

Learning English

American Stories

The Ambitious Guest

by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Lesson Plan
by Jill Robbins, Ph.D.

Introduction

This lesson plan is to accompany the American Stories series episode, *The Ambitious Guest* by Nathaniel Hawthorne .

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.

This lesson plan is based on the CALLA Approach. See the end of the lesson for more information and resources on teaching with the CALLA approach. The following slide shows the five parts of this lesson plan.

Lesson Elements

Prepare

Present

Practice

Self-Evaluate

Expand

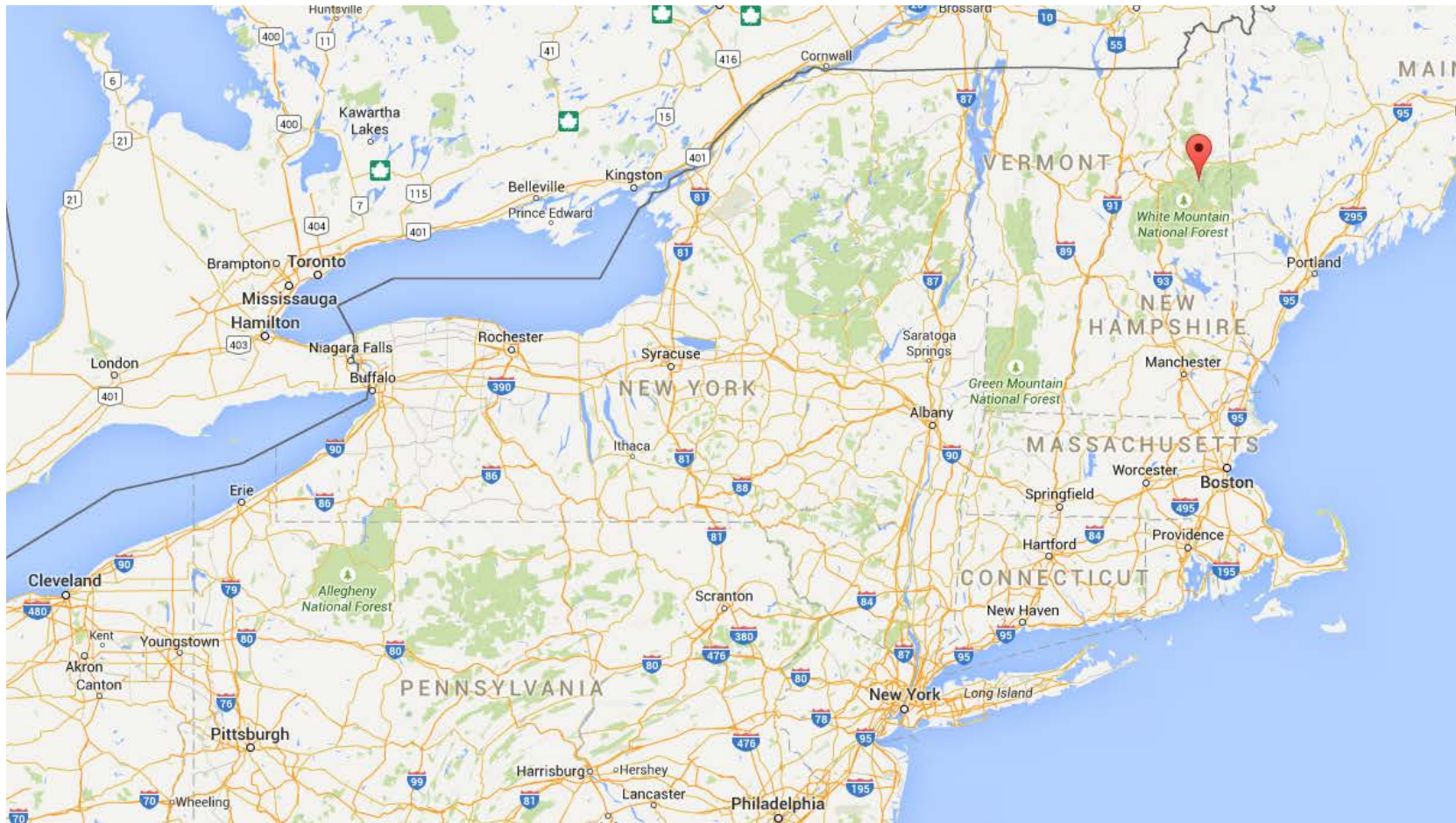
Prepare

Introduce the story. “Today we will read *The Ambitious Guest*, by Nathaniel Hawthorne. It is a story about family with a visitor. What happens in your house when a stranger comes to the door?”

Listen to students’ answers. Explain that the family lives in a remote place. They often get visitors because they live on a busy road.

Show the map of New Hampshire with the White Mountains. Teach the vocabulary for the story.

White Mountains National Forest – New Hampshire



Vocabulary

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

knit - *v.* to make a piece of clothing from yarn or thread by using long needles or a special machine

roar - *v.* to make a long, loud sound

shy - *adj.* showing that you are nervous and uncomfortable about meeting and talking to people

ambitious - *adj.* having ambition; having a desire to be successful, powerful or famous

admire - *v.* to feel respect or approval for someone or something

monument - *n.* a building, statue, etc., that honors a person or event

Present

Introduce the task to students: “As we read the story today, we will practice the strategy *personalize* to help us understand the story. I’ll show you how to do this.”

Play or read aloud to “The wind has been blowing in my face for the last two hours.”

Model the strategy: “The first part of the story introduces the family. We also meet the stranger. He is on the road on a cold night. I’m going to *personalize* now and imagine myself in a similar situation. I don’t like walking in cold weather, especially at night. So I can understand why the stranger knocks on the family’s door and asks to sit by the fire.”

Make a chart like the one on the next slide. Explain how you personalize with one or two characters. There is little said about the family members, so list them, but do not spend time on them yet. Explain to the students that they will read more about the family as the story continues.

Personalize

Character	Details	How I Personalize
The young man	Walking in the cold wind	I wouldn't like being out in the cold alone
Mother	Laughing	They are happy with their family
Father	Laughing	
Daughter	17 years old	
Little Sister	5 or 6 years old	
Little Brother	5 or 6 years old	
Baby	Smiling from bed	
Grandmother	Knitting by the fire	

Practice

Prepare students for the next part, “Now it’s your turn. Let’s listen to some more of the story. As we listen, think about the people in the story. Can you put yourself in their place? Take out a piece of paper. Write a chart listing the people. Get ready to *personalize* as you learn more about each character.

Play or read aloud to “Then let death come! I will have built my monument!”

Have students sit with a classmate and say aloud what they wrote about each character. Tell them to share with their classmate how they *personalize* for this part of the story.

Give students time to discuss their personalization.

Ask several students to share and write how they personalized on the board or screen as on the following slide.

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Personalize (2)

Character	Details	How I Personalize
The young man	He is ambitious. He wants people to remember him	I want people to remember me, too
Mother	Makes a hot meal	She is generous – I like sharing food, too.
Father	Has a shelter from the mountain	He wants to protect his family. I plan to protect mine, too.

Ask students to listen again. “As we read the rest of the story, think about how the author tells us what is important to each character. Can you personalize about what is important to you?”

Play or read aloud to the end of the story.

Ask students to share with their classmate “.

Personalize

Character	Details	How I Personalize
The young man	Says everyone wants to be remembered after they die	I know of men who want a monument to their work
Father	He wants to live away from the mountains.	I know other fathers like him. His family's safety is his top priority
Daughter	She turns pink. She says it is better to be happy by the fire.	I know people who are happy to live quiet, private lives
Grandmother	She wants to be buried in fine clothes.	I don't care about this – but I understand that she wants others to see her in a good light.

Self-Evaluate

Ask students to stay with their partner and talk about the end of the story: “This ending is surprising, isn’t it? What do you think the author is saying about the young man’s wish to be remembered?”

Give students time to talk about the story’s ending.

Ask, “Now I’d like to ask – what do you think about using this strategy, *personalize*, when you read? Did it help you understand the characters in the story? Write a sentence or two on your paper to turn in about how *personalizing* helped you today.”

Expand

Ask students, “Are there other times when you can *personalize*?”

Listen to students’ responses.

Continue, “This strategy is helpful in both reading and listening. Personalizing connects what you read to your own experiences. It doesn’t matter if your experience is different from the character in the story. Just thinking about whether a character is like you or unlike you helps you make a connection with the story. Try using this strategy tonight when you do your homework, or in your next class. Let me know how it goes!”

One December night, a long, long time ago, a family sat around the **fireplace** in their home. A golden light from the fire filled the room. The mother and father laughed at something their oldest daughter had just said. The girl was seventeen, much older than her little brother and sister, who were only five and six years old.

A very old woman, the family's grandmother, sat **knitting** in the warmest corner of the room. And a baby, the youngest child, smiled at the fire's light from its tiny bed. This family had found happiness in the worst place in all of New England. They had built their home high up in the White Mountains, where the wind blows violently all year long.

The family lived in an especially cold and dangerous spot. Stones from the top of the mountain above their house would often roll down the mountainside and wake them in the middle of the night. No other family lived near them on the mountain. But this family was never lonely. They enjoyed each other's company, and often had visitors. Their house was built near an important road that connected the White Mountains to the Saint Lawrence River.

People traveling through the mountains in wagons always stopped at the family's door for a drink of water and a friendly word. Lonely travelers, crossing the mountains on foot, would step into the house to share a hot meal. Sometimes, the wind became so wild and cold that these strangers would spend the night with the family. The family offered every traveler who stopped at their home a kindness that money could not buy.

On that December evening, the wind came rushing down the mountain. It seemed to stop at their house to knock at the door before it **roared** down into the valley. The family fell silent for a moment. But then they realized that someone really was knocking at their door. The oldest girl opened the door and found a young man standing in the dark.

The old grandmother put a chair near the fireplace for him. The oldest daughter gave him a warm, **shy** smile. And the baby held up its little arms to him. "This fire is just what I needed," the young man said. "The wind has been blowing in my face for the last two hours."

The father took the young man's travel bag. "Are you going to Vermont?" the older man asked. "Yes, to Burlington," the traveler replied. "I wanted to reach the valley tonight. But when I saw the light in your window, I decided to stop. I would like to sit and enjoy your fire and your company for a while."

As the young man took his place by the fire, something like heavy footsteps was heard outside. It sounded as if someone was running down the side of the mountain, taking enormous steps. The father looked out one of the windows.

"That old mountain has thrown another stone at us again. He must have been afraid we would forget him. He sometimes shakes his head and makes us think he will come down on top of us," the father explained to the young man. "But we are old neighbors," he smiled. "And we manage to get along together pretty well. Besides, I have made a safe hiding place outside to protect us in case a slide brings the mountain down on our heads."

As the father spoke, the mother prepared a hot meal for their guest. While he ate, he talked freely to the family, as if it were his own. This young man did not trust people easily. Yet on this evening, something made him share his deepest secret with these simple mountain people.

The young man's secret was that he was **ambitious**. He did not know what he wanted to do with his life, yet. But he did know that he did not want to be forgotten after he had died. He believed that sometime during his life, he would become famous and be **admired** by thousands of people. "So far," the young man said, "I have done nothing. If I disappeared tomorrow from the face of the earth, no one would know anything about me. No one would ask 'Who was he. Where did he go?' But I cannot die until I have reached my destiny. Then let death come! I will have built my **monument!**"

The young man's powerful emotions touched the family. They smiled. "You laugh at me," the young man said, taking the oldest daughter's hand. "You think my ambition is silly." She was very shy, and her face became pink with embarrassment. "It is better to sit here by the fire," she whispered, "and be happy, even if nobody thinks of us."

Her father stared into the fire. "I think there is something natural in what the young man says. And his words have made me think about our own lives here. "It would have been nice if we had had a little farm down in the valley. Some place where we could see our mountains without being afraid they would fall on our heads. I would have been respected by all our neighbors. And, when I had grown old, I would die happy in my bed. You would put a stone over my grave so everyone would know I lived an honest life."

"You see!" the young man cried out. "It is in our nature to want a monument. Some want only a stone on their grave. Others want to be a part of everyone's memory. But we all want to be remembered after we die!" The young man threw some more wood on the fire to chase away the darkness.

The firelight fell on the little group around the fireplace: the father's strong arms and the mother's gentle smile. It touched the young man's proud face, and the daughter's shy one. It warmed the old grandmother, still knitting in the corner. She looked up from her knitting and, with her fingers still moving the needles, she said, "Old people have their secrets, just as young people do."

The old woman said she had made her funeral clothes some years earlier. They were the finest clothes she had made since her wedding dress. She said her secret was a fear that she would not be buried in her best clothes. The young man stared into the fire. "Old and young," he said. "We dream of graves and monuments. I wonder how sailors feel when their ship is sinking, and they know they will be buried in the wide and nameless grave that is the ocean?"

A sound, rising like the roar of the ocean, shook the house. Young and old exchanged one wild look. Then the same words burst from all their lips. "The slide! The slide!" They rushed away from the house, into the darkness, to the secret spot the father had built to protect them from the mountain slide. The whole side of the mountain came rushing toward the house like a waterfall of destruction.

But just before it reached the little house, the wave of earth divided in two and went around the family's home. Everyone and everything in the path of the terrible slide was destroyed, except the little house. The next morning, smoke was seen coming from the chimney of the house on the mountain. Inside, the fire was still burning. The chairs were still drawn up in a half circle around the fireplace. It looked as if the family had just gone out for a walk.

Some people thought that a stranger had been with the family on that terrible night. But no one ever discovered who the stranger was. His name and way of life remain a mystery. His body was never found.

Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote this story. Dona de Sanctis adapted it for VOA. Your narrator was Harry Monroe.

Words in This Story

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

knit - *v. to make a piece of clothing from yarn or thread by using long needles or a special machine*

roar - *v. to make a long, loud sound*

shy - *adj. showing that you are nervous and uncomfortable about meeting and talking to people*

ambitious - *adj. having ambition; having a desire to be successful, powerful or famous*

admire - *v. to feel respect or approval for someone or something*

monument - *n. a building, statue, etc., that honors a person or event*

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.

See a list of language learning strategies below.







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	 I know.	<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	 Use Clues	<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	 Crystal Ball	<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	 Me	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Relate new concepts to your own life, to your experiences, knowledge, beliefs and feelings.


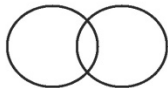


Task-Based Strategies

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	 <p>PDA</p>	<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	 <p>A Venn diagram</p>	<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	 <p>Main Idea</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create a mental, oral, or written summary of information.
Use Selective Attention	 <p>Focus</p>	<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.