

THE LETTER BOX

Note: The transactional processes suggested in CISCE curriculum are highlighted in grey.

Learning Outcomes

- To develop the virtue of kindness to other creatures
- To realise that disappointments are a part of life
- To appreciate the positive side of situations
- To build background knowledge and practice reciprocal teaching by combining the techniques learnt in earlier lessons

Pre-reading

Whole class Activity

(Group-list-label)

Preparation: Prior to class arrange for a chart for each of the groups.

1. Write *Farm* and *Garden* on the board. Have the students brain storm all the words relating to the topics e.g.: *seeds, soil, butterfly, bees, sting, antenna, orange tree, farm house*. (Encourage specifics instead of broad categories like plants, flowers)

Now take the time to introduce the word, *orchard*. Tell students that there is a huge orchard in this garden, and ask them to think of more things/creatures they may find in this garden.

Note: Do not critique their response even if the words do not have a direct relation to the topic.

Write all the words on the board.

2. Divide the students into small groups.
3. Each group works together to cluster the words into different categories. As the cluster of words emerges, challenge students to explain the reason for placing the words together or leaving them out of the cluster.

4. Ask students to suggest headings for the different clusters of words. (*Note:* Show them an example from below.)
5. Tell students to think of sights and sounds from a garden and farm.
6. Now give each group a chart paper and ask them to transfer their word clusters to the chart. (Tell them that there is no wrong answer as long as they can explain the reason to the group. Tell them that this is just a way of helping them connect words to each other and help build their vocabulary.)

Things that grow from the ground	Things plants need to grow
Roses	Soil
Tomatoes	Seeds
	Sunlight

Trees	Birds
Cherry	Parrots
Orange	Sparrows

Some topics can be: *insects, food on the farm, things in the barn, things in a farm house, smells, sounds* and so on.

Note: Provide assistance as needed, reminding students to brainstorm the words first and then form their headers.

READING

Students summarise, predict, clarify and question

Reciprocal Teaching

Tell students that since they are now familiar with the summarising, predicting, clarifying and questioning techniques from the previous units, they are going to practice putting it all together.

Group Work

Preparation: Prior to the class, prepare role cards and a copy of their role description for each member of the group. Every group has 1 or 2 students (depending on the strength of the class) in each of the categories given below.

- Put students in groups of four or eight (depending on the strength of the class)
 - Distribute one role card to each member of the group identifying each person's unique role:
 - Summarizer
 - Questioner
 - Clarifier
 - Predictor
 - Visualizer
- (Note: If there are groups of ten students, assign one role to two students, who discuss and perform the given task.)
- Tell students that they are going to read the assigned part of text, after which they need to play their respective roles. Encourage them to use note-taking strategies such as selective underlining and margin notes to help them better prepare for their role in the discussion.
 - Explain the roles: Provide the role description to each group, and give them time to read the instructions, take down points from the instructions to get ready for the discussion.

	Predict <i>Make a prediction when:</i>	Summarize <i>How to do a summary:</i>	Question <i>(Ask teacher-like questions)</i>	Visualize <i>Draw</i>	Clarify <i>Clarify hard parts when:</i>
Introduction Step	Read the title and write the prediction <i>Based on the title, I predict this is going to be about...</i> <i>Based on... (a clue), I predict...</i>	Look for the topic sentence <i>This text is mostly about ...</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Who is _____? What is/does? When/where is _____? Why is _____ significant? Why does _____ happen? What is most important _____? 	<i>Visualize a picture in your mind:</i> Draw <i>When I read this, I imagine that ...</i>	<i>(Write words, phrases, or sentences that are unclear, and explain how it was clarified)</i> You don't understand <i>I don't really understand ...</i>

<p>Procedure Steps</p>	<p>Predict from the pre-reading exercise</p> <p><i>I already know these things about the topic/ story...</i></p> <p><i>I think the next section will be about...</i></p>	<p>Look for who, what, when, where, why, and how</p> <p><i>The topic sentence is ...</i></p> <p><i>The author is trying to say ...</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What are the parts of _____? ● How is an example of _____? ● How do _____ and _____ compare? ● How are _____ and _____ different? ● What is your opinion of _____? 	<p>Draw</p> <p><i>As I read, in my mind I see ...</i></p>	<p>You can't follow the text</p> <p><i>A question I have is ...</i></p> <p><i>One word/ phrase I do not understand is</i></p>
	<p>When the author asks a question in the text</p> <p><i>Based on what said/did, I predict...</i></p> <p>The text suggests what will be discussed next</p>	<p><i>This story/ passage about _____ begins with _____,</i></p> <p><i>Discusses (or develops) the idea that _____,</i></p> <p><i>and ends with _____</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unclear parts ● Puzzling information ● Connections to concepts already learnt 	<p>Draw</p>	<p>You don't know what a word means</p> <p><i>A question I'd like answered by the author is ...</i></p>

5. Students read the title and work on the introduction step in their groups, and each student shares the findings specific to his role. Encourage visualizers to draw the story as they hear it being read. (Demonstrate the process with one group, so everyone understands the procedure)

6. The roles in the group then switch one person to the right. Each time you complete reading a section, switch roles.

Note: You may read the story aloud with proper intonation / play the audio)

- *In a sleepy ... One day, the priest's helper, Maria, burst into his room.*

Describe where the priest stayed. Who ate the fruits from the orchard? What did the birds do every year? Why do you think they did this? Where did they build their nests?

Tell students to close their eyes and imagine the sense of sight and smell in the orchard.

Predict: *Why do you think Maria rushed into the room?*

What kind of garden would it be?

- *neat and orderly*
- *lush and green*

(Ans: lush and green)

- “You will not believe ... my little sparrows will be safe,” he explained to Maria.

What were the sparrows doing? What were they building their nest with? The writer says he laughs, ‘...like a grandfather when he hears of a baby’s pranks’ what kind of man do you think the priest was? (A man very fond of the birds) What did he see in the letter box? What does he tell them? What does he do with the letter box after that? What does he tell his friends?



Give two adjectives to describe the priest.

This can be used as *Assessment for Learning*. Students learn about the character of the priest.

(Free response. Suggested answer: kind, animal-friendly, compassionate)

- After a few days, only ... because they did not want to disturb the sparrows.

How did the priest know that the mother sparrow is sitting on her eggs? What does the writer mean when he says, ‘He had the heart of a child that had never grown old’? What was the important meeting in Barcelona? What was the test the Archbishop set for the old priest?

Do you think the Archbishop was fair? Give a reason.

(Ans: Free response)

What did the Archbishop do and why did no one see the letter?

- For three weeks ... to bring up your children.”

What happened for three weeks? What did the old priest see one day? What did the priest find in the letter box after the sparrows left? Why did a tear appear in his eyes after reading the letter? What made him finally smile? (The thought that he helped the sparrows bring up their children)

Students conclude by sharing what they learnt, and say one closing statement on the text from each of the participants.

(Note: Throughout the process, guide and nurture the students’ ability to use the four strategies successfully within the small group.)

Post-reading

Group work

Ask students:

1. Was the priest’s decision to help the sparrows, right? Why / Why not?
2. What is the moral of the story?
3. Why is the story titled, *The Letter Box*? What is the significance of the letter box in the story?
4. Think of a different title for the story.

Groups now share a summary of their discussions and their alternative story titles with the class.

GRAMMAR

Order of adjectives; interjections

Order of adjectives

- Tell students that when more than one adjective is used in a sentence it follows a certain order.
- The order is: *number, quality, size, age, age, shape, colour, material*

Practice

Rearrange these jumbled adjectives.

1. My parents gifted me with a _____ (big / really / green /) chair.

2. The queen wore an _____ (gold / enormous / glittering) crown.
3. The pig built a _____ house. (strong / little / brick / third)
- Ans: 1. really big green 2. enormous, glittering, gold 3. third little, strong brick

VOCABULARY

Idioms with *burst*

Follow the inputs in the Reader.

LISTENING

Post listening—article

Tell students that they are about to listen to an article about sparrows. The information will be factual. Instruct them to listen carefully and say whether the statements are true or not true, after listening. Allow them to read the questions before hearing the audio. Inform them that the recording will only be played twice. Now play the audio track. Let the students listen carefully. Instruct them to write whether the statements are True or Not true. Give students sufficient time to write their answers.

Play the audio track one more time so that they may include any missed out information.

SPEAKING

Group discussion

Tell students that they will now be following the *Think-pair-share* technique for speaking.

T: (Think) – Tell them to think of the answers for these questions. They could take down notes if needed.

1. *Who is a hero?*
2. *What qualities did the priest have that could make him a hero?*
3. *What are the qualities that make a person a hero?*

P: (Pair) – Now pair every student with another student.

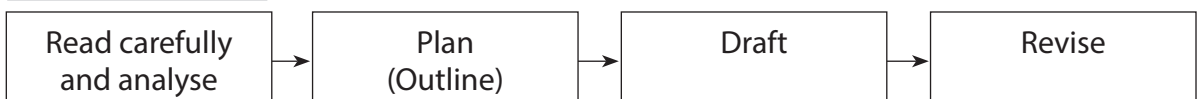
S: (Share) - They now share their thoughts with their partner.

Now take the pairs' discussion into groups and then into the class. Allow observations, clarification, questioning and end by summarising the entire discussion.

WRITING

Alternative Ending

Tell students that they are going to learn how to brainstorm to develop an alternative ending to the story.



Tell students that they have completed the first step in the reading section. Have them discuss the following review questions in their groups and write down the answers:

Read carefully and analyse – Review

Current story ending:

Theme:

Plan – (Outline)

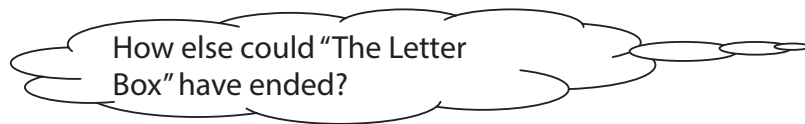
- Brainstorm alternative endings to the story – (begin near the climax of the story).
- Jot down how the new endings would be brought in step-by-step in your story.
- Choose the ending that is most convincing for you.

Remind students that the ending now is a quiet street with the Priest reading the letter, tears rolling down his face knowing he had to leave the place he loved yet, looking at the sparrow family knowing that he helped them.

Draw these pictures on the board, leaving out the examples. Ask students for ideas for *what if*. Discuss one with the class and allow groups time to brainstorm for more *what ifs*

(Note: The examples given are for the teacher's guidance. Encourage students to use their own creativity.) e.g.: 1. The Priest saw the postman

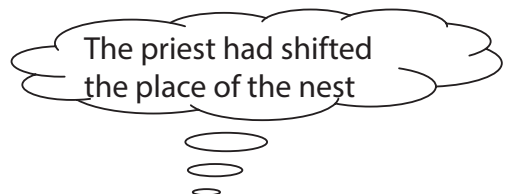
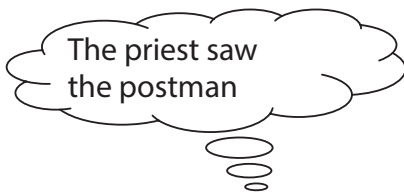
What ifs



What if...

Example: The priest saw the postman

Analysing What ifs



1. He would have taken the letter from the postman.
2. He would have gone to see the Archbishop.

1. The eggs might not have survived.
2. The sparrows might have got angry and pecked the Priest.
3. The sparrows might have decided to fly away and not return.

Tell students to discuss and write the *what ifs* and *what if analysis* for every story ending idea.

Now tell them that the third point of the plan is individual work and that they have to read all the ideas and individually choose one ending that they are personally the most convinced about. They then plan an outline with the selected ending.

Draft: Students work individually to put their ideas into written text. The outline now is converted into paragraphs. Remind students about the paragraph structures they learnt in the previous lessons.

Revise: They revise focusing on word choices and checking for any mistakes.

STUDENTS' BOOK ANSWER KEY

The Letter Box

Pre-reading

A.

C	F	L	I	G	H	T	N	G
L	Q	W	F	E	E	D	E	R
A	K	J	L	W	C	B	S	D
W	Z	M	O	P	B	H	T	W
F	P	V	C	X	I	W	K	I
B	E	A	K	V	L	V	H	N
J	X	T	A	I	L	H	X	G
P	F	E	A	T	H	E	R	P

Comprehension

- A.**
1. The birds came to the orchard in spring to build their nests and feast on the various fruits that grew there.
 2. The priest got to know that a pair of sparrows was building their nest there. He knew that in a few days, they would have three or four brown eggs. When these eggs would hatch, they would need three more weeks to bring up their family and he did not want them to be disturbed. So, the priest locked up the letter box for the next three weeks.
 3. The Archbishop wanted to send the priest away from Santa because he felt that the priest was too old to do his duties and a young priest needed to be there.
 4. The letter sent by the Archbishop remained unopened in the letter box until the sparrow family flew away. The priest opened the letter three weeks later.
- B.**
1. The speaker is talking about a pair of sparrows.
'They', or the pair of sparrows, were building their nest inside the priest's letter box.
 2. The priest said these words to the sparrows.
He said these words because he wanted to make sure that the birds felt safe enough to raise their family inside the letter box. Therefore, he decided that they would remain undisturbed.
 3. The speaker is talking about the priest.
The speaker means that just like a little child, the priest also had a pure and kind heart which loved animals and birds and felt great joy in little things.

4. These words were spoken by the Archbishop.
The Archbishop decided to send a letter to the priest of Santa asking him to come and see him in three days. If the priest came, then he would be allowed to stay on in Santa. Otherwise, he would have to leave. This was the test.

5. The speaker or the priest is talking about the pair of sparrows who could bring up their babies in the letter box.
A tear came to the priest's eye as he understood that the Archbishop had tested him and he had failed the test. He had not seen the letter earlier and had not gone to meet the Archbishop. So, he knew he would have to leave his beloved Santa and the people there.

- C.** 1. The villagers loved the priest because he was a generous and compassionate person, who was kind to both animals and people.
2. *Answers may vary. Please accept all logical answers. Suggested answer:* Yes, the priest did the right thing by allowing the sparrows to build their nest in the letter box because he gave them a chance to bring up their family in a safe place. If he had not given them shelter in his letter box, they may not have been able to find another place to nest or may have been disturbed in another place.

Grammar

- A.** 2. We saw five beautiful big dolphins jumping in the sea.
3. The fisherman threw a strong new nylon net in the river.
4. Father gifted us two big maroon woollen sweaters.
5. He saw four little yellow birds on the window-sill.
6. Asif has a huge old wooden clock in his house.

- B.** 2. Alas 3. Oh dear 4. Ouch 5. Congratulations
6. Look 7. Hello 8. Wow

Vocabulary

- A.** 1. b 2. d 3. a 4. e 5. f 6. c

B. *Answers may vary. Accept all logical answers.*

Listening

Listening text

Sparrows are among the most familiar birds all around the world. Today, there are about 140 species of sparrows in almost every continent except Antarctica. Sparrows mainly eat seeds, but they also feed on fruits, berries and small insects. Sparrows tend to live very close to where humans live. They are well adapted to life in the city, where they eat almost everything they can find. Although not so long ago, sparrows were available in large numbers, they are now reducing in number. If this is not stopped, then very soon the sparrow species will be completely wiped out like the dodo. One of the main reasons for the reducing sparrow population is because the places where they live are being destroyed. It is becoming more and more difficult for the sparrow to find food and places to build nests. With modern buildings, the small holes in which the sparrow builds its nests are no longer available. Also, the use of pesticides kills the small insects that the sparrow

feeds on. Unless steps are taken to help the sparrow, little can be done to protect this lovely bird species from disappearing completely.

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. F | 2. T | 3. F | 4. F | 5. T |
| 6. T | 7. F | 8. T | | |

Speaking

Free response.

Writing

Free response.

Punctuation

1. Aren't there any children's books in the shop?
2. Oh! This is such a beautiful place.
3. What a lovely day!
4. Shut the door!
5. I'm learning all the characters' parts in the play.
6. Wow! How did you do that?
7. Ouch! You stepped on my toe.
8. He isn't going to Raj's house tomorrow.

ANSWER KEY TO WORKSHEET 8

- A.**
2. Paul bought four colourful pairs of socks.
 3. I bought five small round blue cushions for the sofa.
 4. There were three playful huge elephants in the zoo.
 5. My grandmother lives in a quaint tiny brick cottage.
 6. She wore an expensive oval emerald pendant.
- B.**
1. Hurray
 2. Alas
 3. Whoa
 4. Wow
 5. Congratulations
 6. Ouch
- C.**
1. hard of hearing – not able to hear well
 2. smelt a rat – thought that something was not as it appeared to be
 3. in hot water – to be in trouble
 4. on top of the world – feeling very happy
 5. lend someone a hand – help
- D.** *Free response*

QUESTION BANK

The Letter Box

A. Answer in brief.

1. What was the surprising news Maria brought in one day? How did the priest welcome the news?

Ans: The priest's orchard was an abode for many birds during spring. One day, Maria, the priest's helper, burst into the room excitedly to inform that birds were building a nest in the letter box. The priest was excited and happy as a grandfather would be on hearing about a baby's pranks.

2. What efforts did the priest take to protect the sparrows and their family?

Ans: The priest knew that the sparrows would need at least three weeks to bring up their family. He wanted to make sure that no one disturbed them and so informed his friends not to write letters to him for some time.

B. Answer in detail.

1. Describe how Nature made the orchard a Paradise for birds to reside.

Ans: From May to August, the orchard became a heavenly abode for birds. The orchard was filled with delicious fruits and beautiful flowers making it the right place for myriad birds to build their nests. The blackbirds, the pretty orioles, the sparrows and warblers of every variety chose the best places to build their nests in the orchard. The hollows in the trees, the holes in the walls and the gap between the rafters of the roof were all taken up to start a family. They even used the letter box to build their nest.

2. Why did the Archbishop want to change the priest? How did he want to check if he could be retained?

Ans: The Archbishop thought the priest at Santa was getting old and should soon be replaced by a young priest. The other priests were apprehensive of the villagers' reaction to that change because they all knew the villagers loved the priest. The Archbishop decided to set a test to find out if he was too old to be retained. He decided to send a letter asking him to meet him in three days. If the priest did not respond to his letter, he would conclude that a replacement was needed in Santa.

C. Choose the correct answer.

What happened to the priest as a result of protecting the sparrow family in the letter box?

- a. He lost his position in the village church.
- b. He became a hero among the people from the village.
- c. He found that none of the birds feared him anymore.

Ans: a

D. Read the lines and answer the questions.

1. *The priest bent down and put his ear to the letter box.*
 - a. What did the priest check?
 - b. What was in the letter box?
 - c. What did he discover?

Ans: a. The priest wanted to check if there was any sound coming from the letter box so that he would know if the eggs had hatched.

- b. A few days earlier, a couple of sparrows had made a nest in the box and had laid eggs.
 - c. He discovered that the eggs had hatched and he could hear the chirping of the baby birds.
2. *The priest, who was present at this pleasant garden party, counted four baby sparrows.*
- a. Why did the narrator say there was a garden party?
 - b. Where were the sparrows?
 - c. What did the priest find in the place where the sparrows resided?

Ans: a. There was a garden party because, the hatched eggs, which had turned into little baby sparrows tumbled one by one out of their nests and flew out to join other sparrows.

- b. The little sparrows were in the nest inside the letter box.
- c. After checking that there were no more baby sparrows in the letter box, he opened the box and found a long white envelope.

E. Answer in brief. (Think and answer)

1. How did the old priest's love for the sparrows cost him his stay in Santa?

Ans: The priest, in order to protect the birds and the nest, had stopped his friends from sending any letters to him as that would disturb the nest in the letter box. Hence, he could not read the Archbishop's letter sent to test him. As he did not respond, a young priest was sent in his place.

2. Do you think the birds too loved the priest as much as he loved them?

Free response *Suggested answer:* I am not sure if the birds too loved the priests as much as he loved them because the birds seemed attracted to the orchard more than the priest. They made the orchard their residence because of the variety of fruits which the birds loved. But it is possible that the birds felt safe and protected with the priest around.

Answer in detail. (Think and answer)

What did the priest gain by losing his position in the village church?

Free response *Suggested answer:* The priest lost his job in the church in Santa because he could not respond to the Archbishop who had summoned him in three days. This was not because of any indifference on his part, but because of his love for the birds which had nestled comfortably in his letter box. Though the priest was sad to leave the lovely orchard and the loving villagers, he was content and happy that he had helped the sparrows bring up their children. Though he lost something, he gained multi-fold in the form of contentment that he experienced by protecting a sparrow family and letting them out safely into the bird world.