

Learning English

American Stories

The Boy on Graves-End Road

by Caty Weaver

Lesson Plan

by Jill Robbins, Ph.D.

Level: Intermediate

Introduction

This lesson plan is to accompany the VOA Learning English **American Stories** episode, *The Boy on Graves-End Road* by Caty Weaver.

A script for the story is included at the end of this lesson.

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 genre of the story: “Today’s story is a Halloween story. Do you know what to expect from a Halloween* story? This type of story is also known as *horror*.”

Allow students time to share what they know about horror or Halloween stories. Explain in more detail using the following slides and images.

*If students are not familiar with the holiday, Halloween, you may want to find additional resources online to explain its history.

Horror Stories

“Here are some of the things I expect when I read a horror story:

- A frightening or scary event
- Something supernatural or out of the ordinary”
- An evil character or monster
- Gothic scenes – dark places, such as an old house, a graveyard or cemetery”

Children in costumes



Halloween Images

Scary decorations



Cemetery



Vocabulary

scare - *v.* to cause (someone) to become afraid

grave - *n.* a hole in the ground for burying a dead body

cemetery *n.* a place where dead people are buried :
graveyard

intense - *adj.* of a person : very serious

platform - *n.* a flat area next to railroad tracks where people wait for a train or subway

Halloween *n.* the night of October 31 when children dress up as ghosts, witches, monsters, etc., and go to houses to ask for candy (see 'trick or treat')

trick or treat *v.* a custom on Halloween in which children knock on people's doors and say "trick or treat" when the doors are opened to ask for candy

Vocabulary

headstone - *n.* a stone that marks the place where a dead person is buried and that usually has the person's name and birth and death dates on it

weird - *adj.* unusual or strange

worm - *n.* a long, thin animal that has a soft body with no legs or bones and that often lives in the ground

choke - *v.* to become unable to breathe usually because something gets stuck in your throat or because the air is not good for breathing

ghost - *n.* the soul of a dead person thought of as living in an unseen world or as appearing to living people

Present

Explain “Today we’re going to listen to the story, then **act it out**. This strategy helps us by bringing the words on paper to life. Acting out a story is fun and gives us more practice in speaking and listening.

Here are the characters in the story:

- **The narrator** tells the story.
- **Kelly** is the mother, the main character in the story.
- **Eileen** is Kelly’s friend.
- **Ben** is Kelly’s son.
- **News Announcer** tells some news on TV. (The same student can play the part of Eileen and the News Announcer)

We will also be practicing the strategy we have learned before, **cooperate**. That means we work together to learn. When you work with your group, help each other to say the words *with feeling*.” Demonstrate by reading the first few lines.

“I’m going to read *with feeling* to show you what I mean.”

Read aloud, emphasizing words in **bold print**:

“KELLY: "Benny-boy, do you want **black** beans or **red** beans?"

BEN: "**Red** beans, Mama."

Kelly: "Don't **do** that, Ben. You **scared** me half to **death!** You're going to **get it now ...**”

“Let’s make groups of 4. Decide who will play each person, or *role* in the story. Then we will listen to the story. As you listen, *notice how the actor says the words for your role*. This will help you when it’s your turn to **act it out.**”

Practice

Say, “Now it’s your turn. In your group, take turns reading the story. I will listen to you and choose one group to read for the class. So do your best to help your classmates read the story well.”

Walk around the classroom, monitoring the groups. Be sure they stay on task. Note the best readers for each part, and have them perform in front of the class in another session, or for a neighboring classroom.

Self-Evaluation

When all groups have completed the story, ask, “How did you feel about **acting it out**? Do you think *acting it out* helped you understand and remember this story?”

Allow time for some discussion.

“On a sheet of paper, write one way that cooperating and acting it out was better than working alone to read 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 **act it out**. Possible answers are 'doing a group project, giving a book report, or getting ready for a speech.'

Encourage students to go home and **act out** the story with family members.

Now, the VOA Special English program American Stories.

I'm Pat Bodnar. October thirty-first is Halloween. In the spirit of this ancient holiday, we present a story written by Special English reporter and producer Caty Weaver. It's called "The Boy on Graves-End Road."

NARRATOR: Kelly Ryan was making dinner. Her ten-year-old son Benjamin was watching television in the living room. Or at least she thought he was.

KELLY: "Benny-boy, do you want black beans or red beans?"

BEN: "Red beans, Mama."

KELLY: "Don't do that, Ben. You **scared** me half to death! You're going to get it now ... "

NARRATOR: Ben had come up quietly right behind her.

(SOUND)

KELLY: "I'll get back to you, stinker!"

NARRATOR: Kelly goes to the phone, but as soon as she lays her hand on it, the ringing stops.

KELLY: "How strange. Oh, the beans!"

NARRATOR: Kelly turns her attention back to cooking. As soon as she does, the phone rings again.

KELLY: "Honey, can you get that?"

BEN: "Hello? Oh, hi. Yes, I remember. Sure, it sounds fun. Let me ask my mom. Can you hold? She might wanna talk to your mom. Oh, um, OK. See you tomorrow."

KELLY: "Ben, your rice and beans are on the table. Let's eat."

(SOUND)

KELLY: "So, what was that call about?"

BEN: "That was Wallace Gray. You know him, from class. He wants to play tomorrow. Can I go home with him after school? Please, Mom? I get bored around here waiting for you after work."

KELLY: "But, Ben, I don't even know his parents. Maybe I should talk to them."

BEN: "You can't, Mom. He was with his babysitter. He said his parents wouldn't be home until late tonight and they would leave before he went to school in the morning. Please Mom, Wallace lives right over on Graves-End Road. It's a five-minute walk from here. PLEASE,?"

KELLY: "Well, OK. What's so great about this guy, anyway? You've got a ton of friends to play with."

BEN: "I know. But Wallace is just different. He's got a lot of imagination."

NARRATOR: The school week passes, and Ben starts to go home almost every day with Wallace. Kelly notices a change in her son. He seems tired and withdrawn. His eyes do not seem to really look at her. They seem ... lifeless. On Friday night she decides they need to have a talk.

KELLY: "Sweetie, what's going on with you? You seem so tired and far away. Is something wrong? Did you and your new friend have a fight?"

BEN: "No, Mom. We've been having a great time. There's nothing wrong with us. Why don't you like Wallace? You don't even know him, but you don't trust him."

KELLY: "Benjamin, what are you talking about? I don't dislike Wallace. You're right, I don't know him. You just don't seem like yourself. You've been very quiet the past few nights."

BEN: "I'm sorry, Mom. I guess I'm just tired. I have a great time with Wallace. We play games like cops and robbers, but they seem so real that half of the time I feel like I'm in another world. It's hard to explain. It's like, it's like ... "

KELLY: "I think the word you're looking for is **intense**."

BEN: "Yeah, that's it -- it's intense."

KELLY: "Well, tell me about today. What kind of game did you play?"

(SOUND)

BEN: "We were train robbers. Or Wallace was. I was a station manager. Wallace was running through a long train, from car to car. He had stolen a lot of money and gold from the passengers. I was chasing right behind him, moving as fast as I could. Finally he jumps out of the train into the station to make his escape. But I block his path. He grabs a woman on the station platform. She screams 'No, no!' But he yells 'Let me through, or she dies.' So I let him go."

KELLY: "What happened then?"

BEN: "Well, that's what was **weird** and, like you said, intense. Wallace threw the lady onto the tracks. And laughed. He said that's what evil characters do in games. They always do the worst."

NARRATOR: Later, after Ben went to bed, Kelly turned on the eleven o'clock news. She was only half-listening as she prepared a list of things to do the next day, on Halloween.

KELLY: "OK, let's see, grocery shopping, Halloween decorating, the dog's gotta go to the groomer, I gotta go to the hardware store, clean up the garden ...

[TV in background]

NEWS ANNOUNCER: "Reports say it appears she was pushed off the station platform into the path of the oncoming train. It happened during rush hour today. Some witnesses reported seeing two boys running and playing near the woman. But police say they did not see any images like that on security cameras at the station.

KELLY: "No! It can't be. The station is an hour away. They couldn't have gotten there. How could they? It's just a coincidence."

NARRATOR: The wind blew low and lonely that night. Kelly slept little. She dreamed she was waiting for Ben at a train station. Then, she saw him on the other side, running with another little boy.

It must be Wallace she thought. The little boy went in and out of view. Then, all of a sudden, he stopped and looked across the tracks -- directly at her.

He had no face.

Saturday morning was bright and sunny, a cool October day. Kelly made Ben eggs and toast and watched him eat happily.

KELLY: "You know, Benny-boy, a woman DID get hurt at the train station yesterday. She actually got hit by a train. Isn't that strange?"

NARRATOR: She looked at Ben.

BEN: "What do you mean, Mom?"

KELLY: "Well, you and Wallace were playing that game yesterday. About being at a train station. You said he threw a woman off the platform, and she was killed by a train."

NARRATOR: Kelly felt like a fool even saying the words. She was speaking to a ten-year-old who had been playing an imaginary game with another ten-year-old. What was she thinking?

BEN: "I said we played that yesterday? I did? Hmmm. No, we played that a few days ago, I think. It was just a really good game, really intense. Yesterday we played pirates. I got to be Captain Frank on the pirate ship, the Argh.

"Wallace was Davey, the first mate. But he tried to rebel and take over the ship so I made him walk the plank. Davey walked off into the sea and drowned. Wallace told me I had to order him to walk the plank. He said that's what evil pirates do."

KELLY: "I guess he's right. I don't know any pirates, but I do hear they're pretty evil!"

BEN: "So can I play with Wallace today when you are doing your errands? Please, Mom? I don't want to go shopping and putting up Halloween decorations."

KELLY: "Oh, whatever. I guess so. I'll pick you up at Wallace's house at about five-thirty, so you can get ready for trick or treating. Where does he live again?"

BEN: "Graves-End Road. I don't know the street number but there are only two houses on each side. His is the second one on the left."

KELLY: "OK. I can find that easy enough. Do you still want me to pick up a **ghost** costume for you?"

BEN: "Yep. Oh, and guess what, Mom: Wallace says he's a ghost, too! I suppose we'll haunt the neighborhood together."

NARRATOR: Everywhere Kelly went that day was crowded. She spent an hour and a half just at the market. When she got home, decorating the house for Halloween was difficult.

But finally she had it all the way she wanted.

KELLY: "Oh, gosh, five already. I don't even have Ben's costume."

NARRATOR: She jumped into her car and drove to Wilson Boulevard. The party store was just a few blocks away.

Kelly soon found the ghost costume that Ben wanted. She bought it and walked out of the store.

EILEEN: "Hey, Kelly! Long time no see. How's Benjamin doing?"

KELLY: "Eileen! Wow, it's great to see you. How's Matt? We've been so busy since the school year started, we haven't seen anyone!"

EILEEN: "Matt's good. Well, he broke his arm last month so no sports for him. It is driving him crazy, but at least he's got a lot of time for school now!"

EILEEN: "Anyway, Matt was wondering why Benny-boy never comes by anymore. We saw him running around the neighborhood after school last week. It looks like he's having fun, but he's always alone. We don't need to set up a play date. Ben should know that. You just tell him to come by anymore. We took him running around the neighborhood after school last week. It looks like he's having fun, but he's always alone. We don't need to set up a play date. Ben should know that. You just

tell him to come by.

KELLY: "Wait, wait a minute. Alone? What do mean alone? He started playing with a new friend, Wallace somebody, after school, like everyday this past week. Ben hasn't been alone. Wallace Gray, that's it. Do you know him? Does Matt?"

EILEEN: "Oh, Kell. Kelly, I'm sure he's a fine kid. I don't know him but don't worry, Ben's got great taste in friends, we know that! I'm sure he wasn't really alone, he was probably just playing hide and seek or something. I didn't mean to worry you. I guess everybody's on edge because of what happened to the Godwin boy this morning."

NARRATOR: Kelly suddenly felt cold and scared. What Godwin boy? And what happened to him? She was not sure she wanted to know, but she had to ask.

EILEEN: "Frank Godwin's youngest boy, Davey, the five-year-old. You know Frank, we call him Captain. He used to be a ship captain. Well, this morning the rescue squad found Davey in Blackhart Lake. They also found a little toy boat that his dad made for him. Davey and his dad named it the Argh. Davey must have been trying to sail it. It's so sad."

KELLY: "Wait, he's dead?"

EILEEN: "Yes. Davey drowned."

KELLY: "Where's Blackhart Lake?"

EILEEN: "It's right off Graves-End Road, right behind that little **cemetery**. That's why they call it Graves-End. Kelly, where are you going?"

KELLY: "I've got to get Benjamin."

(MUSIC)

NARRATOR: But she did not trust him and she knew her child was in danger.

Finally she was at Graves-End Road.

BEN: "Only two houses on each side."

NARRATOR: She remembered what Ben had told her.

EILEEN: "Right behind that little cemetery."

NARRATOR: And what Eileen had told her. Kelly got out of the car and walked down the street. She looked around.

BEN: "It's the second one on the left."

NARRATOR: She could see the lake. Some fog was coming up as the sky darkened on this Halloween night. But there was no second house. Instead, what lay before her was grass and large white stones. The cemetery. Kelly walked through the gate into the yard of graves.

KELLY: "Ben?"

NARRATOR: No answer. She kept walking.

KELLY: "Ben? Answer me. I know you're here."

NARRATOR: Again no answer. But the wind blew and some leaves began to dance around a headstone. Kelly walked slowly toward the grave. Suddenly the sky blackened -- so dark, she could not see

anything. She felt a force pushing at her. It tried to push her away from the grave. But she knew she had to stay.

KELLY: "Benjamin Owen Orr, this is your mother. Come out this second!"

NARRATOR: No one answered, except for the sound of the blowing wind. The darkness lifted. Silvery moonlight shone down directly onto the old gravestone in front of her. But Kelly already knew whose name she would see.

KELLY: "'Wallace Gray. October thirty-first, nineteen hundred, to October thirty-first, nineteen hundred and ten. Some are best when laid to rest.'"

NARRATOR: Kelly took a deep breath. Then ...

KELLY: "Wallace Gray this play date is OVER! Give me back my son. Wallace, you are in TIME-OUT."

NARRATOR: Suddenly, the ground shoots upward like a small volcano. Soil, sticks and worms fly over Kelly's head and rain down again -- followed by her son, who lands beside her.

BEN: (COUGHING, CHOKING)

KELLY: "Ben! Ben!"

BEN: (COUGHING, CHOKING) "Mom, Mom! Are you there? I can't see. All this dirt in my eyes."

KELLY: "Ben, I'm here, I'm here baby, right here. Oh, sweet Benny-boy. Can you breathe? Are you really ok? What happened? How long were you in there?"

BEN: "I don't know, Mom. But I didn't like it. I didn't like where Wallace lives. I want to go home."

KELLY: "Oh, me too, Sweetie. C'mon, Ben, put your arm around me. C'mon.

(SOUNDS)

BEN: "And Mom, one more thing ... "

KELLY: "What is it, Ben?"

BEN: "I don't want to be a ghost for Halloween."

Words in This Story

scare - *v.* to cause (someone) to become afraid

grave - *n.* a hole in the ground for burying a dead body

cemetery *n.* a place where dead people are buried : graveyard

intense - *adj.* of a person : very serious

platform - *n.* a flat area next to railroad tracks where people wait for a train or subway

Halloween *n.* the night of October 31 when children dress up as ghosts, witches, monsters, etc., and go to houses to ask for candy (see 'trick or treat')

trick or treat *v.* a custom on Halloween in which children knock on people's doors and say "trick or treat" when the doors are opened to ask for candy

headstone - *n.* a stone that marks the place where a dead person is buried and that usually has the person's name and birth and death dates on it

weird - *adj.* unusual or strange

ghost - *n.* the soul of a dead person thought of as living in an unseen world or as appearing to living people

worm - *n.* a long, thin animal that has a soft body with no legs or bones and that often lives in the ground

choke - *v.* to become unable to breathe usually because something gets stuck in your throat or because the air is not good for breathing

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.

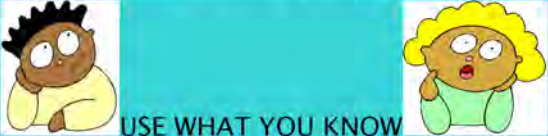




The goals of CALLA are for students to learn essential academic content and language and to become independent and self-regulated learners through their increasing command over a variety of strategies for learning in school. CALLA can be used in ESL, EFL, bilingual, foreign language, and general education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



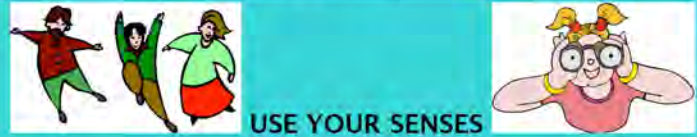


Metacognitive Strategies

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	 <p>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>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>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>Me</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Relate new concepts to your own life, to your experiences, knowledge, beliefs and feelings.


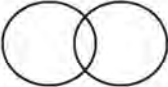


Task-Based Strategies

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	 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.