

Popcorn ELT Readers Teacher's Notes



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Welcome to the Popcorn ELT Readers series, a graded readers series for low-level learners of English. These free teacher's notes will help you and your classes get the most from your Over the Hedge Popcorn ELT Reader.

Level 1

Popcorn ELT Readers level 1 is for students who are beginning to read in English, based on a 200 headword list. There are no past tenses at this level.

Over the Hedge has a total story wordcount of 551 words.

Over the Hedge – synopsis

RJ is a raccoon and like all raccoons, he loves food. When RJ sees Vincent the bear's food supplies, he tries to steal them. But Vincent wakes up as RJ is leaving. Vincent chases RJ and the food falls onto the road and is run over. Vincent tells RJ that he has one week to get new supplies.

As RJ is wondering what to do, he sees a group of forest animals. The animals have just woken up after the winter. While they were sleeping, some new houses have been built on the forest land. The animals are worried about how they can get food supplies for next winter. RJ helps them steal food from the gardens and bins of the houses. His plan is to give the supplies to Vincent – but he doesn't tell the forest animals this. Verne the tortoise is not happy about stealing and doesn't trust RJ. But the other forest animals don't listen to Verne – they are having too much fun with their new friend.

Gladys lives in one of the new houses. She hates the animals and tells the Verminator to destroy them. When the animals try to steal food from Gladys' fridge, the Verminator catches them and takes them away. RJ leaves with the food to give back to Vincent, but finally he realises his new friends are more important. He causes the Verminator's van to crash and the animals escape. The animals all run back to the forest together.

Over the Hedge – the film

Released: 2006

Genre: animated comedy

Suitable for: all children

Actors: Bruce Willis (voice of RJ), Garry Shandling (voice of Verne), Avril Lavigne (voice of Heather)

For ideas on watching extracts from the DVD in class, see pages 3, 5 and 6 of these notes.



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Just choose the pages that you need and print!

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Meet ... everyone from Over the Hedge

• This page is recorded on the CD.

The 'Meet ...' page introduces students to the main characters in the story.



- 1 Before looking at the book, ask students *Do you know the film Over the Hedge?* If anyone knows and likes the film, talk briefly in L1 about why they like it.
- 2 Look together at the front cover of the book. Use the cover to pre-teach the names of the animals: *tortoise, raccoon, squirrel, opossum, skunk, porcupine*. Now pre-teach *food*. Point to Verne and RJ and ask *What are they looking for? (Food)* Point to the house and ask *What's this?* Point to the picture of Gladys on page 3. Ask *Where does she live? (In the house)*. Ask *What do you think? Does Gladys like the animals?* Students discuss in L1.

OR

- DVD** In L1, tell students they're going to see part of a film about a raccoon called RJ. Write the following adjectives on the board. Ask students which adjective best describes RJ in this scene: *funny, happy, hungry*. Show the scene at the start of the film when RJ is

trying to get food (DVD scene 1). Stop the scene at the point where RJ has seen Vincent's food supplies. In L1, students discuss adjectives to describe RJ. Then ask them what they think RJ will do next. Watch the rest of the scene up until the opening credits and see how many of their predictions are correct.

- 3 Look at the 'Meet ...' page with your class and ask some questions about the animals in the pictures, e.g. *What's this animal?*
- 4 Read the page out loud to the class or play the CD.
- 5 Students close their books. Play a game of Who Am I? For example, say *I'm a tortoise*. Students say *You're Verne*. Continue with information about the other characters. With stronger classes, ask students to take over your role.
- 6 Read the 'Before you read' question with your class. Ask any students who haven't seen the film to predict the answer.



New Words



This page is recorded on the CD.



The words on this page are available as flashcards, see pages 13–18 of these notes.

The 'New Words' page presents up to ten new words that are included in the story, but are not on the headword list. There is usually a piece of conversational language at the end.

New Words	
<p>What do these new words mean? Ask your teacher or use your dictionary.</p> 	
forest	push
 <p>This is a big forest.</p>	 <p>She's pushing her brother.</p>
find	frightened
 <p>I can't find my shoe!</p>	 <p>The boy is frightened.</p>
food	hedge
 <p>There's a lot of food.</p>	 <p>There is a tall hedge in the garden.</p>
spring	take back
 <p>I like spring!</p>	 <p>I'm taking it back.</p>
winter	'Yum!'
 <p>It's cold in winter!</p>	 <p>'Yum!' Yum!</p>
<p>What does the title <i>Over the Hedge</i> mean? Ask your teacher.</p>	

- Look at the 'New Words' page with your class. Say *These words are in the story. Which words do you know?* They should remember *forest*, *food* and *hedge* from the 'Meet ...' page.
- Play the recording of the words and sentences on the CD. Elicit the meaning of each word in L1 or translate for the class.
- The conversational language on this page is *Yum!* We use this when we have some food we like. Say it several times and ask students to repeat and mime the word.
- Do some vocabulary activities to practise the new words (see suggestions opposite).

Tip

Try to consolidate the new language introduced in the Popcorn ELT Reader by using it in other activities in your English lessons.

Vocabulary Activities

- Play a game of charades or pictionary, in groups or as a whole class. One student chooses a word and mimes or draws it for the rest of the group. The first student to guess correctly has the next turn.
- Stick the flashcards around the classroom. Say a word and students point to the correct flashcard. Alternatively, for a more energetic version of the activity, they could run to the flashcard.
- Play bingo. Students write down five of the new words on a piece of paper. You then show the picture flashcards in random order and say the words. When students hear or see a word that they have written down, they cross it out. The first student to cross out all his/her words and shout *Bingo!* is the winner.



Using the story with your class

- The story is recorded on the CD.

The story can be read in a number of ways, depending on the size, age and language level of your students and the teaching time available. The following are some suggestions for ways of reading the story. You may want to combine several of these.

Teacher-led reading

This can work well with younger students. Read the story out loud to your class, or use the CD. If possible, allow your class to sit close together on a mat when you read the story to them. Remember to give the students plenty of time to process what they are hearing. As you read, emphasise the words which carry most meaning, and pause at the end of each sentence.

Children love to hear the same stories again and again, and repetition supports language learning. Reading the same story several times can be very useful.

Autonomous reading

It is important that students learn to read autonomously. Decide on a period of time each week when students can practise silent reading in class – or perhaps ten minutes at the start or end of every lesson. This will encourage the habit of reading and will motivate students to continue reading in their own time. Younger students can take their readers home and read a page or chapter to their family. This will give them a strong sense of ownership of the story.

Group or pair reading

Students take turns in reading a sentence, paragraph or page of the story to each other in small groups or pairs. Encourage them to help each other with pronunciation of new words. This can be a useful reinforcement task once students are familiar with the story.

Before reading a section of the story you could:

- Warm up with a vocabulary activity (see page 4).
- Discuss what has happened in the story so far.
- Show students a picture from the next part of the story and ask them to guess (in L1) what is happening.
- Copy several pictures from the next part of the story. Give a set of the pictures to small groups of students. They guess the order in which the pictures will appear.
- Play students a short section of the film, showing an event that they are going to read about or a character that they are going to meet. For example, play the scene in which we first meet the Verminator (DVD scene 9). Then ask students, e.g. *Is he nice? (No) Does he like animals? (No)*

Tip

Set up a class library of graded English readers and give students the opportunity to choose their own stories from time to time. This will encourage them to be more involved in their own reading.



After reading a section of the story you could:

- Give students one of the chapter quizzes on pages 7 and 8 of these notes.
- Ask students to write quiz questions about the story. Give them some examples, e.g. *Where does Gladys live? Where does Verne live? Who is Vincent?* They ask and answer their questions in groups or as a whole class.
- Predict what is going to happen next.
-  Play the film extract that corresponds with the section of the story that students have just read. For example, play the scene in which the animals go to and from the gardens to steal the food (DVD scene 8). After watching, ask students to tell you how much they remember. Make a list on the board, giving new vocabulary as necessary, then show the extract again to see how well they did.

After finishing the story you could:

- Do the activities at the back of the reader.
- Ask students to write captions for the pictures in the story.
-  Divide the class into groups and give each group a word that is used regularly in the story. You might want to create an action for each word. Play the CD or read a section of the story aloud. Each time students hear their word, they stand up and sit down again, or do the action. For example, give groups the words *Vincent, RJ* and *food* for Chapter 1.

- In small groups, students read up to the end of page 6 and then think of a different way for Chapter 1 to finish. They write, draw or role-play their new ending for Chapter 1.
- Ask students to make a poster about one of the characters in the story. They draw a picture and write some information, e.g. what the character looks like, where he/she lives, what he/she likes and doesn't like, what he/she does in the story.
- Ask students to write a short review of the reader. Write on the board:

I think the story of Over the Hedge is ...

My favourite character is ... because ...

 Ask students how they might complete these sentences and write their ideas on the board. They use this as a framework for writing their review. They could also give the story a score out of ten, depending on how much they enjoyed it. You might want students to have a readers folder where they keep reviews for all the readers they have read.



Using film extracts in class

- Use short extracts (two to three minutes maximum).
- Give students something to do or think about as they watch.
- Ask them questions about the extract they have just seen.
- Allow them time to talk about what they have just seen.



Chapter Quizzes (Answer key, page 11)

Chapter 1

Circle the correct words.

- 1 RJ is / isn't hungry.
 - 2 RJ has / doesn't have a lot of food.
 - 3 Vincent is / isn't happy.
 - 4 RJ is / isn't frightened.
 - 5 RJ pushes / doesn't push the food into the road.
 - 6 Now Vincent has / doesn't have a lot of food.
-

Chapter 2

What is Hammy saying? Write the correct words.

big find food forest hungry no

'I'm 1 hungry ! Let's 2 some food in the forest.

Oh 3 ! Come and look at this, everyone!

There's no 4 There's a 5 hedge!

Now we can't find 6 for the winter.'





Chapter Quizzes (Answer key, page 11)

Chapter 3

Put the sentences in order.

- a The Verminator comes to Gladys' house.
 - b The animals eat new food.
 - c The animals are angry with Verne.
 - d The animals go over the hedge. **1**
 - e Verne says, 'I'm sorry, RJ.'
 - f Verne takes the food back to the gardens.
-

Chapter 4

Who says this? Who do they say it to?

1 Quick! It's morning!

Verne says this to RJ

2 One more bag ...

..... says this to

3 Very good, RJ!

..... says this to

4 We're sorry.

..... say this to



Real World

- This page is recorded on the CD.

The **Real World** page provides students with cross-curricular or cross-cultural information linked to the content of the reader.

- Draw two pictures on the board: one of houses and skyscrapers and one of trees and a river. Elicit: *city* and *country*. Ask *What animals live in the country?* Students suggest the names of animals in English or in L1. Ask *What animals live in the city?* Students suggest some animals in English or in L1. Write the names of the animals on the board in English.
- Tell students to open their books at page 26. Students read each section, or read and listen to the CD. When they have finished listening, ask students the names of any other animals in the text that live in the city. Write the names of these animals on the board too.
- Look at the word box. Ask students if they know what these words mean. You might like students to use a dictionary to check meaning.
- Read out the following sentences. Students read the text and find out which animal each sentence refers to. *You can see these in parks*

in London (parakeets). You can see these in cities in the UK (foxes). Now say You can see these in your garden or road. Students give you some suggestions.

- Give each student a copy of the 'Project' worksheet (see page 10 of these notes). Students choose an animal they have seen in their town or a town near them. Encourage students to find out information about this animal. They can find the information either at home or in the school library, using books or the Internet. They find out what the animal eats, where it lives and what it looks like. They draw or stick a picture in the space provided, and label it. Students then complete the text on the worksheet.
- Display the projects around the classroom for other students to read. After this, you could tell students to keep their completed project worksheets in a 'Real World' section of their readers folder.



Real World: Project

My City Animal

Cross-curricular
content area:
Science

Draw or stick pictures here.

This is a

It's

It eats

You can see it



Answer Key

After you read (page 28)

- 1** a 3 b 7 c 4 d 1 e 5 f 2 g 6
2 a Yes b Yes c No d Yes e No f Yes



Where's the popcorn?

Tell your class that the popcorn logo is hidden in the reader.
Can they find it? (Answer: page 25)

Multiple intelligence activities (pages 29–32)

The activities on pages 29–32 are designed to cater for students' multiple intelligences and learning styles.

Puzzle time! (pages 29–30)

1

Linguistic intelligence

	A	L	E	F	P	X
	W	A	K	E	U	P
R	U	B	E	S	U	
R	G	T	Y	H	P	
U	H	I	G	O	M	
N	S	F	I	K	D	
S	R	A	V	O	G	
	S	L	E	E	P	V

2

Spatial intelligence

- a) Who finds some food?
 b) Who finds no food?

3

Naturalistic intelligence



- a** porcupine **d** raccoon
b squirrel **e** opossum
c tortoise **f** skunk

4

Intra-personal intelligence



- a** angry **c** frightened
b hungry **d** sad

Chapter Quiz Answer Key

(Teacher's notes, pages 7 and 8)

Chapter 1

- 1** is **4** is
2 doesn't have **5** pushes
3 isn't **6** doesn't have

Chapter 2

- 1** hungry **4** forest
2 find **5** big
3 no **6** food

Chapter 3

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

Chapter 4

- 1** Verne says this to RJ.
2 RJ says this to Verne.
3 Vincent says this to RJ.
4 The animals say this to Verne.



Imagine ...

Kinaesthetic intelligence

- 1 Say *Open your books at page 31*. Put students in pairs and give them a few minutes to practise their dialogue. Let them read the dialogue several times.
- 2 Clear a large space in the centre of the classroom. Call up each pair to act out their dialogue. Confident students could try acting out the dialogue without looking in their books.
- 3 The class votes for the student or group who did the best acting. Ask if any students can act out another part of the story

Chant

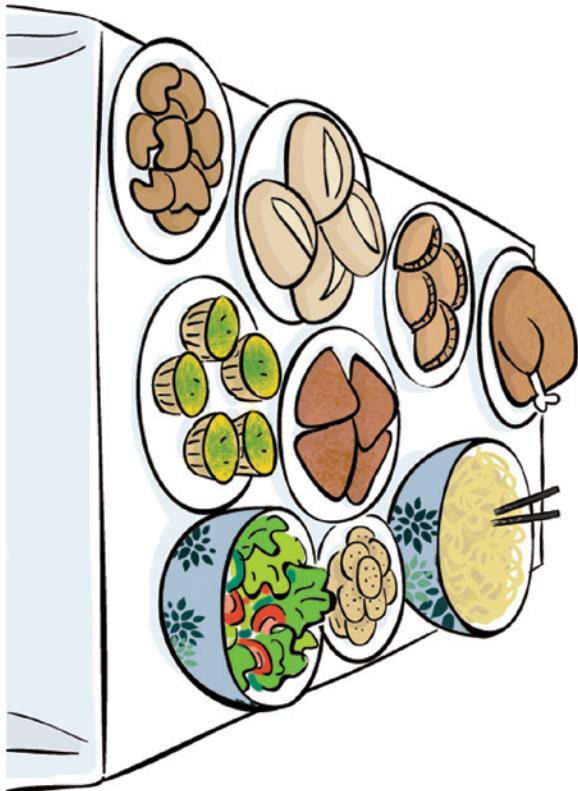
Musical intelligence

- 1 This page is recorded on the CD.
- 2 Say *Open your books at page 32*. Read the chant or play the CD. Ask students to read and listen carefully.
- 3 Play the CD or say the chant yourself. Students say it with you. Practise several times. Students can whisper the lines '*Shhh! Be quiet! Gladys is coming!*'
- 4 Ask students to invent some actions to go with the chant, e.g. climbing over the hedge and finding the food in bins. Students now do the actions as they say the chant.

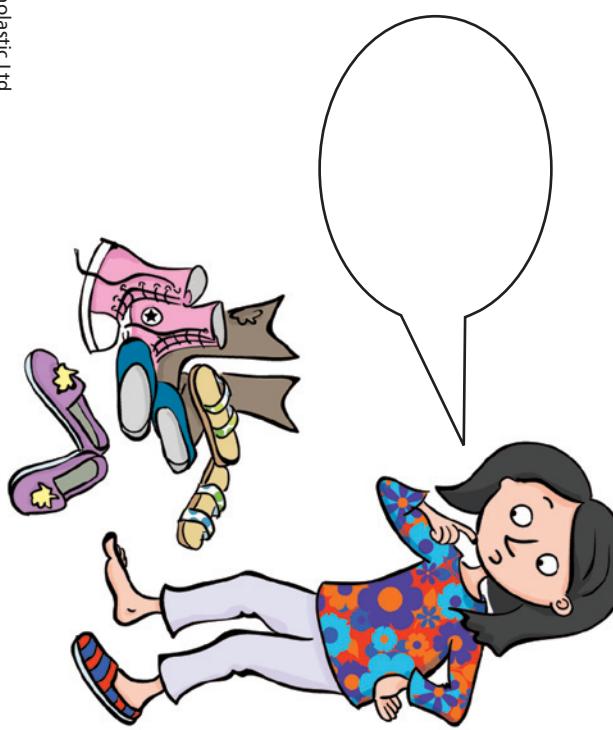


Flashcards

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fold

find

'I can't find my shoe!'

food

There's a lot of food.



Flashcards

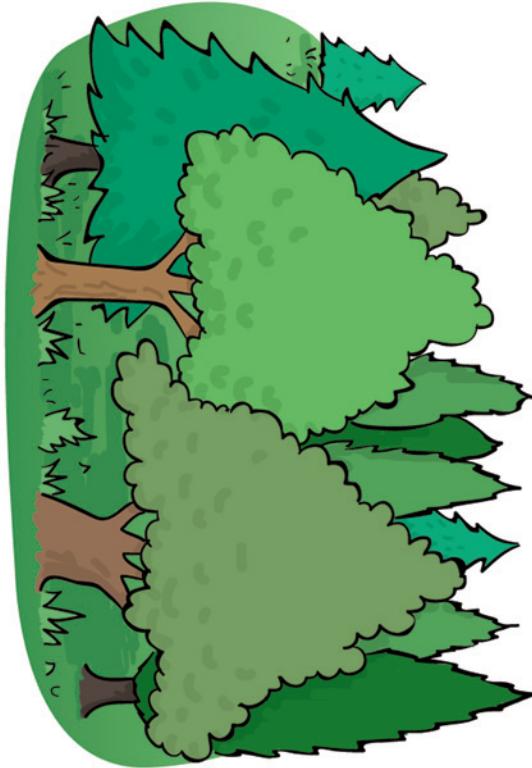
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fold



forest

This is a big **forest**.

frightened

The boy is **frightened**.

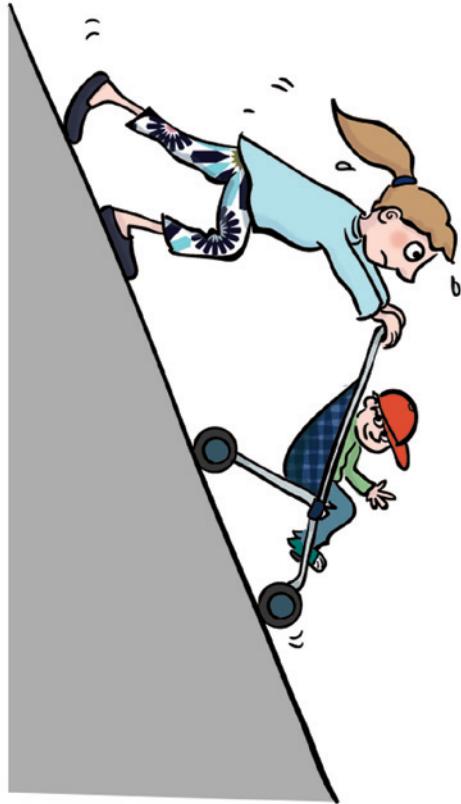


Flashcards

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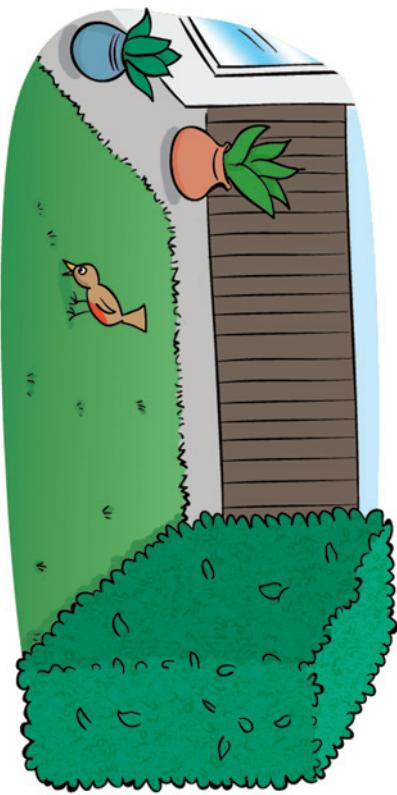


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push

She's **pushing** her brother.



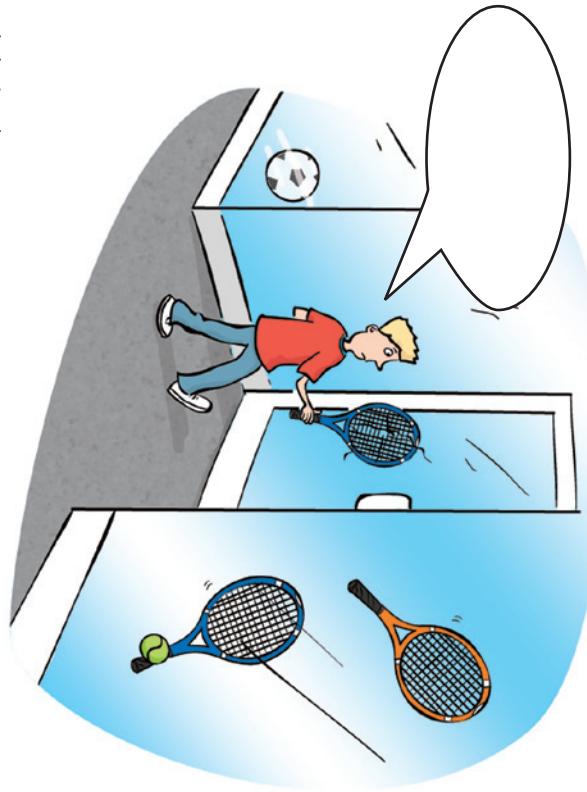
hedge

There is a tall **hedge** in the garden.



Flashcards

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fold

fold

take back

'I'm taking it back.'

I like spring!

spring



Flashcards

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fold

wake up

She **wakes up** at
seven o'clock.

winter

'It's cold in **winter**!'



Flashcards

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fold

'Yum!'

