

American Stories

“The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” Part Two

by Edgar Allan Poe

Lesson Plan

This lesson plan is to accompany Part Two of the American Stories series episode “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” by Jack London.

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:

Before beginning:

1. Fast forward the story audio to the first paragraph of the July 8 news report. (To where you see "**Paris, July 8, 1840**" in bold in transcript).
2. Decide whether you will use the game Alibi and decide on who the two 'suspects' will be.

Prepare

First, write these questions on the board or a shared screen

1. What happened in Part One of the story?
2. What do we know about the narrator?
3. What do we know about August Dupin?

Begin, "Today, we will read Part Two of 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue,' by Edgar Allan Poe. But first, let's review some details and events from Part One. With the person sitting next to you, discuss answers to the questions on the board."

Give students a couple of minutes to talk. Then, ask several volunteers to share their answers. If you think it's helpful, you can make a list on the board or a shared screen, like the one below. As students offer responses, list the responses below the characters' names. (Below are a few examples but students may have many and varied answers.)

Narrator

takes chances

cares what Dupin thinks

August Dupin

interesting, strange

doesn't care about money

impressed by Dupin

excellent at making sense of clues

enjoys books

enjoys books

Continue: "When we talked about what you remembered about each character, we identified some things about them that are similar. We can put things into groups based on ways they are similar; we call this classifying. We will practice this strategy today as we read the story."

If there is time before or after the lesson, your class can play the game Alibi, a game that makes detective work fun. Game instructions can be found following the story transcript. There will likely be time during today's lesson, since the story and activity are fairly direct. If your class does play the game, afterward, make sure you ask students to give you examples of ways the game uses the strategy classify.

Some answers may include these and others: The game Alibi classifies the suspects based on whether they are guilty or not guilty. It examines whether the suspects' stories truthful or not. And, it helps to organize the details of the suspects stories based on what parts are different or the same.

After or before Alibi, continue: "As we read the story today, we will practice the strategy **classify** to help us organize details about the crime. But first, let's learn the new words."

Hand out copies of the vocabulary and teach the words for the lesson. The vocabulary can be found on a separate page after the transcript. Use images, classroom items and physical gestures to aid student comprehension. (There are photos of a fireplace, lock box and chimneys following the story transcript.)

Present

Next, hand out copies of the story transcript. Introduce the task to students, "As we read the story today, we will classify, or organize, the information we

read. I'll show you how to do this. I'm going to begin reading and then classify what I read."

Play or read aloud just the first two paragraphs from the **July 8** news report. (Note: You will play the audio of the beginning part later. For now, only these selected paragraphs.)

On a board or shared screen, make a chart with headers like the one below. Then, model the strategy. "The newspaper report from July 8 provides details about the police questioning of several witnesses. Let's read/listen to the first two paragraphs of the July 8 report and then put these details into groups."

After you have played that part of the news report or read it aloud, write details into the chart, as you see below. You can prompt students to help with the third column.

Name	Details about this person	What they told the police
Pauline Dubourg	Washed clothes for the victims for more than three years	They paid her well; she did not know how they got their money; the mother and daughter seemed to love each other very much; she never met anyone in the house; only the two women lived on the fourth floor

Practice

Now, put students into groups of two or three. If the class is not too large, you can assign groups by birthdays. To do this, ask students to stand up. They then talk to each other to find out their birth days and months (January 9, for example). Next, they line up based on the order of these dates. Then, you can split them into groups of two or three from the line. Another option for choosing groups is to have them count off (1, 2, 3) and

then all ones go together; all twos go together; and all threes go together. Tell them this is another example of classifying, or putting things into groups based on similarities.

Ask students to take out a piece of paper. Tell them they will now hear the first section of the story, which gives details from the *July 7* news report. Their instructions for this part of the story is to listen carefully for the parts about the evidence in the room. They should make a list of these things and what conditions they were in. If you think it's helpful, you can write an example on the board: door - locked from inside.

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

Then hand out copies of the Classifications Chart. Say, "Now, it's your turn. Let's listen to some more of the story. As you follow the transcript, underline the name of each witness and then listen to what the report says about them. After we listen, you will work with your group to fill in your charts." Warn them that they will recognize the part about Pauline Dubourg but tell them it's ok and to keep listening.

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

Now, give groups time to work together to fill in the details. Members of each group can compare what they wrote in their Classifications Chart. Then, ask volunteers from each group to share this information with the class. In order to encourage participation and avoid repetitiveness, elicit only one thing from each student. For example, ask one volunteer to say only the background details about this person (second column in Classifications Chart). Then, ask a different volunteer to say what the person told the police (third column in Classifications Chart).

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

Again, give the groups time to fill in the details and share what they wrote

with each other. Then, as volunteers share with the class, be sure to elicit details from only one column per student.

Play or read aloud to the end of the story.

Proceed with the remainder of the activity in the same way.

Self-Evaluate

Ask, "What do you think about using the strategy *classify* when you read? Did it help you keep track of details in the story better? Write a few sentences on your paper to turn in about how classifying helped you today. At the end of the class, please give the papers to me." Give students a few minutes to work on this.

Expand

Ask students, "Are there other times when classifying things can help you keep information organized?" Listen to students' responses, then continue, "This strategy is useful in both reading and listening. Classifying can help you analyze and remember what you read. It can help you when you study other subjects, too, such as history or science. You can put the information into groups based on similar processes, ideas or qualities. 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 Two by Edgar Allan Poe

It was in Paris in the summer of 1840 that I met August Dupin.

Dupin was a strangely interesting young man with a busy, forceful mind. He seemed to look right through a person and uncover their deepest thoughts. Sometimes Dupin seemed to be not one, but two people — one who coldly put things together, and another who just as coldly took them apart. One morning, in the heat of the summer, Dupin showed me once again his special mental power.

We read in the newspaper about a terrible killing. An old woman and her daughter, living alone in an old house in the Rue Morgue, had been killed in the middle of the night.

The story in the paper went:

*Paris, July 7, 1840 – Early this morning, cries of **terror** were heard in the western part of the city. They reportedly came from a house on the Rue Morgue, in which the only occupants were a Mrs. L’Espanaye, and her daughter Camille.*

Several neighbors and a policeman ran to the house. By the time they reached it, the cries had stopped. They forced the door open.

*As they entered, they heard two voices, apparently from above. The group searched but found nothing until the fourth floor. There, they came to a door, **locked** from the inside. Quickly, they forced it open. Before them was a bloody horror **scene!***

*The room was in total disorder — broken chairs and tables and the **mattress** pulled from the bed. Blood was everywhere; on the walls, the floor, the bed. A sharp knife lay on the floor in a pool of blood. In front of the **fireplace** was a **clump** of long gray hair, also bloodied; it seemed to have been pulled straight out of a head. On the floor were four pieces of gold, an **earring**, several **silver** objects, and two bags containing a large amount of money in gold. Clothes had been thrown around the room. A **lock box** was found left open with just a few old letters and papers inside.*

*There was no one there. But, when the group **inspected** the fireplace, the discovered another horror. A still-warm body had been forced up the **chimney**. It was the old woman’s daughter.*

*There was blood on the face, and dark, deep finger marks on the neck, suggesting a **strangling**.*

*After searching the house thoroughly, the group went outside. They found the body of the old woman behind the building. Her neck had been cut so **severely** that when they tried to lift the body, the head fell off. [STOP AUDIO 1].*

The next day the newspaper offered to its readers these new facts:

Paris, July 8, 1840 – *The police have questioned many people about the **vicious** murders in the old house on the Rue Morgue. But none of the answers **revealed** the identity of the killers.*

Pauline Dubourg, a washwoman, said she has known both of the victims for more than three years, and washed their clothes. She said the two seemed to love each other dearly. They always paid her well. She did not know where their money came from, she said. She never met anyone in the house. Only the two women lived on the fourth floor.

*Pierre Moreau, a **shopkeeper**, said Mrs. L'Esplanade had bought food at his shop for almost four years. She owned the house and had lived in it for more than six years. He never saw anyone enter the door except the old lady and her daughter, and a doctor eight or ten times, perhaps.*

Many other persons, neighbors, said the same thing. Almost no one ever went into the house. Mrs. L'Esplanade and her daughter were not often seen.

Banker Jules Mignaud said that Mrs. L'Esplanade had put money in his bank, beginning eight years before. Three days before the killings, she withdrew a large amount, in gold. A man from the bank carried it to her house for her.

*Isidore Muset, a policeman, said that he was with the group that first entered the house. While he was going up the **stairs**, he heard two voices, one low and soft, and one hard, high, and very strange — the voice of someone who was surely not French, the voice of a foreigner, maybe Spanish.*

It was not a woman's voice, he said, although he could not understand what it said. But the other voice, said softly, in French, "My God!"

[STOP AUDIO 2].

*Alfonso Garcia, who is Spanish and lives on the Rue Morgue, says he entered the house but did not go up the stairs. A **nervous** man, he was afraid he might be sick. He heard the voices. He believes the high voice was not that of a Frenchman. Perhaps it was English; but he said he doesn't understand English, so he is not sure.*

William Bird, an Englishman who has lived in Paris for two years, also entered the house. He said the low voice was that of a Frenchman, he was sure, because he heard it say, in French, "My God!"

The high voice was very loud, he said. He is sure it was not the voice of an Englishman, nor the voice of a Frenchman. It seemed to be that of an Italian, a language he does not understand. He said it might have been a woman's voice.

*Mr. Alberto Montani, an Italian, was passing the house at the time of the cries. He said the **screams** lasted for about two minutes. Montani, who speaks Spanish but not French, says that he also heard two voices. He thought both voices were French. But he could not understand any of the words spoken. **[STOP AUDIO 3]**.*

*All who went into the house agreed that the door to the room on the fourth floor was locked from the inside. It was quiet. They saw no one. The windows were closed and locked from the inside. There is only one **stairway** to the fourth floor.*

They said that the chimney opening is too small for escape that way. It took four or five people to pull the daughter's body out of chimney. It was four or five minutes from the time they heard the voices to the moment they entered the room.

Paul Dumas, a doctor, says that he was called to inspect the bodies soon after they were found. They were in a horrible condition, badly marked and broken. He said only a man could have caused such injury. The daughter had been strangled, he said.

When we had finished reading the newspaper's report of the murders, we were quiet for a while. Dupin had that cold, empty look that I know means his mind is working busily. He asked me what I thought of the crime. I said I considered it a mystery with no answer.

But Dupin responded, "No, no. No. I think you are wrong. A mystery, yes. But there must be an answer. Let us go to the house and see what we can see. There must be an answer. There must!"

Vocabulary

terror – *n.* a very strong feeling of fear

scene – *n.* the place or event of an action

mattress – *n.* a cloth case that is filled with material and used as a bed

clump – *n.* a small ball or mass of something

earring – *n.* a piece of jewelry that is worn on the ear and especially on the earlobe

lock – *v.* to fasten something with a lock

silver – *adj.* made of silver

lock box – *n.* a box that locks, usually for storing money or valuables

inspect – *v.* to look at something carefully in order to learn more about it, to find problems, etc.

fireplace – *n.* a specially built place in a room where a fire can be built

chimney – *n.* a part of a building through which smoke rises into the outside air

strangling – *gerund.* the killing of a person or animal by squeezing the throat

severely – *adv.* very badly or seriously

vicious – *adj.* very violent and cruel

reveal – *v.* to make something known

shopkeeper – *n.* someone who owns or manages a shop or store

stairs – *n.* a series of steps that go from one level or floor to another

stairway – *n.* a set of stairs that go from one level or floor to another

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

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Figure 1: Fireplace

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Figure 2: lock box

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Figure 3: Chimneys

Alibi

Instructions for Teacher

Note: decide in advance who the 'suspects' will be. Choose two students who you think would be comfortable with the idea and make sure they agree to this role before starting the game.

This game is a role-play in which students have to act as criminals and police officers.

Tell the whole group about a crime which has recently been committed, for example:

Last night, between 6pm and 9pm, a diamond was stolen from a store on the main street of our town. The diamond was extremely expensive. Nobody knows exactly when the diamond was stolen but it was certainly taken between 6pm and 9pm. Two people were seen outside of the shop last night and have been taken to the police station for questioning. At present, they are the main suspects and unfortunately they are in this room!



1. Point to the two 'suspects' that you have chosen. Ask the class what needs to happen now, i.e. that the suspects need to be questioned by the police and that they need to have a strong **alibi**. The suspects need to think of a story (that they were together) and they need to think, in very careful detail, what they did between 6pm and 9pm.
2. They might say, for example, that they went to a restaurant, they ate fish, they shared the bill and that they went home on the bus. The stories must be EXACTLY the same. If the stories are not the same, they are guilty.
3. Tell the two students to leave the room and to think about their story.

4. Tell the remaining students that they are police officers and what they are going to do is to question the suspects. Arrange the classroom so that you have two equal groups and put one group on one side of the room and the other group on the other side. (Each group represents a police station.) Ask them to think of questions that they would like to ask the suspects. Tell them that the goal is to find differences between the suspects' stories. So, their questions should attempt to do this.
5. After a few minutes of preparation, allow the two suspects to return to the classroom. Seat one suspect in front of one police station and the other suspect in front of the other police station. Tell each group to question the suspect with their prepared questions. They should take notes so that they can remember responses from the suspects.
6. After 10-15 minutes (this will depend on the group), exchange the suspects. (Move each suspect to the opposite police station.)
7. Allow time for the new interrogations.
8. After both police stations have spoken to both suspects, ask the stations to decide whether they think the suspects are guilty or not (whether there were differences between their stories). They can discuss the similarities or differences as a whole class.

Note: You can have more than two suspects (e.g. three suspects and three police stations, et cetera). The amount will depend on your class size. Always make sure you have the same number of suspects and police stations.

This game is courtesy of ESLsite.com via BusyTeacher.org.

Classifications Chart

Name	Details about this person	What they told the police
Pauline Dubourg	Washed clothes for the victims for more than three years	The victims paid her well; she did not know how they got their money; she never met anyone in the house; the victims seemed to love each other; only the two women lived on the fourth floor

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Name	Details about this person	What they told the police

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.