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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 upon 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 the reader to start forming crucial reference points that will support them as they delve deeper into the text provided.

After the reader has 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 then 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 reader and thinker.

Indeed, each text within 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.

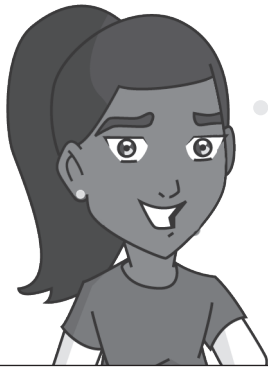


The texts considered within this book have been selected from the *Top Class* series.

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 5**
- **Top Class Punctuation – Year 5**
- **Top Class Grammar – Year 5**

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.



Think about...  
Your teacher will hold up a colour.  
What do you associate with this colour? Why?  
The first word in this story is 'PINK!'  
Who do you think might say it?  
How might it be said? Why might this be?



## Literal: Retrieval of Specific Information

**Who is the main character in this story?**

Henry Pickles.

**Which book does Henry pick up?**

Death in Paradise by Ivor Clue.

## Deductive & Inferential

**Why do you think Henry is in the library?**

He is sheltering from the rain, waiting for his dad to pick him up after school so that he doesn't get wet. It is not because he wants to read or choose a book to take home.

**Why might dad be picking up Henry?**

To stop his son from getting soaked (it must be raining hard) but also to introduce him to the new family car. This shows dad is excited about the car and hasn't really thought what its colour might mean to Henry.

**How quiet is this scene?**

Very – the library is not packed, probably due to the bad weather. Only Henry is stood in the Romance section and nobody else is mentioned apart from the librarian until Sally and Bradley walk in. Mrs Threadbare's actions also ensure that silence is maintained and this is punctuated only by the car horn and an ever-so-quiet tut.

**Which button does Mrs Threadbare want to press? Why?**

As well as the mute button, it is suggested that this louder intrusion of the honking car horn is deserving of a much more forceful response. The destroy button is far superior and will ensure that the culprit (and honk) wouldn't be heard again.

**Who do you think Sally Grimshaw and Bradley Winterbottom are?**

The girl Henry has a crush on and her boyfriend, Henry's arch enemy, Bradley Winterbottom. Note how Bradley's name would have been said to reflect Henry's dislike of him. If Henry didn't like Sally, he wouldn't be bothered about what she thinks and mention her twice.

**How popular are Henry, Sally and Bradley likely to be?**

It is likely both Sally and Bradley are very popular but that Henry is not. A geeky outsider, Henry is a nerd that both Sally would likely avoid and Bradley perhaps bully.

## Authorial

**How surprised is Henry about the colour of dad's car?**

Very – Henry would have said the word PINK! loudly, quickly and without any thought being given to where he was. Remember, he is in a library, a place associated with peace and quiet.

**How does the writer show this?**

Henry's shock is amplified in five ways:  
I. The word is written in capitals.  
II. It uses an exclamation mark.  
III. It is the only word spoken.  
IV. It is the first word we read.  
V. The setting in which it is said.

**Why does the writer use brackets?**

This clever use of brackets allows the writer to speak directly to the reader and, in effect, break the fourth wall. This device is often used in comedy to echo and clarify what the reader might be thinking. Note the use of italics and ellipsis to help adopt a conversational style to help the writer and reader connect.

## Evaluative

**What do you think Henry will do next?**

This Pickle is in a pickle. We know that Henry wants to escape before being spotted by Sally or Bradley getting into dad's new pink car, so it is likely that the comedy will be generated by his attempt to do so with disastrous results.

The original extract can be found in the Top Class series; Top Class **Vocabulary** – Year 5, pages **60-63**.  
Unit focus: **Creative Word Play**

'PINK!' Henry blurted out, despite being the only person standing in the Romance section.

'Shhhhhh,' said Mrs Threadbare. Her eyes bored deep into Henry Pickles' soul and firmly pressed the mute button.

Henry skulked into the Crime section and began thumbing through the pages of a Whodunit: *Death in Paradise* by Ivor Clew.

'How apt,' he thought. The one shred of street cred he had left after rescuing Twinkles was about to come to an untimely end.

'What if anyone sees me getting into a pink car? What if Sally Grimshaw sees me getting into a pink car?' Life was unbearable.

'I'd rather get soaked,' he grimaced and picked up his bag.

But it was too late; two honk honks announced dad's arrival. Mrs Threadbare let out a tut (though ever so quietly) and she peered through the window in search of another button to press, though which button it was this time was hard to guess.

It was at this very same moment, and much to Henry's horror, that Sally Grimshaw (yes... *that* Sally Grimshaw) walked into the library with none other than Bradley Winterbottom (and before you ask, yes... *that* Bradley Winterbottom).



Read this comedy and answer the questions below.

Where is Henry?



Who is picking him up? Why?



How quiet is this scene?



Who is Mrs Threadbare?



Which button does she want to press after the two honk honks?



How does Henry feel about dad's car?



What does the phrase 'blurted out' mean?



Who is Sally Grimshaw?



Why does the author use brackets?



What do you think Henry will do next?

