar not only to improve the quality of their work but also to express themselves as best they can using the written word.

The journey from simply understanding how the English language works to being able to apply that knowledge in order to become a capable and confident writer is a journey that will continue into adulthood and one that, in all truthfulness, never really ends.

However, by providing meaningful activities for both the classroom and beyond, the *Top Class* series can help each and every writer to freely use grammar, punctuation and vocabulary to great effect and support them as they endeavour to bring the written word to life in order to inform, influence and entertain their readers.

**Differentiated activities can be found on the CD Rom.*



The Infinitive



Think about...

Why do people grow their own food?
 Why not just buy it from a supermarket?
 Have you ever grown or picked your own food?
 Yes: What did you grow or pick and from where?
 No: Would you like to? Why? Why not?



Guided	Answers
<p>You are reading a gardening book on how to start growing your own food.</p> <p>Do you think the instructions will be short and simple or long and complicated? Why might this be?</p> <p>Once done, answer the questions on page 49.</p>	<p>1 to grow, to harvest, to eat. They have been written in their natural chronological order.</p> <p>2 to use, to snap, to pinch twist, stop, remember</p>
<p>Independent</p> <p>You are considering how and when to use the infinitive in instructional writing.</p> <p>On your own, with a partner or in a small group; complete the task sheet provided to you by your teacher on page 50.</p> <p>Once finished, cut off the homework task to take home with you for further practice.</p>	<p>3 Audience: the beginner gardener. Purpose: allow for personal response but one that explores and explains some of the following possible ideas that go beyond 'to instruct' and touches upon to educate, to encourage and to inspire.</p>
<p>Extension</p> <p>You are a keen gardener. Complete the task on page 51.</p> <p>When finished, consider how you might grow fruit or veg at school and why this is important.</p>	<p>Homework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific answers are required for this task, though teachers could link this practical activity to topics in Maths or Science.

Remember...

The **infinitive** is the basic form of a verb. They are often used in instructions because they tell you what to do. However, the infinitive can also come after the word 'to' when describing a general action or when describing its purpose.



Grow Your Own Green Beans

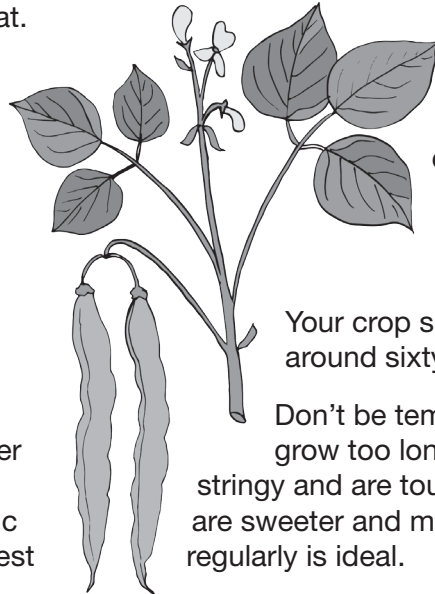
Easy to grow, easy to harvest, easy to eat. Green beans are a great starter crop for the beginner gardener.

Before rushing out to buy your packet of beans, you must first decide which variety of plant you would like to grow: pole beans – climbing vines that will need supporting or bush beans – short, compact plants that need no support.

How to grow your green beans:

As a rule of thumb, beans need to be planted in warm soil, well after the danger of frost returning. They prefer to grow in rich fertile soil so digging in some organic compost will help give your plants the best start in life.

Each seed will need to be planted about an inch (2.5 cm) deep and watered to stay evenly moist until all of the seedlings have emerged from the ground. If the soil dries out, your seeds are unlikely to germinate.



Once your seedlings have several leaves, cover the garden beds with mulch to keep the soil damper and cooler in the hot summer months. This will also help prevent weeds from growing.

Your crop should be ready for picking around sixty days after planting.

Don't be tempted to leave them to grow too long as older beans become stringy and are tough to eat; smaller beans are sweeter and more tender so picking them regularly is ideal.

When picking, it is always a good idea to use both hands to snap or twist them from the stem or to use the one-handed approach which uses the thumb and finger to pinch the stem of the bean. This will help stop you ripping, tearing and damaging the plant. Remember, a healthy happy plant will give you more beans!



Look at this gardening article and answer the questions below.

1 Look at line one. List the three infinitives and explain why they are written in this order.

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2 marks

2 Read the conclusion. Fill in the table below.

The infinitive			The infinitive		
to	to	to			

6 marks

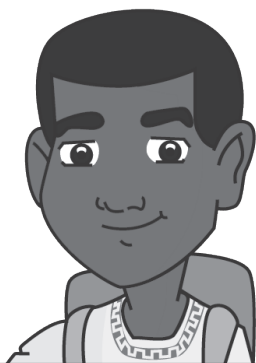
3 Who do you think this text has been written for and why?

Audience: _____

Purpose: _____

2 marks

The Infinitive



You want to grow some cress. Why might this be a good idea, especially if you don't have a garden? How easy do you think it will be? What could you eat your cress with? Complete the instructions using the infinitive labels below. Follow the instructions to make your own Cress Head!

How to Make a Cress Head!

You will need: A hard-boiled egg & an egg cup, a packet of cress seeds, a piece of paper towel, some cotton wool, a butter knife, a teaspoon and some felt tip pens _____ your egg.

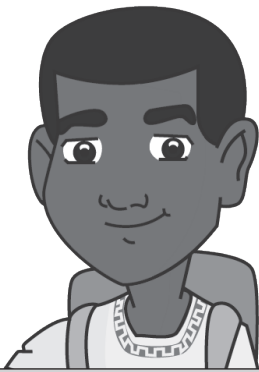
1. Ask an adult _____ you _____ an egg.
2. When cold enough _____, use the back of the butter knife _____ open the top.
3. Use your spoon _____ the egg and carefully wash the empty shell.
4. Wet a small piece of paper towel and place it inside the empty shell. Put the cotton wool on top _____ the water from evaporating.
5. Scatter a layer of cress seeds on the cotton wool. Sprinkle on some water for the cress _____.
6. Decorate your egg with a funny face _____ it unique and easy _____ . Remember not _____ any hair on your design.
7. Leave in a warm, light place, remembering _____ with drops of water every day.
8. The seeds should begin _____ in two days and your egg will begin _____ like it is growing hair!
9. When the hair is 5cm long (in about a week) visit the barbers _____ it a haircut!
10. If you want _____ more, simply replace the old cotton wool and paper towel and start again.

To sprinkle	To make	To grow	To drink
To help	To stop	To handle	To give
To sprout	To boil	To draw	To remove
To identify	To decorate	To crack	To look

Homework

Enter a class sunflower growing competition. Start growing your sunflower seeds at school. When you take the seedlings home, remember to water and feed them. The winner of the competition will be the person who can grow the tallest sunflower by the end of the year.





You are a budding gardener. Write a letter to your Head Teacher to persuade them to include gardening in the curriculum. What would you grow? How will it help your school and your learning? How will it help your health and well-being?

Name:

Date:

Use the checklist below to help you write your letter.

A Letter to Persuade

- I start my letter with 'Dear'.
- I then write their full name and title.
- I put a comma after their name.
- I tell them why I am writing.
- I give reasons why having a garden in school is a good thing. This includes:
 - What we will learn about plants and other wildlife.
 - How it will help us learn about healthy eating and caring for the environment.
 - How nature helps people to relax and be happy.
 - What other lessons we will learn about being patient and how to work with others.
- My last paragraph asks the Head Teacher to think carefully about why gardens are important.
- I suggest where the garden might be put.
- I end my letter with a formal phrase.
- I sign off my letter with my full name and sign it.

