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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 provide 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 practice 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.

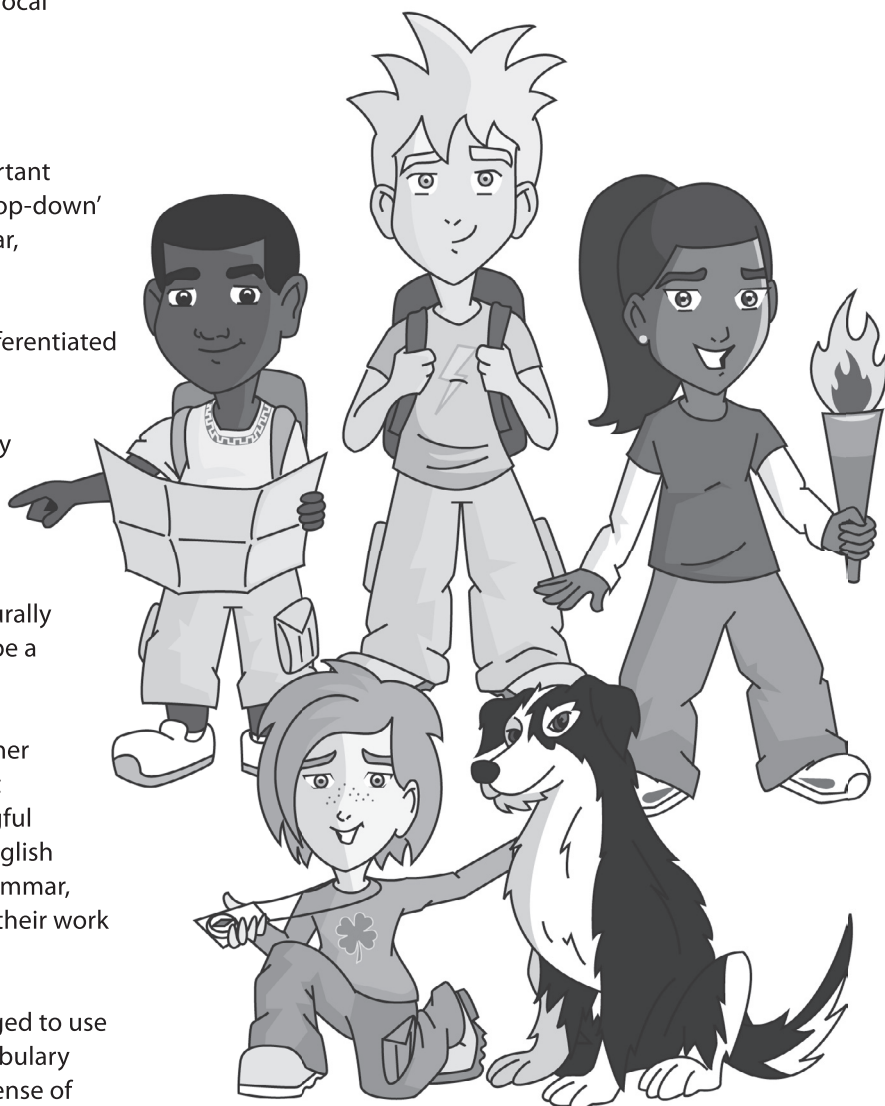
In this way, not only will each learner be encouraged to use particular forms of grammar, punctuation or vocabulary correctly but, essentially, they will gain a strong sense of

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.*



Commas (within clauses)



Think about...

Look at this sentence:

The dog, a Labrador, bit the postman.

Colour the main clause yellow and the secondary clause brown. How do we use commas to show where the embedded clause is?



Guided	Answers
<p>You are looking up information on flags as part of a Geography topic.</p> <p>Why do countries fly flags? Where might you see them? Why are they important? How do they make you feel when you see your own flag? Why? Are there any other flags that you know?</p> <p>Once done, share your ideas with your teacher. Then answer the questions on page 29.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Canada's flag also contains a maple leaf, from its national tree, to show that it cares for its nature and the environment. 2 India's flag also contains a special wheel, the Ashok Chakra, which symbolises progress. 3 Sir Edmund Hillary flew the Union Jack when he conquered Mount Everest.
Independent	Homework
<p>Write about what different world flags mean.</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 30.</p> <p>Once finished, cut off the homework task to take home with you for further practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific answers are required for this task, though teachers should check that each learner has correctly identified the four principle parts of the UK (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) and have drawn each flag. Each learner should also have included at least one embedded clause when describing either each individual flag or how they come together to form the Union Jack.
Extension	
<p>Write about your favourite flag. Complete the task sheet on page 31.</p> <p>Once completed, submit it into a class competition and vote for your favourite design.</p>	

Remember...

When we want to add extra information inside a sentence we can use a comma on either side of that information to show the reader where it is. This extra part of the sentence is often called an **embedded clause**.



Flying the Flag

Here are two flags with special symbols on them:

A



B



Adopted on February 15th 1965, Canada's flag has three vertical stripes on it. The two outer stripes are red to symbolise Canada's sacrifice during the two World Wars. The central white stripe is bigger and represents peace. Canada's flag also contains a maple leaf, from its national tree, to show that it cares for its nature and the environment.

Adopted on July 22nd 1947, India's flag has three horizontal stripes. The top saffron coloured stripe is a symbol of courage and sacrifice. The middle white stripe represents truth, peace and purity. The lower green stripe represents life and prosperity. India's flag also contains a special wheel, the Ashok Chakra, which symbolises progress. This wheel has 24 spokes, one for each hour in the day.



Look at this page from an Atlas and answer the questions below.

- 1 Colour the embedded clause in paragraph A red and copy the full sentence out below.

2 marks

- 2 Colour the embedded clause in paragraph B green and copy the full sentence out below.

2 marks

- 3 Rewrite the following sentence so that it does not contain an embedded clause.

Sir Edmund Hillary, who was from New Zealand, flew the Union Jack when he conquered Mount Everest.

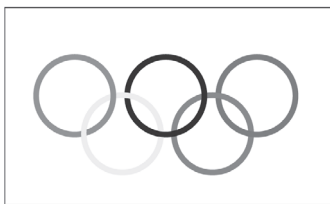
2 marks

Commas (within clauses)



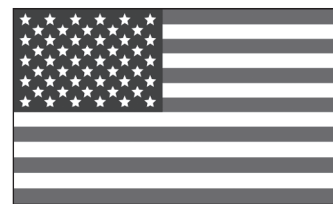
You are a vexillographer (someone who loves to study flags to you and me). Look at the flags below and write about what their colours and symbols mean. Don't forget to use two commas to show where you have added your embedded clause in each of your sentences.

Flying the Flag:



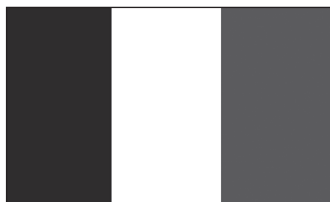
At least one colour seen on the Olympic flag can be found in the national flag of each country of the world.

Extra information: the five interlocking rings representing the five continents of Earth.



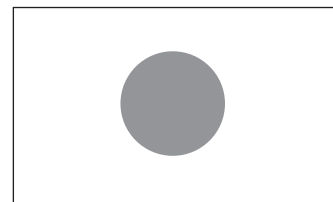
The thirteen red and white stripes on America's flag represent the thirteen British colonies that declared independence from Britain on July 4th, 1776.

Extra information: affectionately known as 'Old Glory'.



The French flag is quite a simple flag and the three colours are often linked with the three ideals of the French Revolution: liberty, equality and fraternity.

Extra information: known as the tricolour.



The iconic flag of Japan has a red disc placed in the centre of a white background that represents the sun.

Extra information: traditionally hoisted up on a bamboo pole.

Homework

Look at the Union Jack. Why is it designed in this way? Which parts of the flag belong to which parts of the UK? Draw the four flags for the four parts of the UK and describe how they come together to form our national flag.



Commas (within clauses)



Look at the different flags of the world. Choose your favourite design and write about it. What country (or organisation) uses this flag? When was it created? By who? What do the colours represent? Are there any symbols on this flag? What do they mean?

Name:

Date:

My Favourite Flag

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing a flag.

Country:

Design Date: