

American Stories

“The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” Part One

by Edgar Allan Poe

**Lesson Plan**

This lesson plan is to accompany Part One of the American Stories series episode "The Murders in the Rue Morgue by Edgar Allan Poe.

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.

American Stories lesson plans are based on the CALLA approach. See the end of each lesson for more information and resources on teaching with the CALLA approach.

CALLA has five lesson elements:

**Prepare:** Engage students in the topic and identify objectives for the lesson. Find out what students already know about it and motivate them to learn more. Teach new vocabulary.

**Present:** Present new information. Explain the target learning strategy for the lesson. Model what the students are asked to do. Discuss connections to students' prior knowledge.

**Practice:** Give students an authentic, active task that they can do in a small group or in pairs. Remind students to use the target learning strategy.

**Self-Evaluate:** Question students so they will reflect on their own learning. Ask students to evaluate their own learning rather than wait for the teacher to assess them. Find out if using the learning strategy helped students' understanding.

**Expand:** Guide students on how to apply what they learned to their own

lives. Point out other contexts where the learning strategy may help. Make connections between content and language or to the student's first language. When appropriate, request that parents contribute to learning.

*And now for today's lesson:*

### **Prepare**

Introduce the story: "Today, we will read Part One of 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue,' by Edgar Allan Poe. This story is recognized as the first modern detective story, and is believed to be the inspiration for Sherlock Holmes, a popular British detective series. It was first published in an American magazine in 1841. The story is about two men in Paris who attempt to solve a murder mystery. Think about a game you have played with friends, family or in school that used clues, or evidence, to solve mystery or find an answer. How did the game work? Did you enjoy it? Take one minute to write down a few notes about the game. Then, tell the person sitting next to you about it."

Give students a couple of minutes to discuss this. Then, ask a few volunteers to share their responses. Continue: "In our story today, neither of the two men are trained as detectives. But, one of them is very clever at observing and making sense of clues. As we read the story, we will use the strategy **predict** to guess what will happen next. But first, let's practice using clues with a game of riddles. A riddle is a difficult question that is asked as a game and that has a surprising answer."

Divide the class into groups of two or three. (You can make larger groups for larger classes.) Hand out copies of the worksheet that reads Student Version: Riddles. Assign one or two riddles to each group. You can assign the same riddle/s to all groups or give each group a different one. (Note: some are more difficult than others.) Students may write directly onto the worksheet. Be sure no one has access to the internet to find the answers.

## Teacher Version - Riddles

Riddle: A father and son were involved in a car accident. The father was trapped in the car, but the son was rushed to the nearest hospital. Upon entering the emergency room, the doctor who was supposed to operate on the young boy exclaimed, "I can't operate! This is my son!" How is that possible?

*Answer: The doctor was the boy's mother.*

Riddle: Mr. Davis lives on the 30<sup>th</sup> floor of an apartment with a total of 30 floors. Every morning, he leaves his apartment for his job at the local bank promptly at 8am, gets into the elevator and goes down 30 floors to the street level exit. Every evening when he returns, he takes the elevator up to the 10<sup>th</sup> floor, then gets out and walks up 20 floors of stairs—except on rainy days, when he takes the elevator up to the 20<sup>th</sup> floor and walks the remaining 10. Why does he do this?

*Answer: Mr. Davis is very short and cannot reach the buttons for the 20<sup>th</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup> floor. On rainy days, he is able to reach the button for the 20<sup>th</sup> floor only because he has an umbrella with him.*

Riddle: Two girls were born to the same mother, on the same day, at the same time in the same month and year. But they are not twins. How is this possible?

*Answer: They are part of a set of triplets, quadruplets, et cetera.*

Riddle: How can you throw a ball as hard as you can and have it come back to you, even though it doesn't bounce off of anything? There is nothing attached to it and no one else catches it or throws it back to you?

*Answer: Throw the ball straight up in the air.*

Riddle: A basket contains five apples. Do you know how to divide them among five kids so that each one has an apple and one apple stays in the basket?

*Answer: Four kids get an apple each. The fifth kid eats the fifth apple while sitting in the basket.*

## Student Version - Riddles

Riddle: A father and son were involved in a car accident. The father was trapped in the car, but the son was rushed to the nearest hospital. Upon entering the emergency room, the doctor who was supposed to operate on the young boy exclaimed, "I can't operate! This is my son!" How is that possible?

*Answer:*

Riddle: Mr. Davis lives on the 30<sup>th</sup> floor of an apartment with a total of 30 floors. Every morning, he leaves his apartment for his job at the local bank promptly at 8am, gets into the elevator and goes down 30 floors to the street level exit. Every evening when he returns, he takes the elevator up to the 10th floor, then gets out and walks up 20 floors of stairs—except on rainy days, when he takes the elevator up to the 20<sup>th</sup> floor and walks the remaining 10. Why does he do this?

*Answer:*

Riddle: Two girls were born to the same mother, on the same day, at the same time in the same month and year. But they are not twins. How is this possible?

*Answer:*

Riddle: How can you throw a ball as hard as you can and have it come back to you, even though it doesn't bounce off of anything? There is nothing attached to it and no one else catches it or throws it back to you?

*Answer:*

Riddle: A basket contains five apples. Do you know how to divide them among five kids so that each one has an apple and one apple stays in the basket?

*Answer:*

Allot a specific amount of time for the group work based on how many riddles each group has. Use a clock or timer and make sure everyone stops talking once the time is up. Then, ask volunteers from each group to share their answers.

Continue, "When you tried to solve these riddles, you used a strategy called *predicting*, or guessing, what the answers were. As we read the story today, we will practice this strategy some more. But first, let's learn the new vocabulary."

Teach the vocabulary for the lesson. The words can be found on a separate page after the transcript. Use images, classroom items or physical gestures to aid student comprehension. (There is an image of a cobblestone street after the story transcript.)

### **Present**

Hand out the Predictions Chart. (Do not hand out copies of the transcript until the end of the activity. Students will find out whether their predictions are true as they listen to the story.) Introduce the task to students: "As we read the story today, we will practice the strategy ***predict*** to help us focus on the events and details in the story. I'm going to begin reading and predict, or guess, what will happen next. I'll show you how to do this."

Play or read aloud to the note that reads: **[STOP AUDIO 1]**.

On a board or shared screen, make a chart with headers like the one below. Tell students that the story gives us clues about what will happen. Then, model the strategy: "The first part of the story introduces the narrator. He is the person telling the story. We do not know his name. He meets a man named August Dupin. They live in Paris and become friends. The narrator asks Dupin to live with him. I am going to guess what will happen next. I think that Dupin will say 'yes' then begin to act strangely."

Fill in your information as in the chart below. (You can alter the wording if you choose to.)

<b>What I predict will happen</b>	<b>Clues from the story</b>
I think Dupin will begin to do strange things when he moves in with the narrator. Also, what did he do with his family's money? Maybe he makes bad decisions. Maybe he will take the narrator's money.	Dupin is "interesting" but he is also "strange." His family was rich yet he has very little money. The narrator asks Dupin to move in with him.

Put students into groups of three or four. Then say, "Now, it's your turn. Let's listen to some more of the story. As we listen, think about what will happen next in the story and think about the specific clues that might support your predictions. Make two predictions for each section we listen to. Then, share your predictions with your group."

Play or read aloud to the note that reads: **[STOP AUDIO 2].**

Give students time to individually write their predictions and clues first then discuss them with their group. Then, ask volunteers to share with the whole class. You can take an informal survey of the similarities or differences between predictions. ("How many people predicted x?") Then, ask students to listen to the next part of the story.

Play or read aloud to the note that reads: **[STOP AUDIO 3].**

Again, give students time to individually work on their predictions and then share with their group members. Then, ask volunteers to share with the whole class.

Ask students to listen to the next part of the story. Tell them that this part will be a little longer than the previous part and to listen carefully.

Play or read aloud to the note that reads: **[STOP AUDIO 4].**

Proceed with the group activity and whole-class sharing as you did previously. Ask students to guess how the narrator will respond to Dupin's explanation for knowing the narrator's thoughts. Then, ask students to listen again.

Play or read aloud to the end of the story.

Proceed with the group activity and whole-class sharing as you did previously.

After the activity, you may hand out copies of the story transcript to students.

### **Self-Evaluate**

Ask the class, "What did you think about using the strategy *predict* today? Did it help you to pay closer attention to the story or understand the story better? Write a sentence or two on your paper about how predicting helped you today."

### **Expand**

Ask students, "Are there other times when predicting things is helpful?" Take responses from several volunteers. Continue, "This strategy is helpful in reading and listening. Predicting helps you focus on information from a story. It can help in other school subjects, too. In mathematics, we call it estimating. In science, we call it making a hypothesis. The strategy is also useful in real life. When it's cloudy outside, we can predict that it will rain and bring an umbrella. Before we go to a job interview, we can prepare by predicting what the interviewer will ask. Try using this strategy tonight when you do your homework, or in your next class. Let me know how it goes!"

## "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," Part One by Edgar Allan Poe

Paris! It was in Paris during the summer of 1840. There and then, I met a strange and interesting young man named August Dupin. Dupin was the last member of a well-known family, a family which had once been rich and famous. August Dupin, however, was far from rich.

He cared little about money. He had enough to buy necessities — and a few books. That was all. Just books. With books, he was happy.

In fact, we first met in an old bookstore. A few more chance meetings at such stores followed. Soon, we began to talk.

I was deeply interested in the family history he told me. I was surprised, too, at how much and how widely he had read; more important, the force of his busy mind was like a bright light in my **soul**. I felt that the friendship of such a man would be for me riches without price.

So, I told him how I felt and asked him to come and live with me. **[STOP AUDIO 1]**

He would enjoy using my many fine books. And I would have the pleasure of company, for I was not happy alone.

We passed the days reading, writing and talking. But Dupin was a lover of the night. So, often, we walked the streets of Paris after dark.

I soon noticed that Dupin had a special way of understanding people. Using it gave him great pleasure. He told me once, with a soft laugh, that he could see through the windows that most men have over their hearts. He could look into their souls.

Then, he surprised me by telling what he knew about my own soul. He knew things about me that I had thought only I could possibly know. At these times, he acted cold and emotionally distant. His eyes looked empty and far away. His voice became high and **nervous**.

At such times it seemed to me that I saw not just Dupin, but two Dupins — one who coldly put things together, and another who just as coldly took them apart. **[STOP AUDIO 2]**

One night we were walking down one of Paris's long, dirty streets. We were quiet, both busy in our own thoughts.

But, suddenly Dupin spoke: "You're right," he said. "He is a very little **fellow**, that's true, and he would be more successful if he acted in lighter, less serious plays."



"Yes, there can be no doubt of that!" I said.

At first I saw nothing strange in this. Dupin had agreed with me. This, of course, seemed to me quite natural. A few **moments** passed. Then it hit me. Dupin had not agreed with something I had said. He had agreed directly with my thoughts. I had not spoken a word!

Dupin had read my mind. I stopped walking.

"Dupin," I said, "Dupin, I don't understand. How could you know that I was thinking of...?"

Here, I stopped speaking. If he really had heard my thoughts, he would have to prove it.

And he did. He said, "How did I know you were thinking of Chantilly? You were thinking that Chantilly is too small for the plays in which he acts."

"That is indeed what I was thinking. But, tell me, in **Heaven's** name, how did you know?" **[STOP AUDIO 3]**

"It was the fruit-seller," Dupin answered.

"Fruit-seller!?"

"I mean the man who **bumped into** you as we entered this street. Maybe fifteen minutes ago."

"Oh, yes...I remember, now. A fruit-seller, with a large basket of apples, bumped into me. But what does that have to do with you knowing I was thinking of Chantilly?"

"I will explain. Listen closely now. Let us follow your thoughts from the fruit-seller to the **stage** actor, Chantilly. Those thoughts must have gone like this: fruit-seller to **cobblestones**, cobblestones to stereotomy, stereotomy to Epicurus, to Orion, and then to Chantilly."

He continued:

"As we turned onto this street the fruit-seller bumped you. You stepped on some uneven cobblestones. I could see that it hurt your foot.

"You spoke a few angry words to yourself, and continued walking. But you kept looking at the cobblestones in the street, so I knew you were thinking of them.

"Then we came to a small street where they are putting down new street stones. Here your face became brighter. You were looking at these more even stones. And your lips moved. I was sure they formed the word stereotomy, which is the name for how these new stones are cut. Stereotomy takes a large **block** and divides it evenly into smaller pieces. You will remember that we read about it in the newspaper only yesterday.

"I thought that the word stereotomy must make you think of the old Greek writer and thinker Epicurus. His ideas are also about dividing objects into smaller and smaller pieces called atoms. He argued that the world and everything else are made of these atoms.

"You and I were talking about Epicurus and his ideas, his atoms, recently. We were talking about how much those old ideas are like today's scientific study of the planets and stars. So, I felt sure that, now, as we walked, you would look up to the sky. And you did.

"I looked also at the sky. I saw that the group of stars we call Orion is very bright and clear tonight.

"I knew you would notice this and that you would think about the name Orion.

"Now, keep listening carefully. Only yesterday, in the newspaper, there was a report about the actor Chantilly. The critic did not praise him. And he used a Latin saying that had also been used to describe Orion. So I knew you would put together the two ideas of Orion and Chantilly.

"I saw you smile, remembering the article and the mean words in it.

"Then, I saw you straighten up, as tall as you could make yourself. I was sure you were thinking of Chantilly's size, and especially his height. He is small; he is short. And so I spoke, saying that he is indeed a very little man, this Chantilly, and he would be more successful if he acted in lighter, less serious plays." **[STOP AUDIO 4]**

I cannot say I was surprised by what Dupin had just reported. My reaction was much bigger than just surprise. I was **astonished**.

Dupin was right, as right as he could be. Those were in fact my thoughts, my unspoken thoughts, as my mind moved from one thought to the next.

But if I was astonished by this, I would soon be more than astonished. One morning this strangely interesting man showed me once again his unusual reasoning power. We heard that an old woman had been killed by unknown persons. The killer, or the killers, had cut her head off — and escaped into the night. Who was this killer, this murderer? The police had no answer. They had looked everywhere and found nothing that helped them. They did not know what to do next. And so — they did nothing. But not Dupin. He knew what to do.

## Vocabulary

**soul** – *n.* the spiritual part of a person that is believed to give life to the body and in many religions is believed to live forever

**nervous** – *adj.* having or showing feelings of being worried and afraid about what might happen

**fellow** – *n. (informal)* a male person

**moment** – *n.* a very short period of time

**heaven** – *n.* the place where God lives and where good people go after they die, according to some religions

**bump** – *v.* to move into or against someone or something in a sudden and forceful way

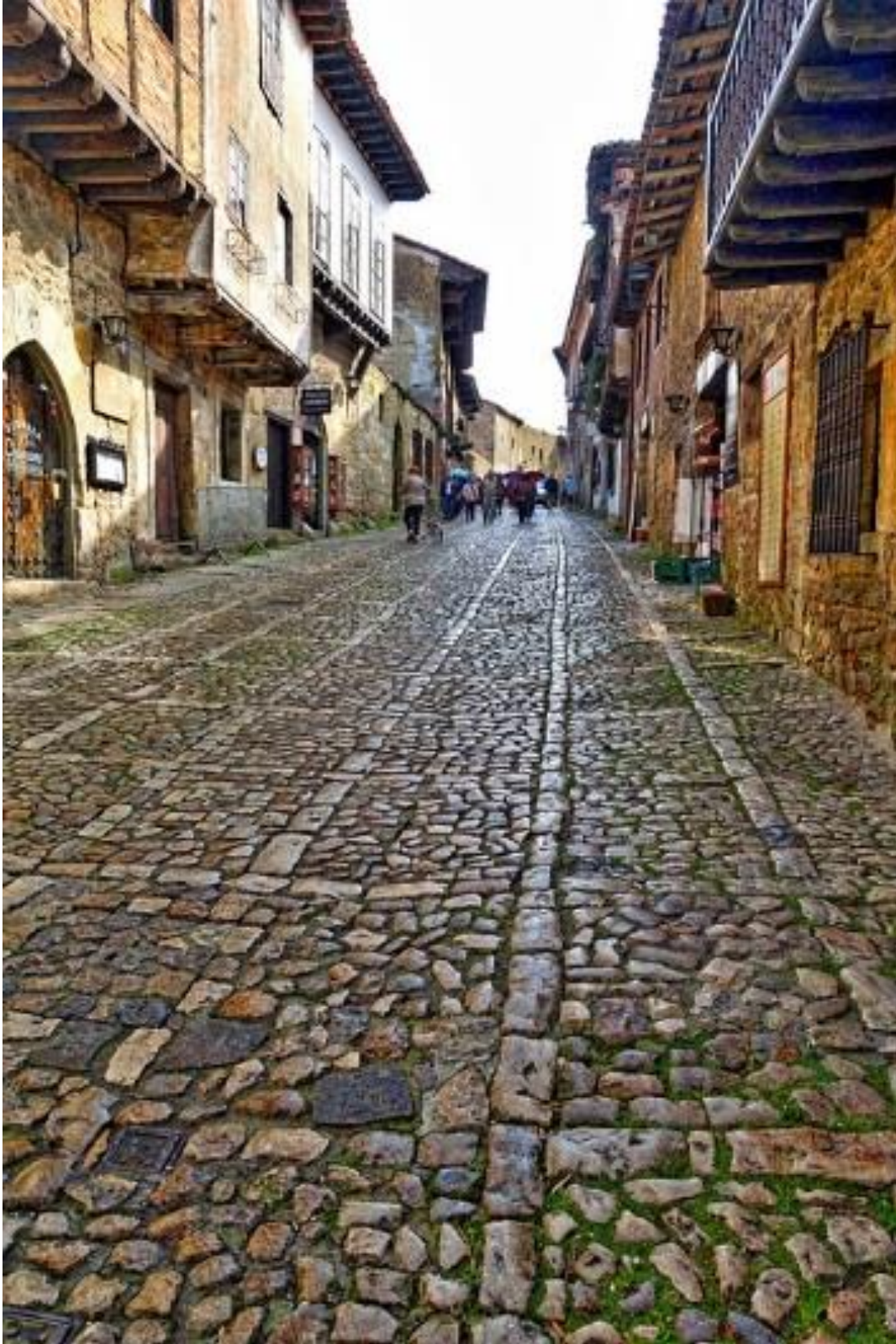
**stage actor** – *term.* a person who acts in a theater play

**cobblestone** – *n.* a round stone used in paving streets

**block** – *n.* a solid piece of material that has flat sides and is usually square or rectangular in shape

**astonish** – *v.* to cause a feeling of great wonder or surprise in someone

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*Figure 1: Cobblestone Street*

### Predictions Chart

<b>What I predict will happen</b>	<b>Clues from the story</b>

## **About the CALLA Approach**

This lesson is based on 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.

A list of CALLA learning strategies follows. These strategies were researched by J. Michael O'Malley and Anna Uhl Chamot.

See a list of language learning strategies below.

## **METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES**

### **Plan / Organize**

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**

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**

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**

Determine how you learn best.

Arrange conditions that help you learn.

Look for Ways to Practice.

Focus your attention on the task.

### **TASK-BASED STRATEGIES - USE WHAT YOU KNOW**

#### **Use Background Knowledge**

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 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**

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**

Relate new concepts to your own life, to your experiences, knowledge, beliefs and feelings.

#### **Transfer / Use Cognates**

Apply your linguistic knowledge of other languages (including your native language) to the target language.

Recognize cognates.

#### **Substitute / Paraphrase**

Use a synonym or descriptive phrase for unknown words or expressions.

## **TASK-BASED STRATEGIES - USE YOUR SENSES**

### **Use Images**

Use or create an actual or mental image to understand and/or represent information.

Use or draw a picture or diagram.

### **Use Sounds**

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.

### **Use Your Kinesthetic Sense**

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.

## **TASK-BASED STRATEGIES - USE YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS**

### **Find/Apply Patterns**

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**

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.

### **Take Notes**

Write down important words and ideas while listening or reading.

List ideas or words to include in speaking or writing.

### **Use Graphic Organizers**

Use or create visual representations (such as Venn diagrams, time lines, webs, and charts) of important relationships between concepts.



### **Summarize**

Create a mental, oral, or written summary of information.

### **Use Selective Attention**

Focus on specific information, structures, key words, phrases, or ideas.

### **TASK-BASED STRATEGIES - USE A VARIETY OF RESOURCES**

#### **Access Information Sources**

Use the dictionary, the internet, and other reference materials.

Seek out and use sources of information.

Follow a model

Ask questions

#### **Cooperate**

Work with others to complete tasks, build confidence, and give and receive feedback.

#### **Talk Yourself Through It (Self-Talk)**

Use your inner resources. Reduce your anxiety by reminding yourself of your progress, the resources you have available, and your goals.