Lesson Plan
Level 1

Cambridge English Readers

Always Original

Help! Philip Prowse

Aims

- To introduce key characters from the book.
- To stimulate students to read the book.

1. Ask students what kind of fiction they most like to read, e.g. romance, thriller. In pairs or small groups ask them to think of as many different genres as they can. Write the different genres on the board or overhead projector. If not all genres have been covered, elicit or give further suggestions. Make sure 'comedy' is on the board. **Possible answers:** thriller, murder mystery, science fiction, horror, comedy, ghost story, romance, adventure, human interest.

2. Hold up a copy of *Help!* or write the title on the board, and ask students what kind of story they think it will be. If they don't know at the moment, tell them that the Blurb might help (show them the back of the book). Don't tell them yet.

3. Ask them to fill in the gaps in the Blurb. If they have problems, tell students to read People in the Story to help them.
   Answers: 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*'!

4. Focus on the computer, Chip. Again, elicit genre, but don't tell them that it's a comedy yet; just keep them guessing. Ask students to read Extracts 1 and 2 to work out what kind of story it is.

5. Discuss the extracts and establish that the story is a comedy. Ask them if they like comedy. What kind of comedy do they like? Talk about favourite TV shows, etc.

6. From the People in the story, focus on Frank. What do we know from the Blurb about him? What do we know about his relationship to his wife, Teresa? Ask students to read Extracts 3–6 and say whether the following statements are true or false.

True or False?
a Frank usually uses a computer.
b Teresa wears expensive clothes.
c She thinks he should make more money.
d Frank thinks that Teresa is angry with him.
e Frank has written part of his book.
f Frank buys some things for his computer.
g Some days Frank doesn't work at all.
h Frank never finishes his books.

7. Pair students up to check answers.

8. Take class feedback.
   Answers
   a F (he writes by hand)
   b T
   c T
   d T
   e T (the first half)
   f F (Mel Parks buys them)
   g T (he sleeps, then watches TV)
   h T

   Alternatives: (both of these work best with a class that isn't very big)

   Alternative 1
   A reading race. Students work in pairs; student A is the writer, student B is the runner. Put lots of copies of the extracts up on the wall. Student A has a copy of the T/F statements. S/he reads the first statement aloud to student B, e.g. 'Frank usually uses a computer.' Student B runs to the wall and finds the answer, runs back and tells A. They continue. The first pair to finish are the winners.

   Alternative 2
   Put each extract on a separate piece of paper and put four copies of each around the room (total 16 copies). Each student has a copy of the T/F statements. They walk around the room and skim and scan the extracts to find the answers.

9. Ask the students if they think Frank gets to be rich in the story.

10. If you have the books, hand them out and start reading.

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Blurb

Frank Wormold is a …………….. . He doesn't have much …………… and his …………… is unhappy. To help him finish one of his …………… he starts to use a …………….. . But the ……………… gives him more help than he wants. Then he really needs …………… !

People in the Story

Frank Wormold: a writer

Teresa Wormold: a lawyer and Frank's wife

Mel Parks: a Hollywood producer

Chip: a computer

A postman

Extract 1

I typed 'Help!' and waited. Chip's face went away. The computer made a noise. It was like 'Ping!' Then Chip's face came back.

'Hi!' said Chip with a big smile. 'I'm now inside your computer. When you need help type "Help!" I can help you use the computer, and help with your spelling and grammar. And lots more things.'

'What things?' I typed.

'Wait and see,' Chip said.

Extract 2

'Well, Frank,' Chip said. She didn't smile. 'Don't you want me to help? You're not asking for help.'

I wanted to be nice to Chip. So I typed, 'Sorry, Chip. Please help with spelling.'

The computer made a noise. Then Chip came back. 'Color not colour,' it said on the screen.

'No, Chip,' I typed. 'Colour is British English. Color is American.'

'I know what is right,' Chip replied. 'The spelling is color.'

'OK,' I typed. Chip went away. I wasn't happy with the spelling. 'But the movie is American,' I thought, 'so it was OK to have American spelling.'

An hour later there was a 'Ping!' and Chip came back.

'Frank,' she said. 'Let me help you. Let me help you with your story.'

'How can you help?' I asked.

'Well,' Chip replied. 'I don't like Joe's name. Let's call him Red.'

'But red's a colour,' I typed.

'Color,' replied Chip. 'Red's a good name.'

'I don't think so,' I typed. 'And it's my book.'

'I know best,' Chip answered.

Extract 3

'What are you going to do today?' Teresa asked. 'Don't go back to bed! Why don't you go out and look for a job?'

'Oh no,' I thought. 'Eight o'clock in the morning, and she's telling me to get a job.'

'But I've got a job,' I said, for about the thousandth time. 'I'm a writer.'

'But you never finish your books! You begin lots of books, but you never finish them.'

She was right. I write by hand in small notebooks – I've got lots of notebooks under the bed – but I don't finish the books.
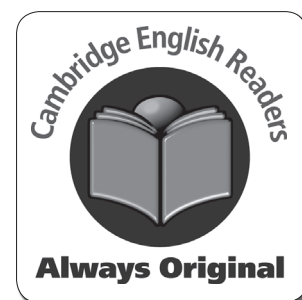
Extract 4

And sometimes I don't work. Sometimes I sit all day with a white piece of paper and a pen and write nothing. Sometimes I sleep all morning and then I get up and watch television all afternoon.

'You need a real job,' Teresa said. 'We must have more money!'

'Why?' I asked. 'Why must we have more money?'

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'We need money to buy things,' she said. 'You need new clothes. Look at your old clothes!' I had an old pullover and jeans on. She had expensive black clothes on.

Extract 5

Then Mel said: 'Hey, Frank. I loved the first half of your book. Did you bring the second half of the book with you?'

'Er, no,' I said. 'I'm writing it again. I want to make it better.' I didn't want to tell Mel the book wasn't finished.

Mel looked at me. He looked unhappy.

'Oh no,' he said. 'I wanted to take it to California with me.'

'I'm sorry' I answered. 'You see I write very slowly. I write by hand.'

Extract 6

'With a modem your computer can talk to the telephone,' Mel said. 'You write your book on the computer. Then you send it to me by e-mail.'

'What's e-mail?' I asked.

'The Internet,' Mel said. 'You can send letters by computer all over the world quickly.'

I didn't ask any more questions. Mel bought lots of things for the computer.

Then we got into a taxi with the computer things.

I sat in the taxi and thought about the morning. 'We're going to be rich,' I said to myself. 'Teresa and I are going to be rich. We're going to have lots of money. Teresa's going to be happy. And I'm going to be happy. Teresa's not going to be angry with me now!'