



American Stories
The Californian's Tale
by Mark Twain

Lesson Plan
by Jill Robbins, Ph.D.

Introduction

This lesson plan is to accompany the VOA Learning English **American Stories** episode, *The Californian's Tale* by Mark Twain.

Depending on the length of the class period, this lesson may cover more than one session. The approach used in this lesson is based on the CALLA approach. 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 topic of the story: “Today’s story is about some friends who **cooperate** with each other. Do you know what the word **cooperate** means? It’s when we work together, helping others to do work or to solve problems. Tell me about when you cooperate with someone else.”

Allow students time to share their experiences.

Introduce the setting of the story, California in the 1840s. Find out how much students know about the California Gold Rush by asking questions such as:

- *Why did many people go to California?*
- *How did they look for gold in California?*

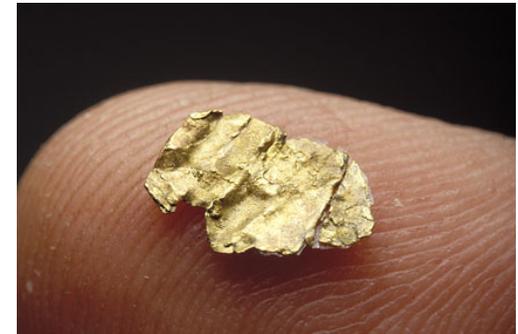
Explain: “The Gold Rush was the biggest movement of Americans in history. Over 300,000 Americans moved to California between 1848 and 1854.”

Show the pictures on the following slides to introduce the setting and the vocabulary for the story.

Miners going to California



Looking for gold



A gold nugget

This picture shows men using small flat pans to look for gold in a river. People found small pieces of gold in the water of some California rivers.

Vocabulary

curtain - *n.* a piece of cloth that hangs down from above a window and can be used to cover the window

whisper - *v.* to speak very softly or quietly

sigh - *v.* to take in and let out a long, loud breath in a way that shows you are bored, disappointed, relieved, etc.

sorrow - *n.* a feeling of sadness or grief caused especially by the loss of someone or something

Group Cooperation – Teacher Instructions

- The sheets at the end of this lesson plan can be printed for student use. Count the number of students in your class and divide by 4. Make that number of copies of the set of 4 sheets. Give the instructions as seen on the following slide **before** separating the class into groups. (Students will pay attention to you much better *before* joining a small group than afterward.)
- Plan the groups before the class or have students call out the numbers from 1 to 4, going around the room. Then have students form groups. Each group should have students who have different **roles**; that is, students who called out the numbers 1,2,3, and 4. If there is a group with fewer than 4 students, assign one student two roles. For a group larger than 4, have students share a role.
- Go to each group, and hand one sheet to each student, according to their assigned role. (The group will have sheets for students 1, 2, 3, and 4.)
- While students are working in groups, walk around checking on them. Make sure that students are reading aloud, and that other students are listening to the story (*not* reading the same paper as the reader.)

Present

Explain “Today we’re going to use the strategy **cooperate**. This strategy helps us *share the work* and learn together. In your group today, you will each have a job. Here is what you will do:

1. Read aloud the part of the story on your paper. Make sure the members of your group are listening carefully.
2. Think of a question to ask your group.
3. Write the question on your paper.
4. Ask your group the question. When the group decides on the answer, write it on your paper.
5. Ask your group to **predict** (Guess) what will happen next in the story. Write what you **predict** on the paper, too.
6. Let the next student read their part. Listen carefully so you can answer their question.”

Model how to use the strategy by looking at the first part of the story.

Read aloud the first two sentences: “When I was young, I went looking for gold in California. I never found enough to make me rich.”

Show how to **predict**: “When I read this, I **predict** that the story is going to tell us about California, around the time of the gold rush. I also **predict** it might be sad story because the narrator says he didn’t get rich. So when I continue to read, I will use my **prediction** to help me focus on the story. I will look for more information about the man in California.”

Practice

Say, “Now it’s your turn. In your group, take turns reading and asking questions about the story. After each part that you read **predict** what will happen next. Be sure to **cooperate** with your classmates by listening carefully when they read the story. Do your best to answer the question, because I will ask you some of these questions later.”

Walk around the classroom, monitoring the groups. Be sure they stay on task.

Self-Evaluation

When all groups have completed the story, ask, “How did the men in the story **cooperate**? Do you think cooperating helped you understand and remember this story? On your sheet of paper, write one way that cooperating was better than you working alone to read the story.

How about **predicting**? Remember, *it doesn't matter* if what you predict actually happened. Write how it helped to **predict** what might happen in the story.”

Give students time to write, then collect all the student sheets.

Expand

Wrap up the lesson by asking students to think of other times they can **cooperate**. Possible answers are 'doing a group project, studying a textbook, or writing in English.

Encourage students to go home and **cooperate** with others on a homework assignment; or when working in another class.

See <http://www.calgoldrush.com> for more resources.

Student 1:

Read your part of the story aloud. Ask your classmates one question about this part to see if they understand it well. Then ask them to predict what will happen next.

When I was young, I went looking for gold in California. I never found enough to make me rich. But I did discover a beautiful part of the country. It was called “the Stanislaw.” The Stanislaw was like Heaven on Earth. It had bright green hills and deep forests where soft winds touched the trees.

Other men, also looking for gold, had reached the Stanislaw hills of California many years before I did. They had built a town in the valley with sidewalks and stores, banks and schools. They had also built pretty little houses for their families.

At first, they found a lot of gold in the Stanislaw hills. But their good luck did not last. After a few years, the gold disappeared. By the time I reached the Stanislaw, all the people were gone, too.

Grass now grew in the streets. And the little houses were covered by wild rose bushes. Only the sound of insects filled the air as I walked through the empty town that summer day so long ago. Then, I realized I was not alone after all.

A man was smiling at me as he stood in front of one of the little houses. This house was not covered by wild rose bushes. A nice little garden in front of the house was full of blue and yellow flowers. White curtains hung from the windows and floated in the soft summer wind.

Still smiling, the man opened the door of his house and motioned to me. I went inside and could not believe my eyes. I had been living for weeks in rough mining camps with other gold miners. We slept on the hard ground, ate canned beans from cold metal plates and spent our days in the difficult search for gold.

Here in this little house, my spirit seemed to come to life again.

I saw a bright rug on the shining wooden floor. Pictures hung all around the room. And on little tables there were seashells, books and china vases full of flowers. A woman had made this house into a home.

The pleasure I felt in my heart must have shown on my face. The man read my thoughts. “Yes,” he smiled, “it is all her work. Everything in this room has felt the touch of her hand.”

My Question:

My Group’s Answer:

We Predict:

Student 2:

Read your part of the story aloud. Ask your classmates one question about this part to see if they understand it well. Then ask them to predict what will happen next.

One of the pictures on the wall was not hanging straight. He noticed it and went to fix it. He stepped back several times to make sure the picture was really straight. Then he gave it a gentle touch with his hand.

“She always does that,” he explained to me. “It is like the finishing pat a mother gives her child’s hair after she has brushed it. I have seen her fix all these things so often that I can do it just the way she does. I don’t know why I do it. I just do it.”

As he talked, I realized there was something in this room that he wanted me to discover. I looked around. When my eyes reached a corner of the room near the fireplace, he broke into a happy laugh and rubbed his hands together.

“That’s it!” he cried out. “You have found it! I knew you would. It is her picture. I went to a little black shelf that held a small picture of the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. There was a sweetness and softness in the woman’s expression that I had never seen before.

The man took the picture from my hands and stared at it. “She was nineteen on her last birthday. That was the day we were married. When you see her...oh, just wait until you meet her!”

“Where is she now?” I asked.

“Oh, she is away,” the man sighed, putting the picture back on the little black shelf. “She went to visit her parents. They live forty or fifty miles from here. She has been gone two weeks today.”

“When will she be back?” I asked. “Well, this is Wednesday,” he said slowly. “She will be back on Saturday, in the evening.”

I felt a sharp sense of regret. “I am sorry, because I will be gone by then,” I said.

“Gone? No! Why should you go? Don’t go. She will be so sorry. You see, she likes to have people come and stay with us.”

“No, I really must leave,” I said firmly.

He picked up her picture and held it before my eyes. “Here,” he said. “Now you tell her to her face that you could have stayed to meet her and you would not.”

Something made me change my mind as I looked at the picture for a second time. I decided to stay.

My Question:

My Group’s Answer:

We Predict:

Student 3:

Read your part of the story aloud. Ask your classmates one question about this part to see if they understand it well. Then ask them to predict what will happen next.

The man told me his name was Henry.

That night, Henry and I talked about many different things, but mainly about her. The next day passed quietly.

Thursday evening we had a visitor. He was a big, grey-haired miner named Tom. "I just came for a few minutes to ask when she is coming home," he explained. "Is there any news?"

"Oh yes," the man replied. "I got a letter. Would you like to hear it? He took a yellowed letter out of his shirt pocket and read it to us. It was full of loving messages to him and to other people – their close friends and neighbors. When the man finished reading it, he looked at his friend. "Oh no, you are doing it again, Tom! You always cry when I read a letter from her. I'm going to tell her this time!"

"No, you must not do that, Henry," the grey-haired miner said. "I am getting old. And any little sorrow makes me cry. I really was hoping she would be here tonight."

The next day, Friday, another old miner came to visit. He asked to hear the letter. The message in it made him cry, too. "We all miss her so much," he said.

Saturday finally came. I found I was looking at my watch very often. Henry noticed this. "You don't think something has happened to her, do you?" he asked me.

I smiled and said that I was sure she was just fine. But he did not seem satisfied.

I was glad to see his two friends, Tom and Joe, coming down the road as the sun began to set. The old miners were carrying guitars. They also brought flowers and a bottle of whiskey. They put the flowers in vases and began to play some fast and lively songs on their guitars.

My Question:

My Group's Answer:

We Predict:

Student 4:

Read your part of the story aloud. Ask your classmates one question about this part to see if they understand it well. Then ask them to predict what will happen next.

Henry's friends kept giving him glasses of whiskey, which they made him drink. When I reached for one of the two glasses left on the table, Tom stopped my arm. "Drop that glass and take the other one!" he whispered. He gave the remaining glass of whiskey to Henry just as the clock began to strike midnight.

Henry emptied the glass. His face grew whiter and whiter. "Boys," he said, "I am feeling sick. I want to lie down."

Henry was asleep almost before the words were out of his mouth.

In a moment, his two friends had picked him up and carried him into the bedroom. They closed the door and came back. They seemed to be getting ready to leave. So I said, "Please don't go gentlemen. She will not know me. I am a stranger to her."

They looked at each other. "His wife has been dead for nineteen years," Tom said.

"Dead?" I whispered.

"Dead or worse," he said.

"She went to see her parents about six months after she got married. On her way back, on a Saturday evening in June, when she was almost here, the Indians captured her. No one ever saw her again. Henry lost his mind. He thinks she is still alive. When June comes, he thinks she has gone on her trip to see her parents. Then he begins to wait for her to come back. He gets out that old letter. And we come around to visit so he can read it to us.

"On the Saturday night she is supposed to come home, we come here to be with him. We put a sleeping drug in his drink so he will sleep through the night. Then he is all right for another year."

Joe picked up his hat and his guitar. "We have done this every June for nineteen years," he said. "The first year there were twenty-seven of us. Now just the two of us are left." He opened the door of the pretty little house. And the two old men disappeared into the darkness of the Stanislaw.

My Question:

My Group's Answer:

We Predict:

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.

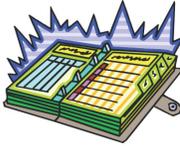
The goals of CALLA are for students to learn essential academic content and language and to become independent and self-regulated learners through their increasing command over a variety of strategies for learning in school. CALLA can be used in ESL, EFL, bilingual, foreign language, and general education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

Metacognitive Strategies

CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	
METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES		
Plan / Organize	 Planner	Before beginning a task: -Set goals. -Plan the task or content sequence. -Plan how to accomplish the task (choose strategies). -Preview a text.
Monitor / Identify Problems	 Check	While working on a task: -Check your progress on the task. -Check your comprehension as you use the language. Do you understand? If not, what is the problem? -Check your production as you use the language. Are you making sense? If not, what is the problem?
Evaluate	 I did it!	After completing a task: -Assess how well you have accomplished the learning task. -Assess how well you have used learning strategies. -Decide how effective the strategies were. -Identify changes you will make the next time you have a similar task to do.
Manage Your Own Learning	 Pace Yourself	-Determine how you learn best. -Arrange conditions that help you learn. -Seek opportunities for practice. -Focus your attention on the task.

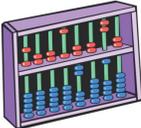
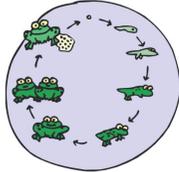
Task-Based Strategies

CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	
TASK-BASED STRATEGIES		
 <p style="text-align: center;">USE WHAT YOU KNOW</p>		
Use Background Knowledge	 <p style="text-align: center;">I know.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Think about and use what you already know to help you do the task. - Make associations between new information and your prior knowledge. -Use new information to clarify or modify your prior knowledge.
Make Inferences	 <p style="text-align: center;">Use Clues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use context and what you know to figure out meaning. -Read and listen between the lines. -Go beyond the text to understand its meaning.
Make Predictions	 <p style="text-align: center;">Crystal Ball</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Anticipate information to come. -Make logical guesses about what will happen in a written or oral text. -Make an estimate (math). -Make a hypothesis (science).
Personalize	 <p style="text-align: center;">Me</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Relate new concepts to your own life, to your experiences, knowledge, beliefs and feelings.

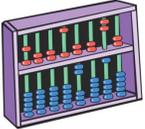
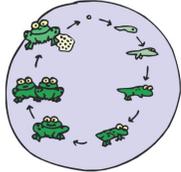
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TASK-BASED STRATEGIES		
Transfer / Use Cognates	 Coffee/Café	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Apply your linguistic knowledge of other languages (including your native language) to the target language. -Recognize cognates.
Substitute / Paraphrase	 Make it work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use a synonym or descriptive phrase for unknown words or expressions.
  USE YOUR SENSES		
Use Images	 See it in your mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use or create an actual or mental image to understand and/or represent information. -Use or draw a picture or diagram.
Use Sounds	 Sound Out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Say or read aloud a word, sentence, or paragraph to help your understanding. -Sound out/vocalize. - Use your "mental tape recorder" to remember sounds, words, phrases, and/or conversations.

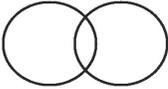
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CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY		DESCRIPTION
TASK-BASED STRATEGIES		
Use Your Kinesthetic Sense		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Act out a role, for example, in Readers' Theater, or imagine yourself in different roles in the target language. -Use real objects to help you remember words, sentences, or content information.
 USE YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS		
Find/Apply Patterns	 <p>abacus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Apply a rule. -Make a rule. -Recognize and apply letter/sound, grammar, discourse, or register rules. -Identify patterns in literature (genre). -Identify patterns in math, science, and social studies.
Classify/Sequence	 <p>Life cycle</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Categorize words or ideas according to attributes. -Classify living things; identify natural cycles. -Identify order and sequences in math, science, and social studies. -Sequence events in history.

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CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	
TASK-BASED STRATEGIES		
Take Notes	 <p>PDA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Write down important words and ideas while listening or reading. -List ideas or words to include in speaking or writing..
Use Graphic Organizers	 <p>A Venn diagram</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use or create visual representations (such as Venn diagrams, time lines, webs, and charts) of important relationships between concepts.
Summarize	 <p>Main Idea</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create a mental, oral, or written summary of information.
Use Selective Attention	 <p>Focus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Focus on specific information, structures, key words, phrases, or ideas.

Task-Based Strategies

CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	
TASK-BASED STRATEGIES		
 		
USE A VARIETY OF RESOURCES		
Access Information Sources	 <p>Look it up!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use the dictionary, the internet, and other reference materials. -Seek out and use sources of information. -Follow a model -Ask questions
Cooperate	 <p>Together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Work with others to complete tasks, build confidence, and give and receive feedback.
Talk Yourself Through It (Self-Talk)	 <p>I can do it!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use your inner resources. Reduce your anxiety by reminding yourself of your progress, the resources you have available, and your goals.