



American Stories
A Princess of Mars
by Edgar Rice Burroughs

Lesson Plan
by Jill Robbins, Ph.D.

Level: Intermediate

Introduction

This lesson plan is to accompany the VOA Learning English **American Stories** episode, *A Princess of Mars* by Edgar Rice Burroughs.

A script for the story is included at the end of this lesson.
Students can read along as they listen to the audio.

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

Say, “This is the beginning of an adventure story. This kind of story usually has exciting action and dangerous situations. Have you read other adventure stories?”

Allow students time to share adventure stories they have read.

Continue to explain: “When reading, we can find certain things that writers do to make the story more exciting. In today’s lesson we will learn how to do that. First, let’s learn some of the new vocabulary.”

Vocabulary

Apache - *n.* a member of a Native American people of the southwestern U.S.

trail - *n.* a path through a forest, field, etc.

flee - *v.* to run away from danger (Irregular past tense: fled)

gravity - *n.* the natural force that tends to cause physical things to move towards each other : the force that causes things to fall towards the Earth

Martian - *n.* an imaginary creature in books, movies, etc., that lives on or comes from the planet Mars

Present

Explain the strategy of *selective attention*: “Today we’re going to listen to the story, and **focus on** what makes it an adventure story. **Focusing** is when you *pay attention* to specific things. This is good to do when we read because it helps us notice more of the details and remember them. Let me show you how it’s done. As we listen to the first part, I am going to **focus** on things that make this story exciting.”

Play to “I who have died two times and am still alive.”

“I’m going to stop here to tell you what I noticed. Remember, I’m **focusing** on strange or exciting things in the story. The narrator, the person telling the story, says that he is over 100 but has never aged. He appears the same as he did 30 years ago. That is strange. So there’s one thing I noticed. Another thing he says is that he does not fear death. I am thinking he must be brave. Maybe that’s because of the adventure he is going to tell us about. As I read more, I will be interested in finding out more about why he does not fear death.”

Practice

Explain, “Now it’s your turn. I will play some more of the story. As you listen, **focus** on the things that make this story an adventure. You can mark them on your copy of the story. When I stop, I will ask you to tell your neighbor what you noticed.”

Play to “I found my weapons, placed a saddle on my horse and started as fast as possible down the trail taken by Powell.”

Ask students to turn to their neighbor and tell what they noticed when they **focused** on the exciting parts in the story. Ask a few students to share the things they **focused** on with the class. “Thank you. Now let’s read some more and keep **focusing** on the adventure parts.

Play to “You do not question the fact, nor did I.”

Say, “Wow! How did he get to Mars? That’s sure an adventure! Turn to your neighbor again and share what you noticed.”

After giving students time to share what they noticed, ask a few students to share the points they focused on with the class. Say, “Thank you. Let’s read to the end of the story now and see what happens. Pay close attention – this gets very exciting!”

Play to the end of the story.

Ask students: “What is the most exciting part of this section?” Give students a chance to tell what they think.

Self-Evaluation

When students have finished making their final predictions, ask, “Do you think *focusing* helped you understand and remember this story?”

Allow time for some discussion.

“Raise your hand if you think you will try this strategy another time.”

Expand

Suggest other times when **focusing** might help students. “When have to do a report, you focus on getting specific information from what you read. When you ask a question in class, you can also use this method to focus on the answer the teacher gives you. There are a lot of times we can focus. Try it in one of your other classes and let me know how it goes!”

JOHN CARTER: I am a very old man. How old I do not know. It is possible I am a hundred, maybe more. I cannot tell because I have never aged as other men do.

So far as I can remember, I have always been a man of about thirty. I appear today as I did forty years ago. Yet, I feel that I cannot go on living forever. Someday I will die the real death from which there is no escape. I do not know why I should fear death. I who have died two times and am still alive.

I have never told this story. I know the human mind will not believe what it cannot understand. I cannot explain what happened to me. I can only tell of the ten years my dead body lay undiscovered in an Arizona cave.

My name is John Carter. I am from the state of Virginia. At the close of the Civil War I found myself without a home, without money and without work.

I decided the best plan was to search for gold in the great deserts of the American Southwest.

I spent almost a year searching for gold with another former soldier, Captain James Powell, also of Virginia. We were extremely lucky. In the winter of eighteen sixty-five we found rocks that held gold.

Powell was trained as a mining engineer. He said we had uncovered over a million dollars worth of gold in only three months. But the work was slow with only two men and not much equipment. So we decided Powell should go to the nearest settlement to seek equipment and men to help us with the work. On March third, eighteen sixty-six, Powell said good-bye. He rode his horse down the mountain toward the valley. I followed his progress for several hours.

The morning Powell left was like all mornings in the deserts of the great Southwest -- clear and beautiful.

Not much later I looked across the valley. I was surprised to see three riders in the same place where I had last seen my friend. After watching for some time, I decided the three riders must be hostile Indians.

Powell, I knew, was well armed and an experienced soldier. But I knew he would need my aid. I found my weapons, placed a saddle on my horse and started as fast as possible down the trail taken by Powell.

I followed as quickly as I could until dark. About nine o'clock the moon became very bright. I had no difficulty following Powell's trail. I soon found the trail left by the three riders following Powell. I knew they were Indians. I was sure they wanted to capture Powell.

Suddenly I heard shots far ahead of me. I hurried ahead as fast as I could. Soon I came to a small camp. Several hundred Apache Indians were in the center of the camp. I could see Powell on the ground. I did not even think about what to do, I just acted. I pulled out my guns and began shooting.

The Apaches were surprised and fled. I forced my horse into the camp and toward Powell. I reached down and pulled him up on the horse by his belt. I urged the horse to greater speed. The Apaches by now realized that I was alone and quickly began to follow. We were soon in very rough country.

The trail I chose began to rise sharply. It went up and up. I followed the trail for several hundred meters more until I came to the mouth of a large cave.

It was almost morning now. I got off my horse and laid Powell on the ground. I tried to give him water. But it was no use. Powell was dead. I laid his body down and continued to the cave.

I began to explore the cave. I was looking for a safe place to defend myself, or perhaps for a way out. But I became very sleepy. It was a pleasant feeling. My body became extremely heavy. I had trouble moving. Soon I had to lay down against the side of the cave. For some reason I could not move my arms or legs.

I lay facing the opening of the cave. I could see part of the trail that had led me here. And now I could see the Apaches. They had found me. But I could do nothing.

Within a minute one of them came into the cave. He looked at me, but he came no closer. His eyes grew wide. His mouth opened. He had a look of terror on his face. He looked behind me for moment and then fled.

Suddenly I heard a low noise behind me.

So could the rest of the Apaches. They all turned and fled. The sound became louder. But still I could not move. I could not turn my head to see what was behind me. All day I lay like this. I tried again to rise, and again, but still I could not move. Then I heard a sharp sound. It was like a steel wire breaking. I quickly stood up. My back was against the cave wall.

I looked down. There before me lay my body.

For a few moments, I stood looking at my body. I could not bring myself to touch it. I was very frightened. The sounds of the cave and the sight of my body forced me away. I slowly backed to the opening of the cave.

I turned to look at the Arizona night. I could see a thousand stars. As I stood there I turned my eyes to a large red star. I could not stop looking at it. It was Mars...the red planet...the red god of war. It seemed to pull me near.

Then, for a moment, I closed my eyes. There was an instant of extreme cold and total darkness. Suddenly I was in deep, dreamless, peaceful sleep.

I opened my eyes upon a very strange land. I immediately knew then I was on Mars. Not once did I question this fact. My mind told me I was on Mars as your mind tells you that you are upon Earth. You do not question the fact, nor did I.

I found myself lying on a bed of yellow colored grass that covered the land for kilometers. The time was near the middle of the day and the sun was shining full upon me. It was warm.

I decided to do a little exploring. Springing to my feet, I received my first Martian surprise. The effort to stand carried me into the Martian air to the height of about one meter. I landed softly upon the ground, however, without incident.

I found that I must learn to walk all over again. My muscles were used to the gravity of Earth. Mars has less gravity. My attempts to walk resulted in jumps and hops, which took me into the air. I once landed on my face. I soon learned that it took much less effort for me to move on Mars than it did on Earth.

Near me was a small, low wall. Carefully, I made my way to the wall and looked over. It was filled with eggs, some already broken open. Small, green creatures were in them. They looked at me with huge red eyes.

As I watched the fierce-looking creatures, I failed to hear twenty full-grown Martians coming from behind me. They had come without warning. As I turned, I saw them. One was coming at me with a huge spear, with its sharp tip pointed at my heart!

Words in this story

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gravity - *n.* the natural force that tends to cause physical things to move towards each other : the force that causes things to fall towards the Earth

Martian - *n.* an imaginary creature in books, movies, etc., that lives on or comes from the planet Mars

About the CALLA Approach

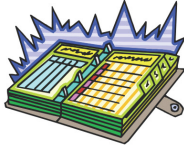



The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) is an instructional model for second and foreign language learners based on cognitive theory and research.

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.







Metacognitive Strategies

CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	
METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES		
Plan / Organize	 <p>Planner</p>	<p>Before beginning a task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Set goals. -Plan the task or content sequence. -Plan how to accomplish the task (choose strategies). -Preview a text.
Monitor / Identify Problems	 <p>Check</p>	<p>While working on a task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -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	 <p>I did it!</p>	<p>After completing a task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -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	 <p>Pace Yourself</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Determine how you learn best. -Arrange conditions that help you learn. -Seek opportunities for practice. -Focus your attention on the task.

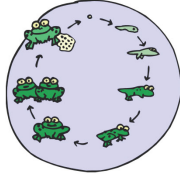
Task-Based Strategies

CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	
TASK-BASED STRATEGIES		
		
Use Background Knowledge	 I know.	-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	 Use Clues	-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	 Crystal Ball	-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	 Me	-Relate new concepts to your own life, to your experiences, knowledge, beliefs and feelings.


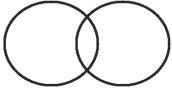


Task-Based Strategies

CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	
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.



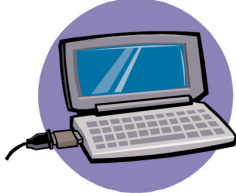


Task-Based Strategies

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	 abacus	<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	 Life cycle	<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.

Task-Based Strategies

CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	
TASK-BASED STRATEGIES		
Take Notes	 PDA	<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	 A Venn diagram	<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	 Main Idea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create a mental, oral, or written summary of information.
Use Selective Attention	 Focus	<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	 Look it up!	<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	 Together	<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)	 I can do it!	<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.