

John Doe

Aims

- To introduce students to genre and characters.
- To practise scanning (reading for information) skills.
- To stimulate students to read the book.

1 Put the word 'blurb' on the board or overhead and ask students if they know what it is. Show them the backs of a few books and point out the blurbs. Ask them what they find in the blurb.

Answer: synopsis of the story

2 Tell the students that they are going to read a story called *John Doe*. Here is the Blurb from the back of the book, but the sentences are in the wrong order. Students work first individually, then in pairs, to put the sentences in the correct order to make a paragraph.

He watches and thinks but says nothing. The doctor wants to know who he is. Then, after John Doe leaves hospital, the doctor finds out more about him than just his real name. The man they call John Doe lies in a hospital bed. But John Doe doesn't answer his questions.

Note: You can do this activity in a variety of ways. Put the sentences on the board or overhead, or put them on strips in an envelope. Each pair gets one envelope and they have to physically re-order the sentences.

Answer: The man they call John Doe lies in a hospital bed. He watches and thinks but says nothing. The doctor wants to know who he is. But John Doe doesn't answer his questions. Then, after John Doe leaves hospital, the doctor finds out more about him than just his real name.

3 Ask students to look at the blurb again and focus on 'doctor'. Then ask them to look at the following list of professions (elicit meanings or teach as necessary). Which three do they think they'll find in the book?

detective lawyer television producer teacher nurse

Students can check by looking at People in the story (see handout).

Answers: nurse, detective, television producer

4 Focus on the name John Doe and elicit or explain that John Doe is the name given to someone by the police or hospital when they don't know his real name.

5 Put the following genres on the board or overhead:

comedy murder mystery adventure science fiction
romance thriller

Elicit or give brief explanations. Ask for examples in each category. What about *John Doe*? What genre do they think it is?

Answer: murder mystery

6 Ask students to look at the blurbs from level 1 and level 2 readers (see handout). Only one of them is a murder mystery. What genres are the others?

Note: This is best done as a timed activity, as it encourages students to find information quickly from the text (scan).

Answers:

a thriller (*Just Like a Movie*)

b comedy (*Help!*)

c science fiction (*Superbird*)

d murder mystery (*Bad Love*)

e romance (*Hotel Casanova*)

Alternative: Give students the five genres above, then ask them to match them with the blurbs.

7 Ask students to look at the Contents on the handout opposite and at the six extracts from *John Doe*. Which extract is from which chapter? This exercise is also best done as a timed activity, or as a competition.

Answers:

Extract 1 – Chapter 3; Extract 2 – Chapter 6; Extract 3 – Chapter 1; Extract 4 – Chapter 5; Extract 5 – Chapter 2; Extract 6 – Chapter 4

8 If you have copies of the books, hand them out and start reading.

John Doe

People in the story

Doctor Cox

Nurse Angela

Detective Jenny Brown

Susan Peters: a television producer

John Doe

Blurbs

- a Brad Black likes the movies. He goes every weekend with his girlfriend, Gina. They are happy, but they have no money. Then Brad has an idea and thinks that real life can be just like the movies – and that’s when things go wrong.
- b Frank Wormold is a writer. He doesn’t have much money and his wife is unhappy. To help him finish one of his stories he starts to use a computer. But the computer gives him more help than he wants. Then he really needs ‘help’!
- c A spaceship crashes on a strange planet and everyone on it dies – except for one person. She helps the people of the planet to build their own spaceship, and returns home in it. But when she is back home with her own people, the real trouble begins.
- d ‘Jack Daly?’ Judy looked at me. ‘He’s a very good doctor. He’s famous at the hospital.’
‘Oh, famous is he?’ I said. ‘I don’t often like famous people.’
Judy looked into my eyes. ‘Oh, come on, Detective Laine,’ she said, ‘you like him! I watched you with him. All the women like him.’
One week later Dr. Daly is dead and Flick Laine of the Denver Police Department is looking for his killer.
- e Dino was 21 and worked in a hotel in the beautiful city of Venice. The women who came to the hotel liked to talk to him. Dino was kind to them. But he knew what he wanted. ‘When I’m 26,’ he thought, ‘I’m going to meet a woman, the woman I want to marry.’ Then Dino met Carla and . . .

Contents

Chapter 1 The man without a name

Chapter 2 Nurse Angela

Chapter 3 Who is John Roberts?

Chapter 4 Waiting

Chapter 5 Goodbye, holiday

Chapter 6 A cup of coffee

Extract 1

‘Then we found this,’ Jenny said.

Susan looked at the paper.

‘It’s a letter Mary wrote on Friday,’ Jenny said. ‘But she didn’t finish it.’

‘Is that the end of the letter?’ asked Susan.

‘Yes,’ answered Jenny.

‘Who is John Roberts?’ asked Susan.

‘We don’t know,’ said Jenny. ‘That’s why I need your help. We need to find him.’

Extract 2

Angela was afraid, but she did not want John to know that she was afraid.

‘Would you like a drink now, John?’ said Angela. ‘I can make you a nice hot drink.’

‘OK,’ said John. He was still smiling.

She walked into the kitchen. She made the coffee very slowly.

Extract 3

‘You’re a doctor,’ said the man. He looked at the doctor. ‘And this is a hospital.’ The man in the bed spoke very slowly.

‘Yes,’ answered Doctor Cox, but now he did not smile.

‘What’s the problem with this man?’ thought Doctor Cox.

‘He has language. He understands words, but he doesn’t know who he is or where he comes from. Does he remember or doesn’t he? The police don’t know who he is. I don’t know who he is. And we need to know these things.’

Extract 4

He sat on the large bed and drank his coffee. He never had breakfast in bed at home. There was too much work. There was a television in the hotel bedroom. ‘I can watch television and eat my breakfast in bed,’ he thought.

‘Is it OK if I turn on the television?’ he asked his wife.

‘Why not?’ she said. ‘You’re on holiday.’

Philip turned on the television.

Extract 5

She’s not going away. She wants a conversation. She wants to talk.

‘My name is Angela,’ she says. ‘I come from Birmingham. But my family comes from London. Do you know Birmingham?’

‘No,’ I say. That’s not true. I know Birmingham. I had a house in Birmingham.

Extract 6

I followed her yesterday. I followed her home. She lives with another nurse. The nurse is at the hospital in the evening. I watched the house yesterday. No-one saw me. I was behind a wall. I watched Nurse Angela, but she didn’t see me.

I’m waiting for Nurse Angela now.