



**American Stories**  
*The Lady, or the Tiger?*  
by Frank Stockton

Lesson Plan  
*by Jill Robbins, Ph.D.*

# Introduction

This lesson plan is to accompany the VOA Learning English **American Stories** episode, *The Lady, or the Tiger?* by Frank Stockton.

A script for the story is included at the end of this lesson.  
Students can read along as they listen to the audio.

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

Say, “This story is about making a choice. Have you ever had to make an important choice?”

Allow students time to share times they have made an important choice in their lives.

Continue to explain that “making choices is a very important part of life. Each day you make choices. Some of them are not so important, like what flavor of ice cream to eat. Others might affect your whole life, like what school you attend. As we read the story, keep in mind the choices you have to make. Let’s learn some of the vocabulary before we read.”

# Vocabulary

**innocence** – *adj.* the state of being not guilty of a crime or other wrong act

**poetic justice** – *n.* a result or occurrence that seems proper because someone who has done bad things to other people is being harmed or punished

**mourn** – *v.* to feel or show great sadness because someone has died

**ancestor** – *n.* a person who was in someone's family in past times; one of the people from whom a person is descended

**tense** – *adj.* nervous and not able to relax

# Present

Explain “Today we’re going to listen to the story, and **predict** what will happen next. **Predicting** is when you *guess* about the next part of the story, based on what you know. This is helpful when we read because it makes us pay attention to the details and think about what they mean. Let me show you how it’s done.”

Play to “When a person was accused of a crime, his future would be judged in the public arena.”

“I’m going to stop here to **predict**. I read that a person has to go into a public arena. I know that in the Roman times, people might have to fight with someone in the arena. Or they would have to face wild animals. I wonder if the story is going to be about that kind of thing. I can use some of the information I get from the title to make a guess about this. The title of the story is ‘The Lady, or the Tiger?’ so I’m going to guess that the person in the area has to choose between a lady and a tiger. I’m not sure *how* they will choose, though, so I’m going to read some more.”

Play to “He could open whichever door he pleased .”

“Now I can *check my prediction*. I haven’t found out anything about a lady or a tiger yet. But I did find out how the accused person makes the choice. Now I can **predict** again. I’m going to predict that behind one door there is a lady, and behind the other door there is a tiger. Would you help me to check my prediction?”

Play to “The case of the suspect was thus decided.”



# Practice

Ask students to tell you if the prediction you made was right.

Explain, “So I know now that the tiger is behind one door. I can guess that the lady is behind the other door. But it’s not important that your predictions are right – what is important is that they help you to understand the story and pay attention to the details as you read.”

“Now it’s your turn. I will play some more of the story. When I stop, I want you to predict what will happen next.”

Plat to “The king permitted nothing to interfere with his great method of punishment and reward.”

Ask students to turn to their neighbor and tell what they **predict** will happen next in the story. Ask a few students to share their predictions with the class.

“Thank you. Now let’s read some more and see if we can make another **prediction**.”

Play to “But he was a commoner, not part of an important family.”

Say, “What do you predict will happen next? Turn to your partner and tell them what you predict will happen to the commoner.”

After giving students time to tell their prediction, ask a few students to share their predictions with the class. Say, “Thank you. Let’s read to the end of the story now and see what happens. Pay close attention, because I’m going to ask you to predict what happens **after** the end of the story!”

*Play to the end of the story.*

Ask students: “Which do you think is behind the right-hand door? Is it a lady or a tiger?” Give students a chance to tell what they think.

# Self-Evaluation

When students have finished making their final predictions, ask, “Do you think *predicting* helped you understand and remember this story?”

**Allow time for some discussion.**

“Remember, it doesn’t matter if what you predict actually happens. What’s important is that predicting helps you focus more on what you read.”

# Expand

Suggest other times when prediction might help students. “When you take a test, you predict what might be on it, right? When you ask your parents for something, can you predict what they will say to answer you? There are a lot of times we can predict. Try it in one of your other classes and let me know how it goes!”

Optional homework assignment: Ask students to write what happens after the young man chooses the ‘right door’ in the story.

## “The Lady, or the Tiger?” by Frank R. Stockton

Long ago, in the very olden time, there lived a powerful king. Some of his ideas were progressive. But others caused people to suffer.

One of the king’s ideas was a public arena as an agent of **poetic justice**. Crime was punished, or **innocence** was decided, by the result of chance. When a person was accused of a crime, his future would be judged in the public arena.

All the people would gather in this building. The king sat high up on his ceremonial chair. He gave a sign. A door under him opened. The accused person stepped out into the arena. Directly opposite the king were two doors. They were side by side, exactly alike. The person on trial had to walk directly to these doors and open one of them. He could open whichever door he pleased.

If the accused man opened one door, out came a hungry tiger, the fiercest in the land. The tiger immediately jumped on him and tore him to pieces as punishment for his guilt. The case of the suspect was thus decided.

Iron bells rang sadly. Great cries went up from the paid **mourners**. And the people, with heads hanging low and sad hearts, slowly made their way home. They mourned greatly that one so young and fair, or so old and respected, should have died this way.

But, if the accused opened the other door, there came forth from it a woman, chosen especially for the person. To this lady he was immediately married, in honor of his innocence. It was not a problem that he might already have a wife and family, or that he might have chosen to marry another woman. The king permitted nothing to interfere with his great method of punishment and reward.

Another door opened under the king, and a clergyman, singers, dancers and musicians joined the man and the lady. The marriage ceremony was quickly completed. Then the bells made cheerful noises. The people shouted happily. And the innocent man led the new wife to his home, following children who threw flowers on their path.

This was the king’s method of carrying out justice. Its fairness appeared perfect. The accused person could not know which door was hiding the lady. He opened either as he pleased, without having knowing whether, in the next minute, he was to be killed or married.

Sometimes the fierce animal came out of one door. Sometimes it came out of the other.

This method was a popular one. When the people gathered together on one of the great trial days, they never knew whether they would see a bloody killing or a happy ending. So everyone was always interested. And the thinking part of the community would bring no charge of unfairness against this plan. Did not the accused person have the whole matter in his own hands?

The king had a beautiful daughter who was like him in many ways. He loved her above all humanity. The princess secretly loved a young man who was the best-looking and bravest in the land. But he was a commoner, not part of an important family.

One day, the king discovered the relationship between his daughter and the young man. The man was immediately put in prison. A day was set for his trial in the king's public arena. This, of course, was an especially important event. Never before had a common subject been brave enough to love the daughter of the king.

The king knew that the young man would be punished, even if he opened the right door. And the king would take pleasure in watching the series of events, which would judge whether or not the man had done wrong in loving the princess.

The day of the trial arrived. From far and near the people gathered in the arena and outside its walls. The king and his advisers were in their places, opposite the two doors. All was ready. The sign was given. The door under the king opened and the lover of the princess entered the arena.

Tall, beautiful and fair, his appearance was met with a sound of approval and tension. Half the people had not known so perfect a young man lived among them. No wonder the princess loved him! What a terrible thing for him to be there!

As the young man entered the public arena, he turned to bend to the king. But he did not at all think of the great ruler. The young man's eyes instead were fixed on the princess, who sat to the right of her father.

From the day it was decided that the sentence of her lover should be decided in the arena, she had thought of nothing but this event.

The princess had more power, influence and force of character than anyone who had ever before been interested in such a case. She had done what no other person had done. She had possessed herself of the secret of the doors. She knew behind which door stood the tiger, and behind which waited the lady. Gold, and the power of a woman's will, had brought the secret to the princess.

She also knew who the lady was. The lady was one of the loveliest in the kingdom. Now and then the princess had seen her looking at and talking to the young man.

The princess hated the woman behind that silent door. She hated her with all the intensity of the blood passed to her through long lines of cruel **ancestors**.

Her lover turned to look at the princess. His eye met hers as she sat there, paler and whiter than anyone in the large ocean of **tense** faces around her. He saw that she knew behind which door waited the tiger, and behind which stood the lady. He had expected her to know it.

The only hope for the young man was based on the success of the princess in discovering this

mystery. When he looked at her, he saw that she had been successful, as he knew she would succeed.

Then his quick and tense look asked the question: "Which?" It was as clear to her as if he shouted it from where he stood. There was not time to be lost.

The princess raised her hand, and made a short, quick movement toward the right. No one but her lover saw it. Every eye but his was fixed on the man in the arena.

He turned, and with a firm and quick step he walked across the empty space. Every heart stopped beating. Every breath was held. Every eye was fixed upon that man. He went to the door on the right and opened it.

Now, the point of the story is this: Did the tiger come out of that door, or did the lady?

The more we think about this question, the harder it is to answer. It involves a study of the human heart. Think of it not as if the decision of the question depended upon yourself. But as if it depended upon that hot-blooded princess, her soul at a white heat under the fires of sadness and jealousy. She had lost him, but who should have him?

How often, in her waking hours and in her dreams, had she started in wild terror, and covered her face with her hands? She thought of her lover opening the door on the other side of which waited the sharp teeth of the tiger!

But how much oftener had she seen him open the other door? How had she ground her teeth, and torn her hair, when she had seen his happy face as he opened the door of the lady! How her soul had burned in pain when she had seen him run to meet that woman, with her look of victory. When she had seen the two of them get married. And when she had seen them walk away together upon their path of flowers, followed by the happy shouts of the crowd, in which her one sad cry was lost!

Would it not be better for him to die quickly, and go to wait for her in that blessed place of the future? And yet, that tiger, those cries, that blood!

Her decision had been shown quickly. But it had been made after days and nights of thought. She had known she would be asked. And she had decided what she would answer. And she had moved her hand to the right.

The question of her decision is one not to be lightly considered. And it is not for me to set myself up as the one person able to answer it. And so I leave it with all of you:

Which came out of the open door – the lady, or the tiger?



*The story was written by Frank Stockton in 1882. It was adapted for VOA Learning English by Shelley Gollust.*

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## **Words in This Story**

**innocence** – *adj.* the state of being not guilty of a crime or other wrong act

**poetic justice** – *n.* a result or occurrence that seems proper because someone who has done bad things to other people is being harmed or punished

**mourn** – *v.* to feel or show great sadness because someone has died

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# About the CALLA Approach

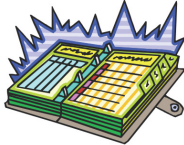



The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) is an instructional model for second and foreign language learners based on cognitive theory and research.

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.







# Metacognitive Strategies

CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	
<b>METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES</b>		
Plan / Organize	 <p>Planner</p>	<p>Before beginning a task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Set goals.</li> <li>-Plan the task or content sequence.</li> <li>-Plan how to accomplish the task (choose strategies).</li> <li>-Preview a text.</li> </ul>
Monitor / Identify Problems	 <p>Check</p>	<p>While working on a task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Check your progress on the task.</li> <li>-Check your comprehension as you use the language. Do you understand? If not, what is the problem?</li> <li>-Check your production as you use the language. Are you making sense? If not, what is the problem?</li> </ul>
Evaluate	 <p>I did it!</p>	<p>After completing a task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Assess how well you have accomplished the learning task.</li> <li>-Assess how well you have used learning strategies.</li> <li>-Decide how effective the strategies were.</li> <li>-Identify changes you will make the next time you have a similar task to do.</li> </ul>
Manage Your Own Learning	 <p>Pace Yourself</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Determine how you learn best.</li> <li>-Arrange conditions that help you learn.</li> <li>-Seek opportunities for practice.</li> <li>-Focus your attention on the task.</li> </ul>

# Task-Based Strategies

CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	
<b>TASK-BASED STRATEGIES</b>		
		
Use Background Knowledge	 I know.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Think about and use what you already know to help you do the task.</li> <li>- Make associations between new information and your prior knowledge.</li> <li>-Use new information to clarify or modify your prior knowledge.</li> </ul>
Make Inferences	 Use Clues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Use context and what you know to figure out meaning.</li> <li>-Read and listen between the lines.</li> <li>-Go beyond the text to understand its meaning.</li> </ul>
Make Predictions	 Crystal Ball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Anticipate information to come.</li> <li>-Make logical guesses about what will happen in a written or oral text.</li> <li>-Make an estimate (math).</li> <li>-Make a hypothesis (science).</li> </ul>
Personalize	 Me	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Relate new concepts to your own life, to your experiences, knowledge, beliefs and feelings.</li> </ul>


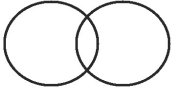


# Task-Based Strategies

CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	
<b>TASK-BASED STRATEGIES</b>		
Transfer / Use Cognates	 Coffee/Café	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Apply your linguistic knowledge of other languages (including your native language) to the target language.</li> <li>-Recognize cognates.</li> </ul>
Substitute / Paraphrase	 Make it work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Use a synonym or descriptive phrase for unknown words or expressions.</li> </ul>
  <b>USE YOUR SENSES</b>		
Use Images	 See it in your mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Use or create an actual or mental image to understand and/or represent information.</li> <li>-Use or draw a picture or diagram.</li> </ul>
Use Sounds	 Sound Out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Say or read aloud a word, sentence, or paragraph to help your understanding.</li> <li>-Sound out/vocalize.</li> <li>- Use your "mental tape recorder" to remember sounds, words, phrases, and/or conversations.</li> </ul>


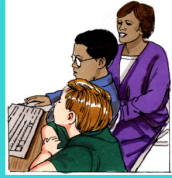
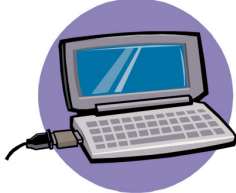


# Task-Based Strategies

CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY		DESCRIPTION
<b>TASK-BASED STRATEGIES</b>		
Use Your Kinesthetic Sense		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Act out a role, for example, in Readers' Theater, or imagine yourself in different roles in the target language.</li> <li>-Use real objects to help you remember words, sentences, or content information.</li> </ul>
  <b>USE YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS</b>		
Find/Apply Patterns	 abacus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Apply a rule.</li> <li>-Make a rule.</li> <li>-Recognize and apply letter/sound, grammar, discourse, or register rules.</li> <li>-Identify patterns in literature (genre).</li> <li>-Identify patterns in math, science, and social studies.</li> </ul>
Classify/Sequence	 Life cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Categorize words or ideas according to attributes.</li> <li>-Classify living things; identify natural cycles.</li> <li>-Identify order and sequences in math, science, and social studies.</li> <li>-Sequence events in history.</li> </ul>

# Task-Based Strategies

CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	
<b>TASK-BASED STRATEGIES</b>		
Take Notes	 PDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Write down important words and ideas while listening or reading.</li> <li>-List ideas or words to include in speaking or writing..</li> </ul>
Use Graphic Organizers	 A Venn diagram	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Use or create visual representations (such as Venn diagrams, time lines, webs, and charts) of important relationships between concepts.</li> </ul>
Summarize	 Main Idea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Create a mental, oral, or written summary of information.</li> </ul>
Use Selective Attention	 Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Focus on specific information, structures, key words, phrases, or ideas.</li> </ul>

# Task-Based Strategies

CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	
<b>TASK-BASED STRATEGIES</b>		
 		
<b>USE A VARIETY OF RESOURCES</b>		
Access Information Sources	 Look it up!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Use the dictionary, the internet, and other reference materials.</li> <li>-Seek out and use sources of information.</li> <li>-Follow a model</li> <li>-Ask questions</li> </ul>
Cooperate	 Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Work with others to complete tasks, build confidence, and give and receive feedback.</li> </ul>
Talk Yourself Through It (Self-Talk)	 I can do it!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use your inner resources. Reduce your anxiety by reminding yourself of your progress, the resources you have available, and your goals.</li> </ul>