

## Lesson 2



### Tom Gates: Top of the Class (Nearly)

#### Objectives

- To ask and answer questions about a text to develop a close understanding of what has been read.
- Research and find out about common species of birds
- To understand how a periscope works

#### Outcomes

- A quiz about *Tom Gates: Top of the Class (Nearly)*
- Common birds Top Trumps® cards
- A periscope for spying round corners

#### Resources

- Activity Sheet 4: Please don't worry about this VERY IMPORTANT TEST
- Activity Sheet 5: Brilliant Birdwatching Facts
- Activity Sheet 6: Top of the Class Top Trumps® Template
- Activity Sheet 7: Make Your Own Periscope
- Extract 2 from *Top of the Class (Nearly)*
- Extract 3 from *Top of the Class (Nearly)*

#### Lead-in

The book opens with Tom's 'Top Five Tips' for being TOP of the class. Unfortunately, Tom being Tom, he doesn't manage to get beyond the first one on the list: 'Concentrate. Don't get distracted.' Ask children to discuss in pairs what top tips would be on their list. Share the ideas to agree on a 'Top Five' tips for the class as a whole. What practical changes could support each tip? For example, if drinking enough water to help you think clearly is one of the suggestions, the practical step would be to make sure you brought your water bottle into school and kept it to hand.



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### Tom Gates: Top of the Class (Nearly)

#### Task 1: Please don't worry about this VERY IMPORTANT TEST

Ask children to read the first part of the book up to page 50, including Extract 2 which sets the scene for the VERY IMPORTANT TEST. Tom messes this up because he gets distracted by a dodgy pen and an itchy foot. Give out Activity Sheet 4 and ask children to answer the comprehension questions about what they have just read - will they go straight to the top of the class, or join Tom in the Ketchup (catch-up) class?

Now divide the class into groups, giving each group a different section of the book to read:

- Section 1: p51 - p101
- Section 2: p102 - p147
- Section 3: p148 - p188
- Section 4: p189 - end

Each group should devise their own multiple choice questions in the style of those on Activity Sheet 4 based on the section of the book they have been given. The groups can then put their questions to the rest of the class as you work through the book.

Read Extract 3. In their drama lesson, Mr Fullerman asks Tom's class to act out a short scene from a day in the life of their school. Ask each group to now choose a scene from the section of the book they have been focusing on and act that out. Can the rest of the class guess which part of the story they are performing?

#### Task 2: Become a Terrific Twitcher

In an attempt to recover his cartoon drawing of Mr Fullerman, also known as Mr 'Fullerbum', Tom ends up having to carry around the Big Book of Birdwatching, and feign an interest in birds. Help Tom to bluff his way to the top of the class in birdwatching by creating your own Top Trumps®-style game using Activity Sheets 5 and 6.



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#### Task 3: And Now For Plan J - The Periscope

Tom spends a lot of the book sneaking around to try and recover his drawing, either from the library, or from Buster Jones. In these situations, a periscope would be very useful, helping him to look round corners without being spotted. Use Activity Sheet 7 to build your own periscope and go straight to the Top of the Spying Class.

#### Extension

Draw some of the funny scenes that Tom might see around school or at home when using his periscope. What might Mr Fullerman be doing in the staffroom for example? Or Dad in his shed? What about Marcus Meldrew when he thinks no-one is looking? You could even use your ideas to write an extra chapter for the book!

#### Curriculum links

##### **Reading: comprehension (Years 3-4)**

- Pupils should be taught to develop positive attitudes to reading and understanding of what they read by listening to and discussing a wide range of fiction.
- They should show that they understand what they read by discussing and explaining the meaning of words in context; asking questions to improve their understanding of a text and identifying the main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph.
- Pupils should be able to retrieve and record information from non-fiction texts.

##### **Spoken Language (Years 1-6)**

- Pupils should be taught to participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates.



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### Tom Gates: Top of the Class (Nearly)

#### Science: Living things and their habitats (Y4)

- Pupils should be taught to recognise that living things can be grouped in a variety of ways, and to explore and use classification keys to help group, identify and name a variety of living things in their local and wider environment.
- Pupils might work scientifically by: using and making simple guides or keys to explore and identify local plants and animals; making a guide to local living things; raising and answering questions based on their observations of animals and what they have found out about other animals that they have researched.

#### Science: Light (Y3)

- Pupils should be taught to recognise that they need light in order to see things and that dark is the absence of light. They should notice that light is reflected from surfaces.



## Activity Sheet 4



### Please don't worry about this VERY IMPORTANT TEST

How closely have you been reading? Have a go at these questions on the first part of the book:

Q1. Elections are being held at Oakfield School. Who is being elected?

- a) Library helpers
- b) School councillors
- c) House captains
- d) Play leaders

Q2. In Tom's daydream, the letter he reads out is from:

- a) the animation team behind Tom's favourite TV show, 'The Crazy Fruit Bunch' who are doing an assembly at the school.
- b) a top chef who is redesigning the school dinner menus.
- c) the band Dude 3 announcing they are coming to perform at the school concert.
- d) the author of the 'Big Book of Birdwatching' who is sending him an autographed copy of the book.

Q3. In the catch up class, Tom tries to persuade Mr Fullerman that he has:

- a) see-through eyelids
- b) a photographic memory
- c) x-ray vision
- d) supersonic hearing

Q4. Before the VERY IMPORTANT TEST, Tom:

- a) has a three-legged race with Derek and Solid.
- b) tries on Norman's glasses.
- c) eats a whole packet of caramel wafers.
- d) bangs his head on the corner of the desk.

Q5. When Tom's parents find out about how Tom did in the test, they:

- a) phone the school and ask to make an appointment with Mr Fullerman.
- b) arrange for Tom to have a tutor outside school.
- c) ask for a copy of the test so they can go through it with him at home.
- d) write a note to Mr Fullerman in Tom's school planner.



## Activity Sheet 4

Please don't worry about this  
**VERY IMPORTANT TEST**



Q6. Tom is really disappointed to discover that until the test is over, he won't be able to:

- a) have a sleepover with Derek.
- b) listen to any Dude3 records.
- c) play football with his friends.
- d) watch any TV.

Q7. Tom thinks that more people would come along to the catch up class if Mr Fullerman:

- a) gave out merits for coming along.
- b) brought nicer drinks and snacks.
- c) made them more fun with games and songs.
- d) gave extra break times to those who attended.

Q8. Tom is amazed when Mr Fullerman allows Leroy Lewis to:

- a) move seats so he is next to all his friends.
- b) go home early.
- c) go to the library where the other catch-up class is happening.
- d) copy all the answers out of a book.

Q9. What happened when Buster Jones tried to escape from the class?

- a) He accidentally set off the fire alarm.
- b) He got stuck in the classroom window.
- c) He tripped and broke his ankle.
- d) He broke the window.

Q10. On his way to the library, Tom hides in the cloakroom because:

- a) he wants to avoid bumping into Marcus Meldrew.
- b) he overhears Mr Fullerman and the head teacher, Mr Keen, talking about him.
- c) he has lost the permission note and doesn't want to get into trouble.
- d) he doesn't want to have to explain to another teacher what he is doing.



# Activity Sheet 5

## BRILLIANT Birdwatching Facts



Read through the fact sheet below about some common species of UK garden birds. Use the information and the templates on Activity Sheet 3 to create your own 'Top Trumps'®-style game cards.

Visit [www.garden-birds.co.uk/](http://www.garden-birds.co.uk/) or [www.gardenbird.co.uk/popular-british-birds](http://www.gardenbird.co.uk/popular-british-birds) to research and add your own species.

### Song thrush

You often see song thrushes darting around between bushes in the garden or in woodlands or fields looking for small insects or worms to eat. Their eggs are pale blue and they lay them in cup-shaped nests which they build from grasses and twigs and line with mud. Song thrushes are brown on their backs but their chests are cream coloured and speckled. They get their name because they make up little tunes and repeat them over and over.

Length: 23 cm

Wing Span: 33-36 cm

Weight: 70-90 g

UK Population: 1.98 million

### Blackbird

Male blackbirds are all-black and have yellow bills and yellow rings around their eyes. Female blackbirds are in fact brown, not black. You often see blackbirds hopping about the lawn looking for worms. Their eggs are light blue with red spots.

Length: 24-25 cm

Wingspan: 34-38 cm

Weight: 80-125 g

UK Population: 8.8 million

### Goldfinch

Male and female goldfinches look similar. They have red faces with white cheeks and throats. The top of their head is black and they have yellow on their wings. Their beautiful colours made them a popular pet in the past. Goldfinches like to eat seeds from trees. They also have a very tuneful song. In winter, lots of goldfinches leave the UK and head south to warmer countries. Their eggs are speckled blue.

Length: 12 cm

Wingspan: 21-25.5 cm

Weight: 14-17 g

UK Population: 0.44 million



# Activity Sheet 5

## BRILLIANT Birdwatching Facts



### Wren

Wrens are one of the smallest birds you might see in your garden. They have brown backs and brown and cream stripes around their eyes so they camouflage well under trees and bushes where they are constantly moving about. They build their nests from grass and leaves in bushes, trees or holes in walls. They line their nests with feathers. Although they are small, wrens can travel many kilometres in search of food. They lay white eggs with reddish spots.

Length: 9-10 cm

Wingspan: 13-17 cm

Weight: 8-13 g

UK Population: 14 million

### Chaffinch

The Chaffinch is one of the most common birds in Europe and can be found in any habitats in all areas of the UK, hopping along the ground with jerky head movements. The male chaffinch has a rosy pink chest and cheeks with bluish-grey feathers on its head. The female has a greenish-brown back and is greyish-brown underneath. Chaffinches eat fruit, insect and seeds. Their eggs are light blue.

Length: 14.5 cm

Wingspan: 15-18 cm

Weight: 18-29 g

UK Population: 10.8 million

### Great Spotted Woodpecker

The Great Spotted Woodpecker is the most common and widespread of all Woodpeckers in the UK. They are black and white with red under the tail. Males also have a red splash on their necks. They are similar in size to a blackbird. They live in woodlands, parks and gardens where there are large trees, and males drum on the trunks with their beaks. They feed on insects they find in the cracks in the bark, but in winter they also eat nuts and berries. They have long tongues for picking up food. Great Spotted Woodpeckers also make their nests in tree trunks by hollowing out holes. Their eggs are white.

Length: 22-23 cm

Wingspan: 34-39 cm

Weight: 70-90 g

UK Population: 0.06 million





# Activity Sheet Sheet 5

## BRILLIANT Birdwatching Facts



### Robin

Robins are easily recognised and very popular birds, often known as gardeners' friends because they perch nearby when soil is being dug over so that they can quickly eat any insects that are turned up. Robins do not leave the UK in winter, although robins from colder countries migrate to the UK. You often hear them warbling and chirping as, unlike some birds, they sing all year round. Their eggs are white and speckled with red.

Length: 12-13 cm

Wingspan: 20 cm

Weight: 16-22 g

UK Population: 8.4 million

### Blue tit

Blue tits are small and lively. They feed mostly on insects (especially caterpillars) and seeds. They are very agile and can hang upside down from twigs and bird feeders while eating. They have bright blue heads and yellow chests, with a slight black stripe. Females lay lots of eggs at a time. These are white with purplish spots. They feed on aphids, so are popular with gardeners! Blue Tits will nest in any hole in a tree, wall or nest box. They are well known for nesting in more unusual places, such as letter boxes or pipes.

Length: 11.5 cm

Wingspan: 17.5-20 cm

Weight: 9-12.5 g

UK Population: 6.6 million



# Activity Sheet 6



## Top of the Class Top Trumps Templates

Use these templates to create your own 'Top Trumps'-style cards on the theme of common birds, and become Top of the Birdwatching Class.






# Activity Sheet 7



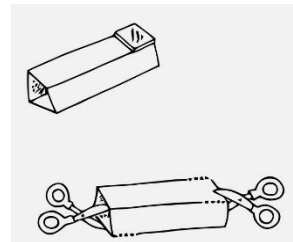
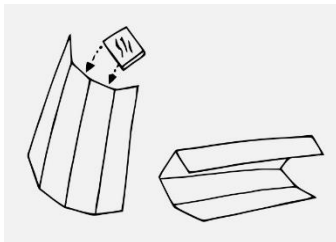
## Make your own periscope

The word 'Periscope' comes from two Greek words: *peri* meaning 'around' and *scopus*, 'to look'. A periscope allows you to look around corners, or other obstacles. Submarines have periscopes so that the people inside can see what's on the surface of the water, even if the ship itself is below the waves.

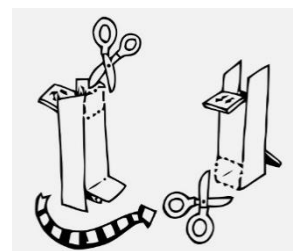
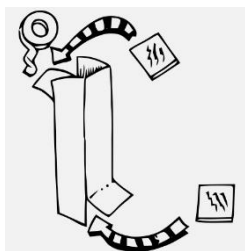
The periscope works because light always reflects away from a mirror at the same angle that it hits the mirror. So, light hits the top mirror and is reflected down onto the bottom mirror at the same angle. That reflected light hits the second mirror and is reflected at the same angle into your eye.

To make your periscope, you will need:

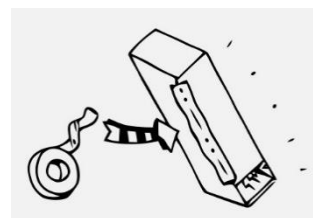
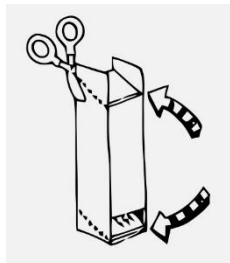
a big piece of card / Tape / Scissors / two small mirrors



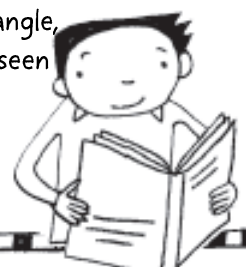
1. First measure, score, fold and tape a large rectangular piece of card to make a tall, open-ended box shape. The opening at each end should be the same size as the mirror.
2. Cut a flap at each end of the box. The flaps should be on opposite sides of the box, and should be the same height as the mirror.



3. Tape a mirror to the inside of each flap, and then cut away the card on the opposite side.



4. Angle both mirrors inward - you will have to play around to find the right angle, but it should be around  $30^\circ$ , so what is reflected on the top mirror is also seen on the bottom one.
5. Tape the mirrors into position, and trim off the extra card.



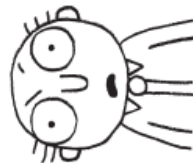
## Extract 2 - Tom Gates: Top of the Class (Nearly)

The **FIRST** time **Mr Fuller**man mentioned the **TEST** he had his **VERY SERIOUS** face on.



**"Tests are nothing to be nervous about. You just have to work hard and CONCENTRATE. But please don't worry about this**

**VERY IMPORTANT TEST."**



**B**ut the way he kept saying

**"VERY IMPORTANT TEST"**



made some kids worry about it a **LOT**.

(Not me though. )

**T**he school sent a letter home about the **TEST** that looked quite **SERIOUS** as well. When Mum and Dad read it, Mum told me,



"Just try your best, Tom. It's not the end of the world if you don't do that well."

"As far as we're concerned it's the **EFFORT** that really counts. So **DON'T** worry about the **TEST**."



Dad said.

**TOM GATES**



## Extract 2 - Tom Gates: Top of the Class (Nearly)



"I'm **NOT** worried," I said.

Which was TRUE. I wasn't worried at all.



Then Delia turned up and joined in. "So, let me get this **STRAIGHT**. When Tom comes at the bottom of the class in the TEST, you won't mind?" she said, trying to make a point.



"Tom **WON'T** be at the bottom of the class. Will you, Tom?" Dad said, looking at me.



"He might be. You're not great at TESTS, are you, Tom?"



"**IF** Tom IS at the bottom of the class in his TEST - and it's a **BIG 'IF'** - as long as he's tried his best, we won't mind at all."

I couldn't get a **WORD** in edgeways with everyone discussing how **BADLY** I was going to do in this TEST.



EVENTUALLY I managed to say,



"**EXCUSE ME!**"

I might do **REALLY WELL** in the TEST and come **TOP** of the **CLASS!**

**TOM GATES**



## Extract 3 - Tom Gates: Top of the Class (Nearly)

Most of the time **DRAMA** LESSONS are OK.

Some are more fun than others depending on who's taking the class.

Mr Fullerman always makes us do these weird face exercises before we start.



Sometimes we have to swing our arms around and

shake our hands.

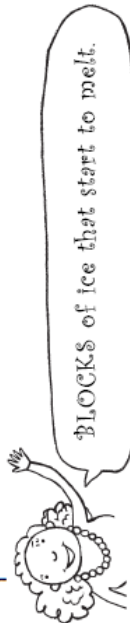


Spinning in a circle can be tricky if you end up near

Norman or Julia Morton.



Once Mrs Nap took us for **DRAMA** and she made us pretend to be...



Some kids **REALLY** got into it. Especially Solid who made an **EXCELLENT** ice cube.

He said it was a very **HOT** day



Today's lesson sounds OK though. Mr Fullerman

wants us to make up a short **SCENE** from a day in the life of the school and **ACT** it out.

**"You could choose something REAL or use your imagination to THINK of something that has NEVER happened before in school!"**



Brad Galloway suggests, which makes us all laugh.

I'm thinking that this could be a really good lesson and a lot of fun...



## Extract 3 - Tom Gates: Top of the Class (Nearly)

SCHOLASTIC

"Hello again, Gatesy!" he says to me, which straight away is annoying.

So I say, "Hello **WERDLEM** - that's your new nickname!"

Marcus doesn't call me Gatesy again.

**AMY**, Solid, Florence and Trevor Peters are in our group too. Normally when it comes to deciding what our play is going to be about, we wouldn't get a word in edgeways with Marcus.

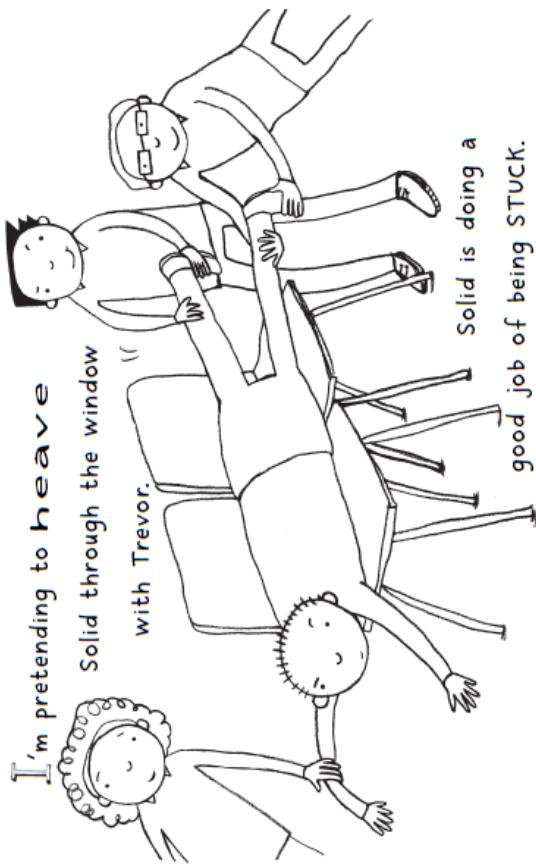
But Solid comes up with a **BRILLIANT** idea that we **ALL AGREE** on. (Even Marcus does.)

What do you think?  
Great!  
Yeah, it's GENIUS!  
OK.

We're going to act out the time when **Buster Jones** got **STUCK** in the window.

Marcus is **Mr Keen**, who gets cross (he'll be good at that). Solid is **Buster**, Florence is the teacher and the rest of us are the kids who try to pull **Buster** out.

Our rehearsal goes pretty well...



I'm pretending to heave Solid through the window with Trevor.

Solid is doing a good job of being **STUCK**.

But when we do the whole scene in front of the class, Marcus gets carried away pretending to be **Mr Keen** and **BLURTS** out, "**RIGHT, Buster** - detention for a **WHOLE** YEAR."

**TOM GATES**