

The Football in the Tree

PASSAGE · FICTION

SKILLS TRAINED

Working memory

Delayed recall

Comprehension

HOW TO USE THIS SHEET

About 12 minutes

- 1 Read the passage twice, slowly. Take about three minutes.
- 2 Turn to the next page and cover this one. No looking back.
- 3 Write what you remember, then mark it on the last page.

The children of the street played football every evening until it was too dark to see.

On Tuesday, Rafa kicked the ball too hard. It flew over the wall and landed in the branches of a mango tree.

Everyone looked up. The ball sat there, far above their heads.

They threw shoes at it. They shook the trunk. Nothing worked.

Then the smallest girl, Bia, went home and came back with a long washing pole. She did not try to knock the ball down. She pushed it sideways, onto a thinner branch.

The branch bent. The ball rolled off and dropped into Rafa's hands.

After that, nobody said Bia was too small to play.

Cover the passage before you start.

Looking back turns this into a copying exercise. Getting it slightly wrong from memory is what makes it work.

PART A Tell it back

Write down everything you can remember about how the ball was got down from the tree.

PART B 4 questions

1 Who kicked the ball into the tree?

2 What kind of tree was it?

3 What did Bia bring back from home?

4 What did Bia do that the others had not tried?

PART C Mark your own work

Now go back to the passage. Tick every answer you got right. You do not need the same words as the answer below — if you wrote the same idea in your own words, it counts.

- ☐ 1 · Rafa.
- ☐ 2 · A mango tree.
- ☐ 3 · A long washing pole.
- ☐ 4 · She pushed the ball sideways onto a thinner branch instead of trying to knock it straight down.

FACTS RECALLED IN PART A

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QUESTIONS CORRECT

— / 4

DATE

THE STRATEGY Link it to something you know

Tie the new story to something already in your head. Have you ever got something stuck somewhere high? Hooking a new memory onto an old one gives your brain two ways to find it later.

WHERE YOU ALREADY DO THIS

Think of a problem you solved by doing something differently from everyone else. What did you try?

FOR THE PARENT OR TEACHER · Let your child read the passage alone, but stay nearby. During Part A, do not prompt — the struggle to retrieve a half-remembered fact is exactly what builds the memory. Count the facts they recall and compare that number across several sets rather than worrying about any single score.