

Today, more than ever, it is important that children can read and interpret text in many different forms. Traditional narrative is still important but, increasingly, vital information is now presented in a wide range of formats including graphs, flow charts, diagrams, timelines, pictures and illustrations. The overwhelming abundance of information available from internet sources places increasing demands on children to locate, sort, understand and interpret information more quickly than ever before. This series aims to help children develop strategies that will enable them to succeed in our information-overloaded world!

About this series

Comprehension is a series of books aimed at developing key comprehension skills across Key Stage 2 and the first years of Key Stage 3.

The series aims to set the children thinking! It requires them not only to interpret what they read but to use the information they have gathered in a constructive way, by applying it to, for example, graphs, maps, diagrams, pictures and tables. Alternatively, many of the activities require the children to explain in words information that is contained in different visual representations, such as graphs, diagrams and illustrations. The **Comprehension** series aims to stimulate children so that they see things from a different perspective and to respond in a variety of ways.

There are four books in the series. Each book is matched to the National Literacy Strategy's *Framework for Teaching* as set out below, but we are confident that the books are flexible enough to be used across the age ranges from Year 3 to Year 8.

- Book 1 – Year 3
- Book 2 – Year 4
- Book 3 – Year 5
- Book 4 – Year 6

Each book aims to:

- develop children's inferential skills, encouraging them to 'read between the lines' where they have to search for hidden clues or make a link between cause and effect;
- develop children's deductive skills, enabling them to relate information in the text to their own experiences and background knowledge;
- develop children's evaluative skills to encourage critical evaluation and expression of opinion;
- support teachers by providing a programme that can be matched term by term to the NLS *Framework for Teaching* or can be 'dipped into' as and when required;
- encourage enjoyment and curiosity as well as develop skills of interpretation and response.

Each book is divided into ten fiction and ten non-fiction activities per term. These are listed on page 3, which also contains a chart that shows the *Framework's* Text level objective/s that each activity addresses.

Many of the activities are cross-curricular, taking in aspects of science, history and geography, for example. Other activities are centred around the interests of children, and topics such as magic, Martians, wizards and dragons are included. All the activities are intended to be fun as well as purposeful!

Using the activities

The activities are versatile enough to be used as part of whole-class lessons, group work or homework /reinforcement tasks. The teacher's role is to introduce the activity, carry out any revision of terms that may be necessary and put the task into a suitable context. Many of the activities would benefit from being discussed in pairs or small groups before commencing.

It is important to stress to the children that they read the complete text (including the required tasks) before they actually do anything. This helps to ensure they understand what they have to do before they begin. Their answers could be formulated in note form before reading through the activity again to make sure there has been no misunderstanding.

Name _____

Legend of a wise man

A long time ago a boy was born. His parents knew he was wise from a very early age. As a baby he never cried (as he knew this would upset his parents) but instead gurgled for attention and then pointed to various parts of his body to tell them what he needed: his mouth for food; his eyes for sleep and of course his bottom for toilet! Soon the baby began to talk and friends and family began to come to him for advice. Everyone in the village heard about this and they too began to come to him for advice. Then word spread (as it tends to) to other villages and soon the whole kingdom was coming to him for advice. (He could have made a fortune if he had ever asked for payment - personally speaking I think he was unwise in this!) When the boy had grown into a man, the queue outside his house was miles long. He was giving advice all day long and nothing else was getting done. One day when the wise man was asked for advice he paused and then said, "What do you think?" The people were puzzled at first and then grew angry. "How selfish of him not to help us!" The wise man was exiled and never heard from again. Years later when the kingdom was prosperous again the people realised what the wise man had done for them and started telling the tale to honour him.



1. There should be four paragraphs in this story. The beginning of the first paragraph is the beginning of the story. Put a vertical line in the text to show where you think the second, third and fourth paragraphs should begin.
2. Why do you think the wise man stopped giving advice?
3. Do you think the wise man was being selfish? Why/why not?
4. Why was the tale told to honour the wise man?

Name _____

Planning is everything

Everything would have worked out beautifully if it hadn't been for the fire alarm! There was the scapegoat - the security guard - who had been suspected of pocketing the odd note from the box office takings. He wouldn't have an alibi and would be watching telly in his room along the corridor from the main office as usual. Who would suspect her? She was well known as a temperamental actress. Everyone knew that she would lock the door to her dressing room and rehearse the next scenes all through the interval. A lot of people had learned the hard way that she wasn't to be disturbed for anything! No one would think anything of the black tracksuit with a hood that she had in the bottom of the wardrobe. No one had seen it before so no one would recognise her from it. No one had seen her bring in the new tape cassette from home that she had spent 20 minutes recording. Everyone knew she liked to listen to music and had a tape player in her room. No one knew she had been a gymnast. She was 50. Who would think she could climb up that drainpipe in the alley behind her dressing room? She had a tool to cut a hole in the window. Into the office, and the box office takings for the last few days were hers. The plastic bag with the tool and the rolls of money could go in the old drainpipe and she would pick it up later in case the robbery was discovered before the end of the show. It wouldn't be much but she was getting deeper into debt. She was a very accomplished actress who should not have a small part in a small play in a small theatre. She had starred in Broadway shows all her life and was accustomed to a certain lifestyle. The theatre should be paying her so much more. They owed her.



1. What was the actress's exact plan?
2. How long did she plan it would take to commit the crime?
3. Explain from the actress's point of view why she felt her crime was justified.
4. How exactly was she caught?