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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 has 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 is 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 4**
- **Top Class Punctuation – Year 4**
- **Top Class Grammar – Year 4**

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.

Hook-a-Duck



Think about...
Where might you win a goldfish?
On what stall would this be?
What would you do to win it?
What would you call your goldfish? Why?
How long do these goldfish usually live?



Literal: Retrieval of Specific Information

Who won Goldie? Who won Lucky?

Goldie: The narrator.

Lucky: Pete (the narrator's younger brother).

Which of these two goldfish celebrated Christmas in 1982?

Lucky.

Deductive & Inferential

Do funfair fish usually live a long time?

No – We are told that they are usually found floating in their fishbowls within a few short weeks. To find a fish floating rather than swimming around spritely is a pretty good indicator that your goldfish is dead. The fact that the narrator remembers Lucky is due mainly to the fact that Lucky bucked this trend (despite the trauma in Queen's Park Road) and lived for several years.

Why did Pete drop his goldfish?

He was only six and a bit at the time. Perhaps the water filled bag was slippery or was heavier than he expected. However, we must remember that he was crossing the road at the time so it is more likely that this is linked somehow. Perhaps he was concentrating on the traffic more than the fish and was distracted or let go of the bag to hold Mum or Dad's hand while crossing over.

Why is Pete told he can adopt Goldie when he gets home?

Funfair fish usually die quickly, and this is when they haven't been dropped on the floor and rescued from certain squishy death from a Ford Cortina. Everyone expects Lucky to die before the night is out, so to ensure that both brothers are happy, Pete is told that he can share ownership of Goldie. That way there is less chance of tears before bedtime.

Where do you think the giant funfair in the sky is?

Heaven – A place where people believe you go to when you die. What Heaven looks like for a goldfish will be very different from how we humans envisage Heaven to be like. Discussion should surround what Heaven for a goldfish would look like and why.

Authorial

Where and why does the writer use a one word sentence?

Disaster! (Line 12). This helps over-exaggerate the event that has just occurred, the dropping of the goldfish bag. In the grand scheme of things, the life of a funfair goldfish is not that important. However, to a six and eight year old, it just might well be. This hyperbole is where the humour lies.

Why are the goldfish called Goldie and Lucky?

I. Goldie: after the gold in goldfish.

II. Lucky: who is lucky to be alive.

Not much effort is given to naming these fish. This suggests that they are not highly valued.

What alliteration is used in line thirteen? Why?

Although the situation has just been called a 'disaster' this alliteration is similar to a tongue twister. Not only does it help us to picture Lucky struggling on Queen's Park Road (about to be squished by a Ford Cortina) but it also puts a smile on our face.

Evaluative

Why do you think the writer remembers this anecdote so vividly?

This event was an emotional roller-coaster for the two brothers. Lucky surviving for so long after such a traumatic event and becoming part of the family, is probably why the two brothers still reminisce about Lucky to this day and remember this event so well.

The original extract can be found in the Top Class series; Top Class **Punctuation** – Year 4, pages 24-27 .
Unit focus: **Commas (within lists)**

Hook-a-Duck

A True Story!



In the town where I grew up there is held a Charities Fete.

It is held in Queen's Park in September and everybody goes. Well, nearly everybody.

It opens at noon after the parade and is usually opened by the mayor.

So, if it happens every year at the same time and in the same place, what makes 1982 so special?

I was eight... OK I wasn't eight, I was seven and three quarters and my brother was six and a bit.

As usual, we had visited the Hook-a-Duck stall and each won a goldfish. Such fish swim spritely in their little plastic bags, but are usually found floating in their fishbowls within a few short weeks... such is the life of a funfair fish.

As we were walking home with Mum and Dad, crossing Queen's Park Road, Pete drops his bag.

Disaster!

Flipping and flopping, flopping and flipping, the fish flounders in the road and is just about to be squished by a Ford Cortina when Dad comes to the rescue and scoops him up.

Throwing it in with mine, things don't look good. Pete is told to expect the worst and that he can adopt my goldfish when we get home.

I call my fish Goldie. Pete calls his Lucky.

Only Lucky celebrated the Christmas of 1982. It would be the summer of 1985 before he was flushed down the toilet and joined Goldie in the giant funfair in the sky.



Read this anecdote and answer the questions below.

Who won Goldie?
Who won Lucky?



Which of these two goldfish celebrated Christmas in 1982?



Do funfair fish usually live a long time?



Why is Pete told he can adopt Goldie when he gets home?



Where do you think the giant funfair in the sky is?



Where and why does the writer use a one word sentence?



Why did Pete drop his fish?



Why are the goldfish called Goldie and Lucky?



What alliteration is used in line thirteen? Why?



Why do you think the writer remembers this anecdote so vividly?

