

# Learning English

## **American Stories**

### ***The Diamond Lens, Part Two***

**by Fitz-James O'Brien**

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

# Introduction

This lesson plan is to accompany the American Stories series episode, *The Diamond Lens, Part Two*, by Fitz-James O'Brien.

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 conclusion of *The Diamond Lens* by Fitz-James O'Brien. In the first part of the story we learned about a man who loves microscopes. He found out how to make the most powerful microscope, but he needs a large diamond. He thinks his neighbor, Simon has such a diamond. What do you think he will do?

Listen to students' answers. Possible answers may be, he will steal the diamond, or he will ask Simon to borrow the diamond.

Teach the vocabulary for the story show on the slide after the next one.

# Vocabulary

**Anton Leeuwenhoek** - a Dutch tradesman and scientist, best known for his work on the development and improvement of the microscope

**drunk** - *adj.* having drunk so much alcohol that normal actions (such as talking, thinking, and moving) become difficult to do

**carat** - *n.* a unit for measuring the weight of jewels (such as diamonds) that is equal to 200 milligrams

**commit** - *v.* to do (something that is illegal or harmful)

**drop** - *n.* a very small amount of liquid that falls in a rounded shape

**wrinkle** - *n.* a small line or fold that appears on your skin as you grow older — usually plural

# Present

Introduce the task to students: “As we read the story today, we will practice the strategy *read between the lines* to help us understand the story. I’m going to begin reading and try to go beyond what the words say to understand the message of the story. I’ll show you how to do this.”

Play or read aloud to “I had to kill Simon.”

Model the strategy: “The first part of the story summarizes what happened before. Part of the summary includes the sentence, ‘I wanted to discover what it was, so I brought two bottles of wine to his apartment.’ Reading between the lines, I infer that the storyteller is going to trick Simon into telling about his secret.”

Continue, “Then, we read that Simon really does have the large diamond. Simon stole it from someone. I’m going to read between the lines here. I think the writer is telling us that nobody else knows Simon has the diamond. That is an important point.”

Make a chart like the one on the next slide. On one side, write the text from the story. On the other side, write your inferences, based on reading between the lines.

Tell students, “I read, ‘I had to kill Simon.’ and think, that’s not true. If the storyteller had basic morals, he would not even consider this. So this tells me that the storyteller is obsessed. He can only think of one thing – the perfect microscope.”

# Read between the lines

| <u>What the story tells me</u>   | <u>What I infer about it</u>  |
|--|---|
| I wanted to discover what it was, so I brought two bottles of wine to his apartment. | The storyteller is sneaky. He is going to trick Simon into telling his secret.                              |
| Simon stole the diamond...   | Only Simon knows he has it.   |
| I had to kill Simon.   | This is not true. The storyteller is obsessed – only thinking of his microscope and not of right and wrong. |



# Practice

Prepare students for the next part, “Now it’s your turn. Let’s listen to some more of the story. As we listen, *read between the lines*. Write a chart like I made on your own paper. What can you infer about the storyteller?”

Play or read aloud to “I ran out of the room, threw myself on my bed and cried until I fell asleep.”

Have students sit with a classmate and compare their notes. Ask several students to share what they inferred with the class. Write on the shared chart on the board or screen as on the following slide. Give students time to discuss what they have inferred.

# Read between the lines

| <u>What the story tells me</u>                                     | <u>What I infer about it</u>   |
|--|--|
| I washed our glasses and took the two wine bottles away with me.   | The storyteller is trying to avoid being caught.                       |
| My hands shook as I put a drop of water on a piece of glass.       | The storyteller is nervous. He is afraid the microscope will not work. |
| Suddenly, I realized I had fallen in love with this tiny creature! | This man is out of touch with reality.                                 |

Ask students to listen again. “As we read the rest of this part of story, keep reading between the lines.”

**Play or read aloud to the end of the story.**

Ask students to write their inferences and share them with their classmate. Continue to write on the shared chart.

# Self-Evaluate

Ask students to stay with their partner and ask each other, “What do you think is the message of this story? What do you think the writer is telling us?”

Give students time to talk about the message. Suggest possible themes if students are not able to come up with their own. One possible theme is that the narrator thinks he is not subject to laws – but the laws of Nature apply to his tiny world and ignoring them leads to his tragedy.

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

# Expand

Ask students, “Are there other times when you can *read between the lines*?”

Listen to students’ responses.

Continue, “This strategy is helpful in both reading and listening. *Inferencing* is another name for using what we observe to make a good guess about the meaning of what we read or hear. When you leave class today, look for ways you use this strategy in your daily life. For example, when my children ask me if I’m busy, I can make an inference – they are going to ask me to do something for them. You may be surprised at how often you do it. Write down an example and bring it to our next class.”

# 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.

*Our story is called "The Diamond Lens." It was written by Fitz-James O'Brien. Today we will hear the second and final part of the story. Here is Maurice Joyce with part two of "The Diamond Lens."*

When I was a child, someone gave me a microscope. I spent hours looking through that microscope, exploring Nature's tiny secrets. As I grew up, I became more interested in my microscope than in people.

When I was twenty years old, my parents sent me to New York City to study medicine. I never went to any of my classes. Instead, I spent all my time, and a lot of my money, trying to build the perfect microscope. I wanted to make a powerful lens that would let me see even the smallest parts of life. But all my experiments failed.

Then one day, I met a young man, who lived in the apartment above mine. Jules Simon told me about a woman who could speak to the dead. When I visited Madame Vulpes, she let me speak to the spirit of the man who invented the microscope. The spirit of **Anton Leeuwenhoek** told me how to make a perfect lens from a diamond of one hundred forty carats.

But where could I find a diamond that big?

When I returned home, I went to Simon's apartment. He was surprised to see me and tried to hide a small object in his pocket. I wanted to discover what it was, so I brought two bottles of wine to his apartment. We began to drink. By the time we had finished the first bottle, Simon was very **drunk**.

"Simon, I know you have a secret. Why don't you tell me about it?" Something in my voice must have made him feel safe. He made me promise to keep his secret. Then he took a small box from his pocket. When he opened it, I saw a large diamond shaped like a rose. A pure white light seemed to come from deep inside the diamond.

Simon told me he had stolen the diamond from a man in South America. He said it weighed exactly one hundred forty **carats**.

Excitement shook my body. I could not believe my luck. On the same evening that the spirit of Leeuwenhoek tells me the secret of the perfect lens, I find the diamond I need to create it.

I decided to steal Simon's treasure.

I sat across the table from him as he drank another glass of wine. I knew I could not simply steal the diamond. Simon would call the police. There was only one way to get the diamond. I had to kill Simon.

Everything I needed to murder Simon was right there in his apartment. A bottle full of sleeping powder was on a table near his bed. A long thin knife lay on the table. Simon was so busy looking at his diamond that I was able to put the drug in his glass quite easily. He fell asleep in fifteen minutes.

I put his diamond in my pocket and carried Simon to the bed. I wanted to make the police think Simon had killed himself. I picked up Simon's long thin knife and stared down at him. I tried to imagine exactly how the knife would enter Simon's heart if he were holding the knife himself.

I pushed the knife deep into his heart. I heard a sound come from his throat, like the bursting of a large bubble. His body moved and his right hand grabbed the handle of the knife. He must have died immediately.

I washed our glasses and took the two wine bottles away with me. I left the lights on, closed the door and went back to my apartment.

Simon's death was not discovered until three o'clock the next day. One of the neighbors knocked at his door and when there was no answer, she called the police. They discovered Simon's body on the bed. The police questioned everyone. But they did not learn the truth. The police finally decided Jules Simon had killed himself, and soon everyone forgot about him. I had **committed** the perfect crime.

For three months after Simon's death, I worked day and night on my diamond lens. At last the lens was done. My hands shook as I put a **drop** of water on a piece of glass. Carefully, I added some oil to the water to prevent it from drying. I turned on a strong light under the glass and looked through the diamond lens.

For a moment, I saw nothing in that drop of water. And then I saw a pure white light. Carefully, I moved the lens of my microscope closer to the drop of water.

Slowly, the white light began to change. It began to form shapes. I could see clouds and wonderful trees and flowers. These plants were the most unusual colors: bright reds, greens, purples, as well as silver and gold. The branches of these trees moved slowly in a soft wind. Everywhere I looked, I could see fruits and flowers of a thousand different colors.

"How strange," I thought, "that this beautiful place has no animal life in it."



Then, I saw something moving slowly among the brightly-colored trees and bushes. The branches of a purple and silver bush were gently pushed aside. And, there, before my eye, stood the most beautiful woman I had ever seen! She was perfect: pink skin, large blue eyes and long golden hair that fell over her shoulders to her knees.

She stepped away from the rainbow-colored trees. Like a flower floating on water, she drifted through the air. Watching her move was like listening to the sound of tiny bells ringing in the wind.

She went to the rainbow-colored trees and looked up at one of them. The tree moved one of its branches that was full of fruit. It lowered the branch to her, and she took one of the fruits. She turned it in her tiny hands and began to eat.

How I wished I had the power to enter that bright light and float with her through those beautiful forests.

Suddenly, I realized I had fallen in love with this tiny creature! I loved someone who would never love me back. Someone who is a prisoner in a drop of water. I ran out of the room, threw myself on my bed and cried until I fell asleep.

Day after day, I returned to my microscope to watch her. I never left my apartment. I rarely even ate or slept.

One day, as usual, I went to my microscope, ready to watch my love. She was there, but a terrible change had taken place. Her face had become thin, and she could hardly walk. The wonderful light in her golden hair and blue eyes was gone. At that moment, I would have given my soul to become as small as she and enter her world to help her.

What was causing her to be so sick? She seemed in great pain. I watched her for hours, helpless and alone with my breaking heart. She grew weaker and weaker. The forest also was changing. The trees were losing their wonderful colors.

Suddenly, I realized I had not looked at the drop of water for several days. I had looked into it with the microscope, but not at it. As soon as I looked at the glass under the microscope, I understood the horrible truth. I had forgotten to add more oil to the drop of water to stop it from drying. The drop of water had disappeared.

I rushed again to look through the lens. The rainbow forests were all gone.

My love lay in a spot of weak light. Her pink body was dried and **wrinkled**. Her eyes were black as dust. Slowly she disappeared forever.

## The Diamond Lens by Fitz-James O'Brien (Part 2) American Stories | VOA

I fainted and woke many hours later on pieces of my microscope. I had fallen on it when I fainted. My mind was as broken as the diamond lens. I crawled to my bed and withdrew from the world.

I finally got better, months later. But all my money was gone. People now say I am crazy. They call me "Linley, the mad scientist."

No one believes I spoke to the spirit of Leeuwenhoek. They laugh when I tell them how I killed Jules Simon and stole his diamond to make the perfect lens. They think I never saw that beautiful world in a drop of water.

But I know the truth of the diamond lens. And now, so do you.

*You have just heard "The Diamond Lens" by Fitz-James O'Brien. It was adapted by Dona de Sanctis. Your storyteller was Maurice Joyce.*

**Anton Leeuwenhoek** - a Dutch tradesman and scientist, best known for his work on the development and improvement of the microscope and also for his contribution towards the study of microbiology

**carat** - *n.* a unit for measuring the weight of jewels (such as diamonds) that is equal to 200 milligrams





**drunk** - *adj.* having drunk so much alcohol that normal actions (such as talking, thinking, and moving) become difficult to do

**commit** - *v.* to do (something that is illegal or harmful)

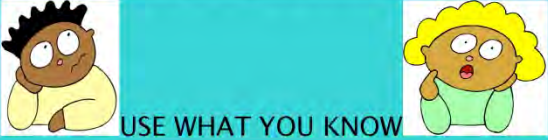




**drop** - *n.* a very small amount of liquid that falls in a rounded shape

**wrinkle** - *n.* a small line or fold that appears on your skin as you grow older — usually plural







# 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   | <br>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  | <br>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   | <br>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  | <br>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


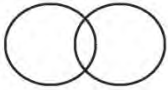


| CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES  |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| STRATEGY  | DESCRIPTION  |  |
| <b>TASK-BASED STRATEGIES</b>  |  |  |
| Transfer / Use Cognates   | <br>Coffee/Café          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Apply your linguistic knowledge of other languages (including your native language) to the target language.</li> <li>-Recognize cognates.</li> </ul>   |
| Substitute / Paraphrase   | <br>Make it work         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Use a synonym or descriptive phrase for unknown words or expressions.</li> </ul>   |
|  <br><b>USE YOUR SENSES</b> |  |  |
| Use Images  | <br>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  | <br>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>                                  |
|  <br><b>USE YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS</b> |  |   |
| Find/Apply Patterns  | <br>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  | <br>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                                     |  <p>PDA</p>            | <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                         |  <p>A Venn diagram</p> | <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                                      |  <p>Main Idea</p>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Create a mental, oral, or written summary of information.</li> </ul>   |
| Use Selective Attention                        |  <p>Focus</p>        | <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  |  <p>Look it up!</p>    | <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   |  <p>Together</p>      | <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)  |  <p>I can do it!</p> | <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>                             |