



The Cask of Amontillado

By Edgar Allan Poe

Lesson Plan

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Introduction

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

Students benefit from knowing some of the key words of the story before they begin reading. Discuss these new words with students; showing pictures to help them understand. Later, you can use the Quiz about this vocabulary on the VOA Learning English website to confirm that the students understand the meanings of the words.

Carnival



n. a festival held before Lent that includes music and dancing

Cask



n. a container that is shaped like a barrel and is used for holding liquids ("an oak cask for wine")

Palace



n. a very large and impressive house

Cellar



n. the part of a building that is entirely or partly below the ground

Insult

v. to do or say something that is offensive to (someone) : to do or say something that shows a lack of respect for (someone) (“She felt they had *insulted* her by repeatedly ignoring her questions.”)

Did you ever feel **insulted** by someone you know? What did you do?

Revenge

- *n.* the act of doing something to hurt someone because that person did something that hurt you

Did someone you know ever try to get **revenge** for something another person did?

Present

“We’re going to use the strategy **summarize**. This strategy helps us to make sure we understand and can remember what we are reading. **Summarizing** means to tell the main points of what you read *in your own words*. Using your own words is important because it shows you understand what you have read. I’m going to play a little of the story now and summarize it.”

Play the first section of the story, up to *‘When I smiled at him, he thought it was because we were friends.’*

Explain the strategy to practice

Say, “Now I will summarize what I understand from this part. Here is my summary: There are two men, the person who is telling the story (the narrator) and Fortunato. The narrator and Fortunato grew up near each other. Fortunato made the narrator angry when they were children. Today he is a rich man and has a great life. The narrator smiles when he sees Fortunato but is not really his friend. He wants to kill him.” Point out that you did not use the same words as the text.

Model the strategy

Practice

Play the next section of the story, to where Fortunato says “*I’ll taste the Amontillado for you.*”

Say, “Now it’s your turn. Let’s read the next section. Be ready to **summarize** the story when we stop.”

Next, ask students to turn to their neighbor and tell in their own words what they could understand from the section.

Give students time to exchange their verbal summaries; about 3 minutes should be long enough.

Allow students to practice the strategy with the story

Then, ask the class to read the next section. (to ‘I smiled to myself and stopped working so that I could better enjoy listening to the noise.’)

Say, “Let’s read another section now. Remember the main points so you can summarize them.”

After the next section, pair students with a new partner, and repeat the summarizing activity, or if you would like to encourage writing, ask students to write at least three sentences about the part they have read.

Allow students to practice the strategy with the story

Ask a volunteer to tell their summary to the class.

The summary should include these facts:

- *Fortunato and the narrator (we learn his name is Montresor) are both wine experts*
- *Montresor lives in a 'palace' that has people buried under it.*
- *The two men meet one night after a carnival.*
- *They talk about a cask of wine Montresor bought.*
- *Fortunato offers to taste the wine to make certain it is good.*

Allow students to practice the strategy with the story

Self-Evaluation

Ask students if they are excited about reading the rest of the story. "Are you understanding the story? Do you think using **summarizing** has helped you understand the story?" Ask students to give a signal (thumbs up for yes, thumbs down for no or another culturally appropriate set of gestures) to let you know if summarizing was helpful. "Let's try it one more time. This time you'll **summarize** the end of the story. Think about the main points as you listen."

Ask students to evaluate for themselves whether the strategy helped them

Play or allow students to play the remaining section of the story (to the end). When it is finished, lead a brief discussion about the theme of the story.

You may say, “Imagine you go out of the classroom today and run into a friend. What will you tell them about the story you read in class? Can you summarize the whole story now? If your friend asks you to say just one word about the story, what will you say? (students might come up with ‘jealousy’ or ‘revenge’ or ‘murder.’)”

Ask students to evaluate for themselves whether the strategy helped them

Expand

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

Possible answers are ‘listening to a lecture; reading a textbook; reading the newspaper; watching a show on TV.’

Encourage students to go home and use summarizing if they are able to with a homework assignment; or to go to their next class and use summarizing in that class.

Ask students use the strategy in other contexts

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.