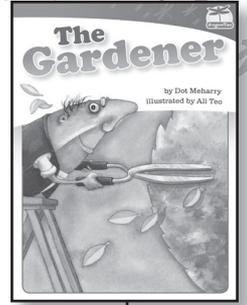


# The Gardener

by Dot Meharry

illustrated by Ali Teo



## Overview

This humorous narrative portrays a gardener's delight in expressing his creativity. The students will enjoy making predictions from the intriguing illustrations.

## Suggested purposes

This book supports the comprehension strategies of making and confirming predictions and drawing conclusions. The repetitive sentence structure provides strong support for students who lack confidence in their reading.

## Text features (Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the high-frequency words – *a, and, are, he, is, my, said, the*
- the initial consonant blends – *cl, fr, sm, tr*
- the digraphs -ph – *elephant*; -th – *the, this*
- the different endings for the word “clip” – *clippers, clipped*
- the adverb “too”
- the use of direct speech to begin and end the story
- the clear beginning, middle, and end
- the use of repetition
- the question mark on page 2
- the humorous, exaggerated illustrations

## Setting the scene

Talk about the students' experience with gardens. *Do you have a garden at home? Do you help in the garden?* If there are students who lack experience of gardens, show them a photograph of a public garden. City information pamphlets usually include photographs of notable gardens. You could arrange to visit the school caretaker to have a look at some gardening tools.

There may be trees, bushes, or hedges at your school that need to be clipped regularly. Introduce the word “clippers”.

If possible, show the students an example of topiary. You could use the illustration on page 4 of the book.

## The first reading

Look at the cover of the book. The illustration suggests that this might not be a straightforward story. *What is this man doing? What is he using?* Read the title and the names of the author and the illustrator.

**Back cover** – Read aloud the preview question. Discuss the students' predictions.

**Title page** – Listen to the students read the title again. Reinforce the word “clippers”.

**Page 2** – *Why is the gardener standing like that? What do you think he's saying?* You may need to review the students' knowledge of other words starting with “cl”, such as “click”, “clock”, “class”, and “clap” to support them in their decoding of “clippers”.

**Page 3** – *What did the gardener do with the clippers?* Focus on the ending of “clipped”. Listen as the students read the text independently, encouraging them to use the illustrations on pages 5, 7, and 9 to predict what the gardener might be making. Note which students cross-check the visual features of the content word on the following page to confirm their predictions.

**Page 10** – *Why is the gardener scratching his head? Is he happy with the frog?*

**Page 11** – *What might happen next?*

**Page 12** – *Were you right? What will the gardener do now? Which shape did you like best?*

**Ideas for revisiting the text** (Choose only one or two per session.)

- Identify specific high-frequency words in the text.
- Focus on any of the initial consonants or blends that the students may have been unsure of. Locate the words in the book and make a list of other words that start the same way.
- Focus on the initial consonant blend “cl”. Reread the text and note where “cl” has been used. Make a list of other words that start this way.
- Explore endings that can be used with “clip”. Note that the endings “ed”, “ing”, and “er” all involve doubling the final “p”. Repeat the activity with the words “slip”, “drip”, or “trip”.
- List words that rhyme with “clip”.
- Using the words and punctuation cards for this book, reassemble the sentences with the students.
- Look at the illustration on page 11. *Why does the tree suddenly appear bigger?* Draw out the idea that the close-up illustration, the flying leaves, and the gardener’s tongue all work together to create a sense of the gardener getting carried away with his own ideas.

**Suggestions for further activities**

- Innovate on the text, using the names of the students in the class, for example, “Nathan clipped and clipped. He made a dragon.”
- The students could write a group or individual response to the outcome of the text.
- The students could use dough or clay to model a shape from the book and add a label.
- The students could make a list of the jobs a gardener would need to do.
- The students could illustrate and label a list of gardening tools.
- Encourage the students could find out more about topiary.
- BLM word activity: practise writing word endings  
The students can add the word ending “ed” and “ing” to each word. They must remember to double the “p”.
- BLM comprehension activity: revise predictions  
The students can predict a new outcome by adding a new illustration and word. They can then read their story to a partner.