

Learning English

American Stories

Paul's Case

by Willa Cather

Lesson Plan
by Jill Robbins, Ph.D.

Introduction

This lesson plan is to accompany the American Stories series episode, *Paul's Case, by Willa Cather*.

A transcript of the story is included at the end of this lesson to print so students can read as they listen. Teachers who cannot play the audio from the website can read the story aloud or have students read it.

This lesson plan is based on the CALLA Approach. See the end of the lesson for more information and resources on teaching with the CALLA approach. The following slide shows the five parts of this lesson plan.

Lesson Elements

Prepare

Present

Practice

Self-Evaluate

Expand

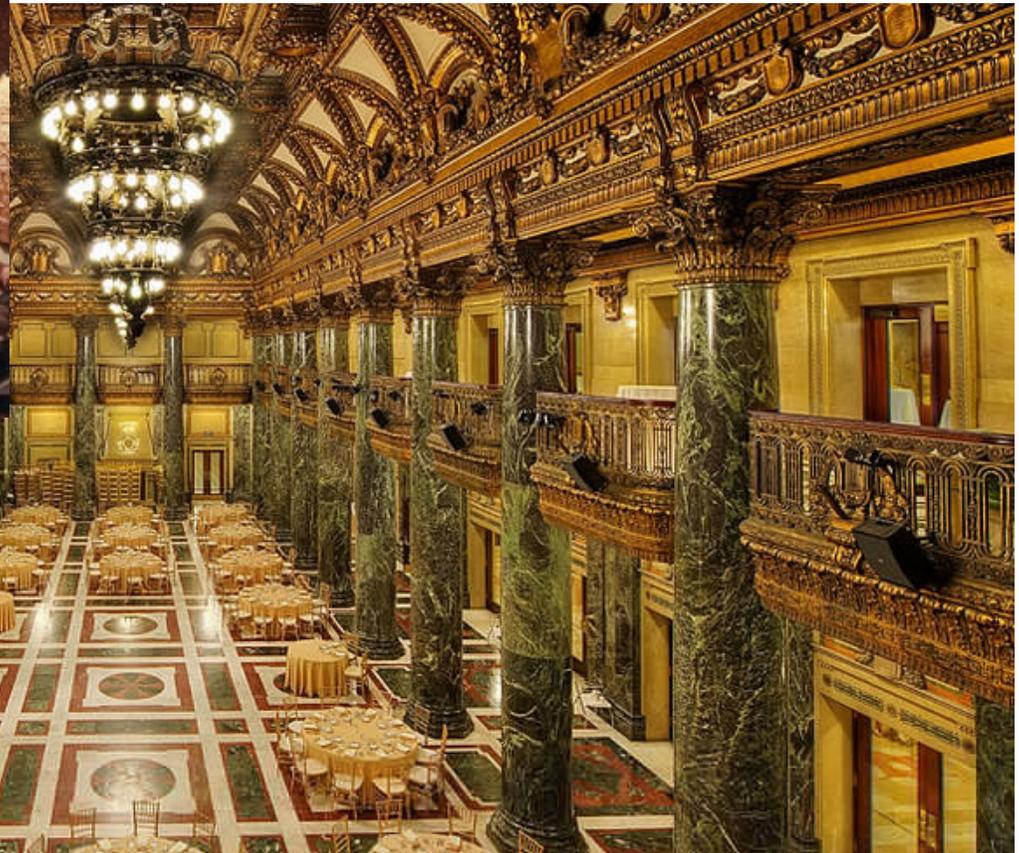
Prepare

Introduce the story. “Today we will read *Paul’s Case*, a story about a young man, Paul, who feels that he doesn’t belong. This is not unusual for a high school student. Paul’s teachers notice his feelings and complain about him. Do you know anyone like this?

Listen to students’ responses. If they do not give an example, give one of your own when you did not feel you could ‘fit in’ to a situation.

Show the images on the following slides and teach the vocabulary.

Carnegie Music Hall



Pittsburgh in 1902



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- NO. 1. UNION PASSENGER P. R. R.
- 2. BERKINGHAM STATION PANHANDLE R. R.
- 3. F. & M. R. R. STATION
- 4. B. & O. " "
- 5. P. & W. & B. & P. R. R. " "
- 6. POST OFFICE
- 7. EXPOSITION BUILDINGS
- 8. FORT PITT BLOCKHOUSE

PITTSBURGH,
PENNSYLVANIA.
1902.

- NO. 9. COURT HOUSE
- 10. FARMERS SAVINGS BANK
- 11. ARMY BUILDING
- 12. PEOPLES SAVINGS BANK
- 13. FRICK BUILDING
- 14. CARNEGIE " "
- 15. PARK " "

Vocabulary

Pittsburgh - *Placename*. a port in SW Pennsylvania; the largest river port in the US and an important industrial center, formerly with large steel mills.

vein - *n.* any one of the tubes that carry blood from parts of the body back to the heart

eyebrows - *n.* the line of hair that grows over your eye

usher - *n.* a person who leads people to their seats in a theater, at a wedding, etc.

uniform - *n.* a special kind of clothing that all the members of a group or organization wear

marble - *n.* a kind of stone that is often polished and used in buildings and statues

wallpaper -*n.* thick decorative paper used to cover the walls of a room

soprano - *adj.* relating to the highest female singing voice or the highest voice part in a singing group

Present

Introduce the task to students: “As we read the story today, we will practice the strategy *personalize*. When we personalize, we think about how what we are reading relates to our own experiences. Then we use that knowledge to help us understand the story. Today, we will try to personalize in relation to several characters. I’ll show you how to do this.”

Play or read aloud to “His teachers attacked him without mercy.”

Tell students, “We have three characters so far. I’ll write them on my chart, then talk about how I personalize when I read about them.” Explain as you fill out the chart, seen on the next slide. Write on the board or display on a screen for the class.

Personalize

Character	Description	How I personalize
Paul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hates school • Doesn't do homework • Tall & thin; His clothes do not fit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know some students who feel this way • I have seen some unhappy kids who do not keep up with school work • I know poor families can't buy new clothes when children grow quickly.
Paul's teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't know what to do with Paul • They complain • They do not have mercy on Paul (they are unkind to him) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have known teachers who don't understand some students • I have heard teachers complain about a student • I feel angry because I have had teachers get angry with me, too
Paul's father	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doesn't know what to do with Paul 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know that many parents feel this way, sometimes I felt this with my son

Practice

Tell students, “Now it’s your turn. Make a table on your paper. As we read the next section, use your own experiences to personalize. Write the things you personalize on your own paper. Then I will ask you to share your knowledge with your partner.”

Play or read aloud to ‘Paul felt truly happy for the first time that day.’

“Now, sit with your partner and write in your chart. What do the characters do in this part? Can you personalize based on your own experiences?”

Give students time to work together in their groups. Ask students to tell you what they wrote. Fill in the chart.

Personalize (Continued)

Character	Description	How students personalize
Paul	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tell teachers what they want to hear• Smiles at the teachers• Bows politely to the teachers• Excited about going to his job• Loves wearing his uniform• Looks handsome and happy at work• Music makes Paul very happy	
Paul's teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Art teacher tries to explain Paul's behavior	
People at the concert hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Think Paul is charming	

Personalize (Example)

Character	Description	How I personalize
Paul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell teachers what they want to hear • Smiles at the teachers • Bows politely to the teachers • Excited about going to his job • Loves wearing his uniform • Looks handsome and happy at work • Music makes Paul very happy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know some lie to make others happy • I know he is smiling from nervousness • I think he is trying to get along with the teachers • I know in the right situation some problem children are calm and happy • I know music can calm people with emotional problems
Paul's teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art teacher tries to explain Paul's behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know teachers try to understand children
People at the concert hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think Paul is charming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know children often behave differently when away from their school and family

Instruct students to listen again. “With your partner, listen to the next part of the story. Notice what Paul thinks about the concert hall, the hotel, and his street. Write down your ideas as you personalize based on this part of the story. I also want you to think of what advice you would give to Paul, if he were your friend.”

Play or read aloud to ‘Paul liked to spend as much time as he could at the theater where Charley Edwards and his group acted in their plays.’

Guide students to complete their chart with their personalization of the events and people described in this section of the story.

Personalize (Continued)

Character	Description	How students personalize
The Schenley Hotel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has wide glass doors • Important people stay there • Warm, sweet air is inside • Has sparkling lights and marble floors • the mysterious dishes of food being served in the hotel's dining room. He thought about green bottles of wine growing cold in silver buckets of ice. 	
Paul's house	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has ugly yellow wallpaper • Bed has an old red cover • His bathroom has a cracked mirror and gray floor 	
Paul's neighbors on Cordelia Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houses are all alike • All children like mathematics • Visit with each other on Sundays 	
Paul	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wants to spend time with actors 	

Explain the task and model the learning strategy

Discuss what students understand by applying personalization to this part of the story. Ask students, “What advice would you give to Paul?”

Give students time to discuss the advice they would give to Paul.

Acknowledge students’ advice to Paul (for example, he should study music or drama, or look for a music group he can join at his school). Let’s read the rest of the story. Remember to personalize if you can.”

Play to the end of the story.

Self-Evaluate

Ask students to stay with their partner and talk about the final sentence “Paul’s was a bad case.” Encourage students to explain, “What does this mean? When someone is sick, we might say they have a bad case of the flu. What disease does Paul have a ‘case’ of?”

Give students time to talk about their ideas.

Ask, “Now I’d like to ask – what do you think about using this strategy, *personalizing*, when you read? Did it help you follow the story? Write a sentence or two on your paper to turn in about how *personalizing* helped you today.”

Expand

Ask students, “Are there other times when you can *personalize*?”

Listen to students’ responses.

Continue, “This strategy is helpful in both reading and listening. Personalizing helps us to see the common human experiences in what we read. It helps us to understand and remember the people and events in the stories we read or hear. Try using this strategy tonight when you do your homework, or in your next class. Let me know how it goes!”

Our story today is called "Paul's Case." Willa Cather wrote it. Donna de Sanctis adapted it for VOA Learning English. "Paul's Case" will be told in two parts.

Paul hated school. He did not do his homework. He did not like his teachers. Paul's father did not know what to do with him. His teachers did not know either. One afternoon, all his teachers at **Pittsburgh High** School met together with him to discuss his case. Paul was late. When he entered the room his teachers sat waiting for him.

He was tall for his age and very thin. His clothes were too small for him, but they were clean. He had a bright red flower in the button hole of his black jacket. One of the teachers asked Paul why he had come to the meeting. Paul said politely that he wanted to do better in school. This was a lie. Paul often lied.

His teachers began to speak. They had many complaints. One said Paul talked to the other students instead of paying attention to the lessons. Another said Paul always sat in class with his hands covering his eyes. A third teacher said Paul looked out the window instead of looking at her. His teachers attacked him without mercy.

Paul's eyebrows moved up and down as his teachers spoke. His smile never left his face, but his fingers shook as he touched the flower on his coat. At last the meeting was over. Paul's smile got even wider. He bowed gracefully and left the room.

His teachers were angry and confused. The art teacher spoke for all of them when he said there was something about Paul that he didn't understand. "I don't think he really means to be bad," he said. "There's just something wrong with that boy." Then the art teacher remembered one warm afternoon when Paul had fallen asleep in his class. Paul's face was white with thin blue **veins** under the skin. The boy's face looked tired and lined, like an old man's. His **eyebrows** moved up and down, even in his sleep.

After he left the meeting, Paul ran down the hill from the school whistling. He was late for his job at the concert hall. Paul was an **usher** there. He showed people to their seats. He carried messages for them. He brought them their programs with a polite bow. Everyone thought he was a charming boy and the best usher at the hall.

When Paul reached the concert hall that evening, he went immediately to the dressing room. About six boys were already there. Paul began changing his clothes with excited hands. He loved his green **uniform** with the gold pockets and design.

Paul rushed into the concert hall as soon as he had changed clothes. He ran up and down the hall, helping people. He became more and more excited. His face became pink and his eyes seemed larger and very bright. He looked almost handsome. At last everyone was seated. The orchestra began to play and Paul sat down with a sigh of relief.

The music seemed to free something in Paul's spirit. Then a woman came out and began to sing. She had a rich, strong **soprano** voice. Paul felt truly happy for the first time that day.

At the end of the concert Paul went back to the dressing room. After he had changed his clothes again he went outside the concert hall. He decided to wait for the singer to come out. While he waited he looked across the street to the large hotel called "The Schenley." All the important people stayed at The Schenley when they visited Pittsburgh. Paul had never been inside it, but he used to stand near the hotel's wide glass doors. He liked to watch the people enter and leave. He believed if he could only enter this kind of a hotel, he would be able to leave school, his teachers, and his ordinary, gray life behind him. . . forever.

At last the singer came out of the concert hall. Paul followed her as she walked to the hotel. He was part of a large crowd of admirers who had waited to see her. When they all reached the hotel, she turned and waved. Then the doors opened and she disappeared inside. Paul stared into the hotel as the doors slowly closed. He could feel the warm, sweet air inside. And for a moment, he felt part of a golden world of sparkling lights and **marble** floors. He thought about the mysterious dishes of food being served in the hotel's dining room. He thought about green bottles of wine growing cold in silver buckets of ice.

He turned away from the hotel and walked home. He thought of his room with its horrible yellow **wallpaper**, the old bed with its ugly red cover. He shook his head.

Soon he was walking down the street where he lived. All the houses on Cordelia Street were exactly alike. Middle class businessmen had bought them for their families. All their children went to school and to church. They loved arithmetic. As Paul walked toward his house he felt as if he were drowning in ugliness. He longed for cool colors and soft lights and fresh flowers. He didn't want to see his ugly bedroom or the cold bathroom with its cracked mirror and gray floor.

Paul went around to the back of his father's house. He found an open window and climbed into the kitchen. Then he went downstairs to the basement. He was afraid of rats. But he did not want to face his own bedroom. Paul couldn't sleep. He sat on the floor and stared into the darkness until morning came.

The following Sunday Paul had to go to church with his family. Afterwards, everyone came home and ate a big dinner. Then all the people who lived on Cordelia Street came outside to visit each other.

After supper Paul asked his father if he could visit a friend to get some help with his arithmetic. Paul left the house with his school books under his arm. But he didn't go to his friend's house. Instead he went to see Charley Edwards. Charley was a young actor. Paul liked to spend as much time as he could at the theater where Charley Edwards and his group acted in their plays.

It was only at the theater and the concert hall that Paul felt really alive. The moment he smelled the air of these places he felt like a prisoner suddenly set free. As soon as he heard the concert hall orchestra play he forgot all the ugly, unpleasant events in his own life.

Paul had discovered that any kind of music awakened his imagination.

Paul didn't want to become a musician, however. He didn't want to become an actor, either. He only wanted to be near people who were actors and musicians. He wanted to see the kind of life these artists led.

Paul found a schoolroom even worse after a night at the theater or the concert hall. He hated the school's bare floors and cracked walls. He turned away from his dull teachers in their plain clothes. He tried to show them how little he thought of them and the studies they taught.

He would bring photographs of all the actors he knew to school. He would tell the other students that he spent his evenings with these people at elegant restaurants. Then he would announce that he was going away to Europe or to California, or to Egypt for a while. The next day he would come to school smiling nervously. His sister was ill, he would say. But he was still planning to make his trip next spring.

Paul's problems at school became worse. Even after the meeting with his teachers, things did not get better. He told them he had no time to study grammar and arithmetic. He told them he had to help the actors in the theater. They were old friends of his.

Finally, his teachers went to Paul's father. He took Paul out of school and made him get a job. He told the manager at the concert hall that Paul could not work there anymore. His father warned the doorman at the theater not to let Paul into the place. And Charley Edwards promised Paul's father not to see Paul again.

All the actors at the theater laughed when they heard about the stories Paul had been telling. The women thought it was funny that Paul had told people he took them out to nice restaurants and sent them flowers. They agreed with the teachers and with his father that Paul's was a bad case.

Words in This Story

Pittsburgh - (Placename) a port in SW Pennsylvania; the largest river port in the US and an important industrial center, formerly with large steel mills.

vein - *n.* any one of the tubes that carry blood from parts of the body back to the heart

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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 below.

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.

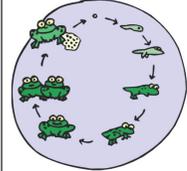
Task-Based Strategies

CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	
TASK-BASED STRATEGIES		
		
Use Background Knowledge	 I know.	<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	 Use Clues	<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	 Crystal Ball	<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	 Me	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Relate new concepts to your own life, to your experiences, knowledge, beliefs and feelings.

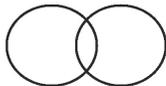
Task-Based Strategies

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	 <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.

Task-Based Strategies

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	 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.