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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.*



Ellipses



Think about...

Listen to this: Going once...going twice...
Who might say this? Where might they be?
Why has the writer used ellipses here?
What effect does this have on the listener?
What might be said next? How might they say it?



Guided	Answers
<p>You are an actor reading a play script. You are going to play the part of the auctioneer.</p> <p>How do the various punctuation marks help you to understand what is happening and how you should act it out? With a partner, take turns in being the auctioneer. While one acts out this scene, let the other be the director. Watch and listen to each other so that you can improve your performance. Which words do you stress? When do you pause and say nothing? How long will you pause for? Why are some pauses longer than others? How are these shown in the play script itself? Do you think such long pauses add or detract from the play? Why?</p> <p>Once done, answer the questions on page 49.</p>	<p>1 To show a clear break between the auctioneer's introduction and the start of the auctioneering process. The fact that this ellipsis is preceded by 'And so we begin' infers the auctioneer enjoys the theatrical element of the job.</p> <p>2 This ellipsis helps highlight the auctioneer's disappointment at the audience's lack of response. It offers us time to reflect upon why nobody is bidding and think about what can be said to help change the audience's mind.</p> <p>3 The final ellipsis shows the passage of time. The auctioneer hopes to gain another bid and thus sell for a higher price.</p>
Independent	
<p>You are a famous author holding a writing workshop. You want to explain how ellipses work and why writers like to use them.</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 50.</p>	
Extension	Homework
<p>You want to retell the legend of The Curse of the Crystal Skull.</p> <p>Complete the task sheet on page 51.</p> <p>Once done, publish your work on the computer or school blog.</p>	<p>• No specific answers are required for this task, though teachers should check that the examples provided by each learner include ellipses.</p>

Remember...

We use **ellipses (...)** to help create suspense. It gives the reader time to think, forcing them to complete the sentence in order to consider an important point. It also allows them time to ask themselves what will happen next or what the punch line might be.





The Crystal Skull

Setting: A packed auction house in the heart of Victorian London, 1874.

Auctioneer: Ladies and gentlemen, a finer antiquity your eyes will not have seen. Let them feast upon the splendour of this exquisite piece.

[Silence]

Auctioneer: And so we begin...who will start the bidding for me today at £200? Come now...surely you cannot all believe in the curse of the Crystal Skull? Superstitious nonsense I can assure you. Ladies and gentlemen, please, do none of you desire to own such a unique and precious artefact?

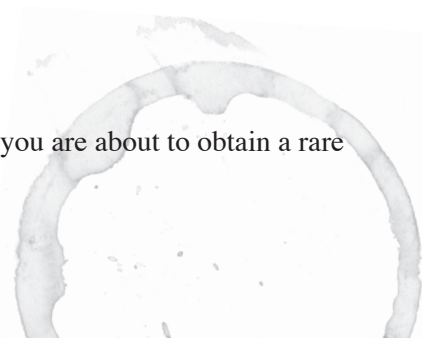
[A figure steps out of the shadows and raises his cane. A woman gasps and the hall begins to murmur]

Auctioneer: Ah, the gentleman at the back of the hall in the bowler hat and the...mask. Obviously a connoisseur of dramatic flair; I thank you.

[Silence]

Auctioneer: Is that the only offer I am to have? Then I say to you good Sir, you are about to obtain a rare bargain. Going once...going twice...

Sold!



Look at the play script and answer the questions below.

1 Why does the author use ellipses in the first instance?

1 mark

2 Why does the author use ellipses in the second instance?

1 mark

3 Why does the author use ellipses in the final instance?

1 mark

Ellipses



You are looking at how different authors use ellipses effectively. Use different colours to match each example with the purpose below. Why do you think each writer has used an ellipsis? Which examples could have used words instead? Why didn't they? Once completed, star your favourite. Why do you like it?

And the next line is...

(A) And without another word, I turned the key, unlocked the door and entered the room...

(B) Milk on the floor, eggs on the ceiling, flour on the walls, butter on the... well, let's just say Rover wouldn't be going for his walk tonight!

(C) Erm...I'm not really sure... perhaps.

(D) The best way to have lots of friends...be a good friend yourself!

(E) Teacher: Jones
Jones: Here
Teacher: Smith
Smith: Here
Teacher: Gibson. Gibson...

(F) The sun rises...The sun sets...
The sun rises...The sun sets...

(G) The credit card (stolen in London) was used two hours later...in Paris!

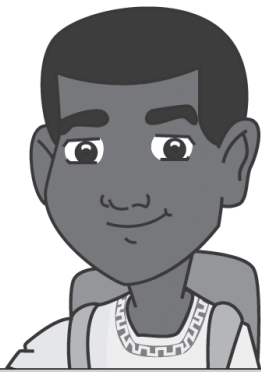
(H) "Somebody took off his hat and...the rest of the men bowed their heads also...The hush deepened."

1 To show hesitation or confusion.	2 To emphasise a repeated action over time.	3 For dramatic effect.	4 To encourage the reader to read on (as part of a cliff hanger).
5 To show there is text missing in a quote.	6 To comical effect when delivering a punchline.	7 To emphasise silence and the passage of time.	8 To indicate the answer is an obvious one.

Homework

Go on an ellipses hunt!
Find five examples of when a writer has used an ellipsis. Make a list of where you found each one, together with why you think they have used it. If you can't find five examples, write some of your own.





You want to retell the legend of The Curse of the Crystal Skull. Why does it have such a bad reputation? What has happened to people in the past? Is it superstitious nonsense or is the curse really true?

Name:

Date:

The Curse of the Crystal Skull

Tales of bad fortune had rippled through the ages, following the skull wherever it went. Who had created this mysterious gem and for what purpose...nobody could say. But legend has it that whoever owns the skull will encounter nothing but misery and mayhem. Lost for over thirty years, it had recently turned up in an old junk shop; a chance discovery that was to awaken the legend once more!

