

### SECTION 3

MIKE: Hi Sue.

SUE: Hi Mike, so what happened to you last week?

MIKE: Oh, I was sick with the flu. What's this I hear about a big assignment we've got to do?

SUE: Well, basically, we've got to find two science experiments to do with a group of eight-year-old children at the local primary school, and we've got to complete it by the end of the week.

MIKE: Oh, that sounds like hard work. Where are we supposed to get the ideas for these experiments from?

SUE: Well, I managed to get hold of two books from the library.

- MIKE: Oh, well done!
- SUE: How about if we take a look at the experiments in this book first and see if anything looks suitable? I can make notes as we go, about equipment and the purpose of the experiments.
- MIKE: OK, let's see, um, the first experiment is called 'Make your own hovercraft', which sounds very ambitious! Mind you, you only need twenty balloons and a table – you don't need any special engines or anything like that! Q21
- SUE: What do you do with it all?
- MIKE: Er, you blow up the balloons and you balance the table on them, upside down of course, and the kids get to ride around on it. You know, the other kids sort of push them around the room. The main purpose is to show how hovercrafts work, and how things hover around on just a cushion of air.
- SUE: OK, that doesn't sound too bad.
- MIKE: OK, ready for number two?
- SUE: Hmm, hmm.
- MIKE: Now this one is called 'Unusual Measures of Lengths', and you basically use lots of paperclips. The kids go around the class measuring things – you know, how long the desk is, and that sort of thing, um, and then they all compare their answers. Er, and, basically, because not all paperclips are the same lengths, they should come up with some strange answers. It's supposed to demonstrate the importance of having fixed units of measurement. Q22
- SUE: Hmm, yes, that's not bad.
- MIKE: OK, now for number three you need rock salt or copper sulphate. Q23
- SUE: Oh, I'm not sure about that!
- MIKE: Well, just put down the rock salt then, um, apart from that you only need a jar of water. Um, and basically you dissolve lots of salt into the water and watch the crystals form, so it basically teaches the kids about growing crystals. Q24
- SUE: I suppose it would be nice to grow something. Hmm, let's move on and have a look at number four.
- MIKE: OK, this one is called 'Spinning colour wheel'. It looks like you get some cardboard and draw a circle on it, divide it into six equal segments and colour each one in using different colours, then you thread a piece of string through the middle. Q25
- SUE: So we'd need some string as well.
- MIKE: Yes, sorry . . . um . . . and you spin the wheel around and if you can get it spinning fast enough, hopefully the colours all merge and show up as white.
- SUE: Oh, I didn't know that. What's the principle behind it?
- MIKE: Well it's pretty elementary physics, really. It teaches them about how white light or ordinary light is made up. Q26
- SUE: Hmm, well that doesn't sound too bad. Now there's only one more left in this book isn't there? What does that one say?
- MIKE: Um, well it's another one where they'd get to make something.
- SUE: Sounds very interesting.
- MIKE: You need quite a lot of equipment actually – a hand drill, an old record, a pin or needle, some paper and a bolt.

*Tapescripts*

- SUE: Hmm, go on, what do they have to do?
- MIKE: Well, they basically make a record player. The main idea is to teach them about recording sound, but hopefully they'd also see that you need motion and an amplifier to make the sound heard.
- SUE: OK, well it does sound interesting. Shall we go through all of those again and decide if any of them are going to be suitable?
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- MIKE: Right, number one. I thought this one sounded nice: there'd be lots of activity and it doesn't need too much in the way of equipment.
- SUE: Yes, that's true, but don't you think it's a bit risky to get a group of eight-year-olds pushing each other around a classroom like that? Someone could get hurt. No, I don't like the sound of that one at all! Q27
- MIKE: Maybe you're right.
- SUE: What about number two, with the paperclips? It sounds tame enough.
- MIKE: Yes, a bit too tame if you ask me. I think it needs to be something a bit more active and interesting than that, don't you? Q28
- SUE: Yes, I suppose you're right. We won't get a very good mark if the children don't actually enjoy the experiments, and I suppose we could turn them off science for good! Well, what about the next one, number three?
- MIKE: Now, I quite like the idea of this one.
- SUE: Yes, so do I, but I seem to remember when we did it at high school we had to wait up to a fortnight before we saw any halfway decent results. Q29
- MIKE: Oh, yes well, that won't be any good then. We'll only see the kids for one or two hours at the most.
- SUE: Yes, and we have to do the experiments and write up our results within a week, so that one won't do at all.
- MIKE: OK, well, what did you think of number four?
- SUE: I like the idea of it, but do you think it will be a bit elementary for them?
- MIKE: Well they are only eight you know!
- SUE: I know, but you know what I mean. Don't you think the activity itself is a bit babyish?
- MIKE: Hmm, maybe you're right.
- SUE: They might have fun but, I mean, cutting out a circle and colouring it in?
- MIKE: OK, well, what about number five?
- SUE: I thought this one sounded a bit too good to be true – great equipment!
- MIKE: Yeah.
- SUE: But don't you think it's a bit ambitious for this age group? I mean, I don't want to start off something and then have to abandon it if they just can't cope with it. I could see us ending up doing just about all of the work for them. Q30
- MIKE: I guess you're right. Oh well, maybe we could store that idea away for later.
- SUE: Yep, let's hope this second book has something better!