
Finding the Key

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| Media Research | Demonstrate how to find advertisements by using the classified ads index in a newspaper. Invite suggestions regarding what the abbreviations mean in the advertisements you have found. |
| Telephone Tasks | Arrange or simulate phone calls to get information about rental accommodation. |
| Issues for Discussion | What are the pros and cons of leaving home? What should you look for when viewing a flat? What are the responsibilities of the tenants? Of the landlord? E.g. conditions in leases, signing the lease, increasing the rent, repairs, entry by the landlord, termination of a lease, discrimination, etc. Furnished or unfurnished? Which is the better option for first time flatmates? What might the hidden costs be when going flatting for the first time? Debate: "Everyone should go flatting." |
| Field Trip | Visit a real estate agency or the Tenants' Union. Find out about bonds (page 38). How much is the cost? What happens to the bond money? Can you get it back? Does everyone have to pay a bond? What is a lease or rent agreement? (page 38) Get a copy of a lease to study. What are the main items written into the lease? |
| Group Task | Form groups of 'flatmates'. Work co-operatively to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- write an advertisement for a dream flat- plan a budget for a week- list requirements for an unfurnished flat |
| Filling in Forms | Help students fill in a lease. |
| Useful Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Newspapers- Supermarket docketts- An electricity account- The telephone directory- A telephone account- Real estate agency forms |

Notes for Teachers

This series evolved from our experience as teachers and our need for material with a low reading level centred on topics suited to teenagers and young adults. We have capitalised on a 'soap opera' format that emphasises life skills. This format provides the emergent reader with familiar settings and characters in an ongoing serialised story, although each book can be read and enjoyed on its own.

Key words and ideas are repeated to reinforce them in a variety of contexts. The illustrations provide extra interest, humour and visual clues. The word count progressively increases from 1700 to 3000 words per book, which gives reading 'mileage' for less able readers. The text is simple and clearly set out so as to eliminate any barrier between the reader and the ideas being presented. The aim of the paperback format is to present books which will stand outward comparison with 'normal' paperbacks.

The *Slice of Life* series provides a useful text for applying the 'whole language' approach to literacy. We believe students best learn to read by doing 'real' reading rather than practising reading skill exercises. The process of reading and rereading for entertainment or information is therefore of greater importance in improving literacy than the completion of follow-up activities.

The activities require students to do more than merely 'bark at print'. They invite readers to think critically about the characters and situations. In many cases there is no 'right' answer to the questions and problems. Instead readers should be encouraged to bring their own experience and understanding to the process of constructing meaning from the text.

With learning language the process is more important than product. Therefore the process of reading, discussing and analysing the issues is far more important than producing tidy worksheets to be marked right or wrong. You will find that the issues seldom lend themselves to black or white judgments or solutions. It is the 'shades of grey' which bring interest, diversity and reality to the themes discussed in the *Slice of Life* series.

The intention of the follow-up activities is to encourage the reader to read:

- * firstly *along* the lines (direct recall of ideas)
- * then *between* the lines (inferring and analysing ideas)
- * and ultimately to read *beyond* the lines (applying and personalising ideas)

The situations presented in the books were never designed to provide a perfect model for coping with such dilemmas. At best they offer students and teachers opportunity for reflection, investigation and practice involving real-life skills and issues. *Note that some of the information here will date*, but this in itself can provide the opportunity for discussion.