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# Introduction

*Top Class Comprehension* is a skills-based series designed to help learners develop higher order reading skills and secure Greater Depth.

Each book contains 42 lesson plans and uses a variety of texts to promote wider reading. There are four books in the series:

- **Year 3 (Ages 6-7)**
- **Year 4 (Ages 7-8)**
- **Year 5 (Ages 9-10)**
- **Year 6 (Ages 10-11)**

## The Lesson Plan: A Layered Approach

Before embarking on the text, it is important that you cue in the reader. This can be found in the *Think about...* section in each lesson plan. This section is included for two reasons: to reduce the anxiety learners can face when jumping into a text blindly and, more importantly, to encourage readers to start forming crucial reference points that will support them as they delve deeper into the text provided.

After readers have been cued in, give them the text.

- First, the teacher reads the text to the learners. This will help them gain the gist of what the text is about and is a great opportunity for you to model the reading process and bring the text to life.
- Then, learners read the text themselves. This will allow them to become orientated with the text and pick out one or two words or phrases that they would like to explore as a group.
- After you have clarified the meaning of any unfamiliar language and explored its impact upon both the text and its reader, then you are ready to begin reading for deeper understanding.

A range of skills have been included within the lesson plan. These link directly to the Question Cards that have been supplied beneath the text.

Each card asks a single question and explores a specific reading skill. Each particular skill is referenced in an accompanying spy glass:



**Literal: Retrieval of Specific Information.**  
Can the reader locate detail within the text?



**Deductive Reasoning**  
Can the reader use clues and evidence in the text to infer meaning?



**Inference**  
Can the reader read between the lines to infer meaning?



**Authorial Intent**  
Does the reader understand why the author has chosen a particular word, phrase or punctuation mark and explain the effect this has?



**Vocabulary**  
Does the reader understand what a certain word or phrase means?



**Evaluative**  
Can the reader evaluate and reflect upon the text as a whole?

Each lesson plan has been designed so that a large proportion of the session is dedicated to the development of higher order reading skills, with a particular focus being placed upon Inference.

### Important Note: Orientation

Should you feel your learners need more time to orientate themselves with the text, either independently or with support, then you may find it useful to ask more Literal questions and model how each answer can be found.

This, together with clarifying any contextualised language proving difficult to understand or that may have been misinterpreted, will help ensure that learners are better equipped to answer the main inference questions later on.

If learners have not secured their initial understanding of the text and the vocabulary within it, then they will struggle to engage with the main section of the lesson plan and fail to develop and explore important higher order reading skills.

There are two ways that you may wish to consider using the lesson plan and accompanying Question Cards.

### Option One: A Warm Application

When using as part of a Guided Reading session, a conversational style ought to be adopted as you begin to walk through and around the text. This helps you to open up and explore the text more fully and encourages learners to engage with both the text and with each other. It supports collaborative learning and places value on it.

Once the questions contained within the lesson plan have been explored orally (learners annotating the text when and

where appropriate) a follow up lesson can be undertaken, whereby the Question Cards are given to the group for them to supply their answers in written form.

Whether you give your learners all ten Question Cards at once or one card at a time is up to you. The important aspect here is that they are given sufficient time and opportunity to engage with the text.

Answers can then be shared, peer marked and modelled by the teacher to help individuals structure their answers more robustly. In this sense, the teaching and learning focus of this session is firmly maintained.

## Option Two: A Cold Application

This is when no support or guidance has been given and the text has not been seen before written answers are required. As such, the focus here is on assessment. Answers provided are to be marked and monitored by the teacher in order to identify gaps in learning and inform future planning, both for individuals and for the group as a whole.

Whether you still wish to cue in your learners before undertaking this cold task is a matter of preference. However, a gentle reminder of the contents, themes and skills explored in previous sessions will help to calm learners and enable them to showcase their confidence and competence at unpicking a text more fully. This is not a test and still needs to be an engaging and enjoyable experience.

### Verbal Reasoning & Written Answers

When answering questions in the written form we often use a different skill set than when we are developing thinking and reasoning skills for comprehension.

Some learners who are adept at answering questions in a collaborative setting, can sometimes find it difficult to provide a well-structured written answer when working independently.

For these learners, being exposed to a range of opportunities to have written answers modelled is crucial.

Separating this understanding of the text with how to answer questions more formally is important.

It allows learners to focus clearly on the learning and application of a particular skill and affords them a greater opportunity to learn collaboratively, as well as apply various reading and writing skills with greater success.

In truth, a combination of both types of application sessions are needed to support your learners on their journey to becoming a successful independent readers and thinkers.

Indeed, each text in the book has been carefully sequenced so that it links with other texts provided. This will allow you to share the first two texts as a Guided Reading experience but then use the third text as a means of monitoring a learner's reading progress and assessing to what extent a specific reading skill is being applied.

It is hoped that this layered approach to the teaching, learning and applying of reading comprehension is but one facet of your school's enriched Reading Curriculum, one that will support and engage your learners as they become an authentic Reading Community.



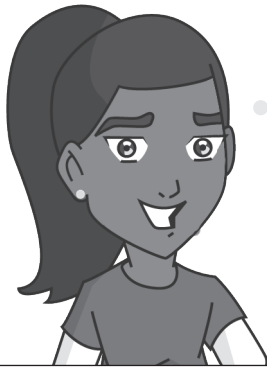
The texts considered within this book have been selected from the *Top Class* series.

Should you wish to support and apply wider aspects of Literacy to a given text in terms of grammar, punctuation and vocabulary, then further guided, independent and extension activities can be found in the following books:

- **Top Class Vocabulary – Year 3**
- **Top Class Punctuation – Year 3**
- **Top Class Grammar – Year 3**

This will give learners the opportunity to explore the various strands of English in context, so important when adopting a 'Reading into Writing' approach and supporting the developing learner.

# Florence's Florist



Think about...  
Where do people buy flowers?  
Why do people buy flowers?  
Are all plants harmless?  
This plant is more of a pet than a plant.  
What might this suggest about the plant and story?



## Literal: Retrieval of Specific Information

### Who enters the shop?

A gentleman wearing a navy blue suit and clutching his wallet.

### What time is it?

Lunchtime.

## Deductive & Inferential

### How rude is the gentleman?

Very – his questions to Florence are direct and at no point does he say please or thank you. He looks at his watch when he first speaks (presumably because he is in a rush or has better things to do) and ignores her answer when she tells him that the strange plant is not for sale. He then begins to bully her so that she will sell it to him. He is used to getting his own way and sees no reason why now should be any different.

### Why did the old woman's smile fade?

She is not the weak old woman that he has presumed her to be, and will not tolerate being spoken to in such a manner or be bullied in such a way. She knows what this rude man deserves and knows exactly how to serve up justice. Interestingly, she remains polite at all times and still calls him Sir despite the disrespect he has shown towards her.

### Why did the plant begin to rustle?

Not only is the plant hungry (it is lunchtime after all) but it senses the old woman is about to feed it. Perhaps it knows that when people are rude and hostile towards its keeper, then their actions will be rewarded in kind. This has happened before and is about to happen again. Lunch is being served and is wearing a navy blue suit!

### Did Florence want the man to smell the plant?

No – it was a way of getting the man to walk into the shadows and close enough for the plant to grab him and swallow him up. Notice the use of an ellipsis to show the passing of time as the man walks into the curious corner, the dark shadow hiding what happens next.

## Authorial

### Why do you think this title was chosen?

This sign hangs above the flower shop. It not only sets the scene but also leads us into a false sense of security. A florist is usually welcoming and friendly, bright and colourful, not somewhere we associate with death and danger lurking in the shadows. This contrast makes the ending more dramatic and its message more memorable.

### How did the writer begin this cautionary tale?

The sound of the florist door opening is heard (Ting-a-ling), a clear signal to both florist and reader (and indeed the plant) that someone has just entered the shop and the scene is about to begin.

### Why is the word 'SNAP!' placed in capitals?

This implies the following:

- The plant was very hungry.
- The plant (and possibly the man) was unusually large.
- He was swallowed up and eaten quickly.
- The man had no chance of escape.

## Evaluative

### What is the moral of this story?

We say lots of things with flowers: thank you, I love you, sorry, get well soon, congratulations... However, we are left in no doubt that the monstrous flower eats the man because of his bad manners and rudeness towards Florence. Manners cost nothing but in this case, the man's lack of them has cost him dearly. In this respect, the byline (whatever you say, say it with flowers) has literally come true.

The original extract can be found in the Top Class series; Top Class **Vocabulary** – Year 3, pages **60-63**.  
Unit focus: **Creative Word Play**



## Florence's Florist



*Whatever you say, say it with flowers.*

Ting-a-ling.

In walked a gentleman. Wearing a navy blue suit and clutching his wallet, his eyes darted around the shop: white lilies, pink carnations, red roses... and there, in a curious corner, was a flower that he had never seen before.

'How much is that plant?' said the man looking at his watch.

'Oh, that's not for sale sir. It's more of a pet than a plant. I couldn't possibly let it go.'

'What utter nonsense! This is a flower shop, isn't it? You do sell flowers, don't you? I have neither the time nor the patience to play games old woman. Now are you going to allow me to purchase that plant or not?'

The old woman stood perfectly still, her warm smile fading like the morning dew.

The plant began to rustle.

'Perhaps sir would like to step a little closer and partake of its scent. An unusual fragrance, I'm sure you will agree; an aroma like no other I assure you.'

'Indeed I would,' snorted the man. And as he stepped into the shadows...SNAP!

In a single gulp, he was gone. Lunch, it seemed, had been served.



Read this Cautionary Tale and answer the questions below.

Where is this story set?



What is happening in the first line of this story?



Why does this story begin this way?



Is the man who enters the florist in a rush?



Why did the old woman's smile fade?



Why did the plant begin to rustle?



Find three words used for a sweet, pleasant smell.



How is the word 'snap' emphasised? Why is this?



What is served for lunch?



What is the moral of this story?

