



American Stories

Luck - a Short Story by Mark Twain

Lesson Plan

by Jill Robbins, Ph.D.

Introduction

This lesson plan is to accompany Luck - a short story by Mark Twain.

The approach used in this lesson is based on the CALLA approach. Through exploration of the literature content of this article, students can develop their use of English. See the end of the lesson for more information and resources on teaching with the CALLA approach.

Lesson Elements

Prepare

Present

Practice

Self-Evaluate

Expand

Prepare

Introduce the author: "Mark Twain was one of America's most popular writers. His stories are often humorous, and make fun of human qualities. Have you heard of his stories, 'Tom Sawyer' or 'Huckleberry Finn'?" Allow students to respond with their knowledge of these stories.

"Today we will read a story about a military hero. We hear about him from his teacher at the military school."

"Let's look together at some of the key words in the story."

Vocabulary

ally– *n.* (pl. allies) a country that supports and helps another country in a war

disabled – *adj.* having a physical or mental disability : unable to perform one or more natural activities (such as walking or seeing) because of illness, injury, etc.

dismiss – *v.* to send away; to refuse to consider

dismissal – *n.* the act of sending a person away (from a position at work or in a school)

join up – (*idiom*) enlist in the military service

superiors – *n.* a person of higher rank or status than another

Present

Explain “Today we’re going to use the strategy **selective attention**. This strategy helps us *look for the key ideas* that we read or hear. **Selective attention** can help us to understand the story. In this story the teacher is telling a friend that a military hero is actually stupid. Let’s look at the first part of the story. See if you can find one thing the teacher says about how the man is 'stupid.'”

Play the first part of the story; to "It was painful to see him stand there and give answers that were miracles of stupidity."

“Ok, here I think we have our first example. Using **selective attention** I noticed that the instructor, called a 'clergyman' by the narrator, says Scoresby didn't give answers like the other students did. I wonder, why were his answers different? Were they wrong? I'm going to write this in the chart. Then I'm going to read more to find out what the teacher did.”

Show students the next slide or write the sentences on a chalkboard.

Proof that Scorseby is "Stupid"

What the teacher saw	What the teacher did
<p>he did not know anything, so to speak. It was painful to see him stand there and give answers that were miracles of stupidity.</p>	

Practice

Say, “Now it’s your turn. Make a chart on your paper like the one I showed you. Let’s listen to and read the next section. Be ready to look for another example. Then watch or listen for the key ideas. We are trying to find out what the teacher did, and more reasons why he thinks Scorsby is stupid.”

Play the story to “Such an accident does not happen more than once in a hundred years.”

Next, ask students to write the key ideas in their chart. Show the chart with what they found as on the next slide.

Proof that Scorseby is "Stupid"

What the teacher saw	What the teacher did
<p>he did not know anything, so to speak. It was painful to see him stand there and give answers that were miracles of stupidity.</p>	<p>...help him as much as I could... tested him and worked him like a slave. I made him work, over and over again, on a few questions about Caesar,</p>
<p>he came through very well on the day of the examination. He got high praise too, while others who knew a thousand times more than he were sharply criticized.</p>	

Say, “Let’s read the rest of the story now. Use **selective attention** to notice the key ideas.”

Play to the end of the story.

Repeat the procedure in which students fill in the key ideas supporting the idea that Scoresby is stupid.

Proof that Scorseby is "Stupid"

What the teacher saw	What the teacher did
<p>he did not know anything, so to speak. It was painful to see him stand there and give answers that were miracles of stupidity.</p>	<p>...help him as much as I could... tested him and worked him like a slave. I made him work, over and over again, on a few questions about Caesar,</p>
<p>he came through very well on the day of the examination. He got high praise too, while others who knew a thousand times more than he were sharply criticized.</p>	<p>all through his studies, I stood by him, with the feeling a mother has for a disabled child.</p>
<p>what in the end would destroy him would be the mathematics examination</p>	<p>I pushed facts into his stupid head for hours.</p>
<p>He was appointed an officer... every mistake he made increased his glory and fame.</p>	<p>I must go with him and protect the nation against him as far as I could. So, I joined up with him</p>
<p>he just mistook his left hand for his right hand...that was all. An order came for him to fall back and support our right. Instead, he moved forward and went over the hill to the left.</p>	<p>those surprised Russians ... It must be the whole British army ...They turned tail, away they went over the hill and down into the field in wild disorder, and we after them.</p>

Self-Evaluation

Ask students, “Do you think *looking for the key ideas* helped you understand this story? Do you agree with the teacher in the story? Do you think Scoresby is 'stupid'?”

Ask students to turn to their neighbor and give their opinion on the question. If time allows, ask a couple of students to share their opinion with the class.

Expand

Wrap up the lesson by asking students to think of other times they can **use selective attention**.

Possible answers are 'listening to a lecture, studying a textbook, or answering test questions.

Encourage students to go home and look for key ideas with a reading assignment; or when listening in another class.

About the CALLA Approach

The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) is an instructional model for second and foreign language learners based on cognitive theory and research.

CALLA integrates instruction in priority topics from the content curriculum, development of the language skills needed for learning in school, and explicit instruction in using learning strategies for academic tasks.

The goals of CALLA are for students to learn essential academic content and language and to become independent and self-regulated learners through their increasing command over a variety of strategies for learning in school. CALLA can be used in ESL, EFL, bilingual, foreign language, and general education classrooms.

CALLA was developed by Anna Uhl Chamot and J. Michael O'Malley, and is being implemented in approximately 30 school districts in the United States as well as in several other countries.

See a list of language learning strategies here: <http://calla.ws/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/strategylist.pdf>