

Learning English

American Stories

Feathertop

by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Lesson Plan
by Jill Robbins, Ph.D.

Introduction

This lesson plan is to accompany the American Stories series episode, *Feathertop* 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

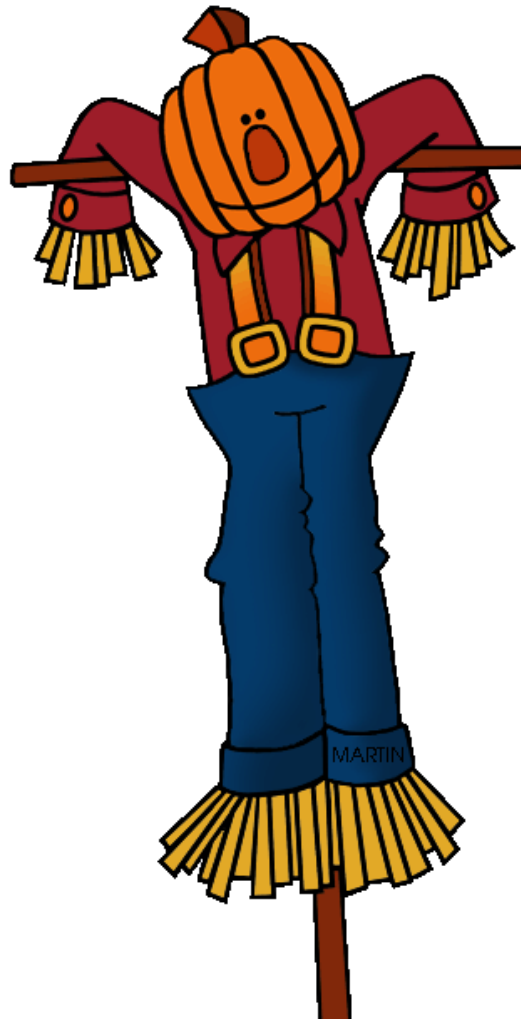
Introduce the story. “Today we will read *Feathertop*, by Nathaniel Hawthorne. It is a story about a witch. What do you know about the American image of a witch?”

Listen to students’ answers. Explain that witches are thought to be women with special powers. In the early days of American settlement, some witches were put on trial.

Explain the new words such as witch, scarecrow and pumpkin using the images on the following slide.



pumpkin



scarecrow



**witch riding a
broomstick**

Vocabulary

broomstick - *n.* the handle of a broom

pesky - *adj.* making someone annoyed or irritated

pumpkin - *n.* a large, round, orange vegetable used as food and sometimes as a decoration — often used before another noun

scarecrow - *n.* an object that looks like a person and that is placed in a field to scare birds away from crops

puff - *v.* to breathe smoke from a cigarette, pipe, etc., in and out of the lungs

puff - *n.* a movement of gas, smoke, or air that can be seen or felt

Present

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

Play or read aloud to “It was a broomstick, and it helped her to do all sorts of strange tricks.”

Model the strategy: “The first part of the story introduces Old Mother Rigby. She has a problem. Crows keep eating her corn plants. I can *create a mental image* of this easily because I have seen crows in a field, picking at something on the ground.”

Draw pictures on board or show on a screen as on the next slide.

Explain, “Here’s a picture of some crows. I know they are large black birds. So I can *create an image* to help myself understand this part.”

Read the sentences aloud: ‘She was a witch, a woman with strange powers. She could make water run uphill, or change a beautiful woman into a white horse. Many nights when the moon was full and bright, she could be seen flying over the tops of the houses in the village, sitting on a long wooden stick.’

Show image of a witch on a broomstick. Explain, “It is easy for me to imagine a witch flying around in the air on a broomstick because I have seen this in movies.” Show image of a witch on a broom.

Imagery



Practice

Prepare students for the next part, “Now it’s your turn. Let’s listen to some more of the story. As we listen, try to create an image in your mind of what you read in the story. If you like to draw, make a quick sketch on your paper. Get ready to *personalize* as you learn more about each character.

Play or read aloud to “And in that hat, she stuck the feather of a bird.”

Have students sit with a classmate and show or tell about the images they created from the story.

Give students time to discuss their images with each other.

Ask several students to share the images they created by holding them up or redrawing them on the board. Continue with the next part of the story. Tell students, “As you create a mental image of each character, think of how it changes as you read this part of the story.

Play or read aloud to ‘Mother Rigby gave Feathertop much money and said “Now you are as good as any of them and can hold your head high with importance.”’

Now, I’d like you to tell your partner how your image of Feathertop *changed* after reading this part of the story.

Ask students to share how their images changed. Possible changes are that Feathertop, the scarecrow, now is supposed to look like a respectable, wealthy man. And the witch is happy now instead of being angry. “As we read the rest of the story, create a mental image of the action and the people in the story.”

Play or read aloud to the end of the story.

Ask students to share the final images they created with their classmates.

Self-Evaluate

Ask students to stay with their partner and talk about the end of the story: “Were you surprised at the ending? How does Feathertop become a scarecrow again? What do you think the author is saying to us?”

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, *create an image*, 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 *creating an image* helped you today. If you have made drawings, turn those in, too.”

Expand

Ask students, “Are there other times when you can *create an image*?”

Listen to students’ responses.

Continue, “This strategy is helpful in both reading and listening. When we *create an image* we have a stronger memory of an event or a person. In our daily lives, creating an image helps us to understand things like directions and instructions. When someone gives me directions to their house on the phone, I often make an image in my mind as they talk to me.”

“Try using this strategy tonight when you do your homework, or in your next class. Let me know how it goes!”

Our story today is called "Feathertop." It was written by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

The long cold winter was gone at last. At first the cold nights went away slowly. Then suddenly, the warm days of spring started to come. There was new life again in the earth. Things started to grow and come up. For the first time, green corn plants began to show. They pushed through the soil and could now be seen above the ground.

After the long winter months, the crows, the big black birds, were hungry. And when they saw the little green plants, they flew down to eat them. Old Mother Rigby tried to make the noisy and hungry birds go away. They made her very angry. She did not want the black birds to eat her corn. But the birds would not go away. So, early one morning, just as the sun started to rise, Mother Rigby jumped out of bed. She had a plan to stop those black birds from eating her corn.

Mother Rigby could do anything. She was a witch, a woman with strange powers. She could make water run uphill, or change a beautiful woman into a white horse. Many nights when the moon was full and bright, she could be seen flying over the tops of the houses in the village, sitting on a long wooden stick. It was a **broomstick**, and it helped her to do all sorts of strange tricks.

Mother Rigby ate a quick breakfast and then started to work on her broomstick. She was planning to make something that would look like a man. It would fill the birds with fear, and scare them from eating her corn, the way most farmers protect themselves from those black, **pesky** birds.

Mother Rigby worked quickly. She held her magic broomstick straight, and then tied another piece of wood across it. And already, it began to look like a man with arms.

Then she made the head. She put a **pumpkin**, a vegetable the size of a football, on top of the broomstick. She made two small holes in the pumpkin for eyes, and made another cut lower down that looked just like a mouth.

At last, there he was. He seemed ready to go to work for Mother Rigby and stop those old birds from eating her corn. But, Mother Rigby was not happy with what she made. She wanted to make her **scarecrow** look better and better, for she was a good worker. She made a purple coat and put it around her scarecrow, and dressed it in white silk stockings. She covered him with false hair and an old hat. And in that hat, she stuck the feather of a bird.

She examined him closely, and decided she liked him much better now, dressed up in a beautiful coat, with a fine feather on top of his hat. And, she named him Feathertop.

She looked at Feathertop and laughed with happiness. He is a beauty, she thought. "Now what?" she thought, feeling troubled again. She felt that Feathertop looked too good to be a

scarecrow. “He can do something better,” she thought, “than just stand near the corn all summer and scare the crows.” And she decided on another plan for Feathertop.

She took the pipe of tobacco she was smoking and put it into the mouth of Feathertop. “Puff, darling, puff,” she said to Feathertop. “Puff away, my fine fellow.” It is your life.” Smoke started to rise from Feathertop’s mouth. At first, it was just a little smoke, but Feathertop worked hard, blowing and puffing. And, more and more smoke came out of him.

“Puff away, my pet,” Mother Rigby said, with happiness. “Puff away, my pretty one. Puff for your life, I tell you.” Mother Rigby then ordered Feathertop to walk. “Go forward,” she said. “You have a world before you.”

Feathertop put one hand out in front of him, trying to find something for support. At the same time he pushed one foot forward with great difficulty. But Mother Rigby shouted and ordered him on, and soon he began to go forward. Then she said, “you look like a man, and you walk like a man. Now I order you to talk like a man.”

Feathertop gasped, struggled, and at last said in a small whisper, “Mother, I want to speak, but I have no brain. What can I say?”

“Ah, you can speak,” Mother Rigby answered. “What shall you say? Have no fear. When you go out into the world, you will say a thousand things, and say them a thousand times...and saying them a thousand times again and again, you still will be saying nothing. So just talk, babble like a bird. Certainly you have enough of a brain for that.”

Mother Rigby gave Feathertop much money and said “Now you are as good as any of them and can hold your head high with importance.”

But she told Feathertop that he must never lose his pipe and must never let it stop smoking. She warned him that if his pipe ever stopped smoking, he would fall down and become just a bundle of sticks again.

“Have no fear, Mother,” Feathertop said in a big voice and blew a big cloud of smoke out of his mouth.

“On your way,” Mother Rigby said, pushing Feathertop out the door. “The world is yours. And if anybody asks you for your name, just say Feathertop. For you have a feather in your hat and a handful of feathers in your empty head.”

Feathertop found the streets in town, and many people started to look at him. They looked at his beautiful purple coat and his white silk stockings, and at the pipe he carried in his left hand, which he put back into his mouth every five steps he walked. They thought he was a visitor of great importance.

“What a fine, noble face” one man said. “He surely is somebody,” said another. “A great leader of men.”

As Feathertop walked along one of the quieter streets near the edge of town, he saw a very pretty girl standing in front of a small red brick house. A little boy was standing next to her. The pretty girl smiled at Feathertop, and love entered her heart. It made her whole face bright with sunlight.

Feathertop looked at her and had a feeling he never knew before. Suddenly, everything seemed a little different to him. The air was filled with a strange excitement. The sunlight glowed along the road, and people seemed to dance as they moved through the streets. Feathertop could not stop himself, and walked toward the pretty smiling young girl. As he got closer, the little boy at her side pointed his finger at Feathertop and said, “Look, Polly! The man has no face. It is a pumpkin.”

Feathertop moved no closer, but turned around and hurried through the streets of the town toward his home. When Mother Rigby opened the door, she saw Feathertop shaking with emotion. He was puffing on his pipe with great difficulty and making sounds like the clatter of sticks, or the rattling of bones.

“What’s wrong?” Mother Rigby asked.

“I am nothing, Mother. I am not a man. I am just a puff of smoke. I want to be something more than just a puff of smoke.” And Feathertop took his pipe, and with all his strength smashed it against the floor. He fell down and became a bundle of sticks as his pumpkin face rolled toward the wall.

“Poor Feathertop,” Mother Rigby said, looking at the heap on the floor. “He was too good to be a scarecrow. And he was too good to be a man. But he will be happier, standing near the corn all summer and protecting it from the birds. So I will make him a scarecrow again.”

You have heard the American story, “Feathertop.” It was written by Nathaniel Hawthorne. Lawan Davis adapted it for Learning English.

Words in This Story

broomstick - *n.* the handle of a broom

pesky - *adj.* making someone annoyed or irritated

pumpkin - *n.* a large, round, orange vegetable used as food and sometimes as a decoration — often used before another noun

scarecrow - *n.* an object that looks like a person and that is placed in a field to scare birds away from crops

puff - *v.* to breathe smoke from a cigarette, pipe, etc., in and out of the lungs

n. a movement of gas, smoke, or air that can be seen or felt

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.


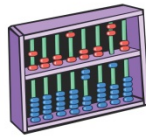
Task-Based Strategies

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.


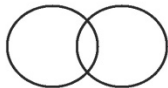


Task-Based Strategies

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	 <p>Look it up!</p>	<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	 <p>Together</p>	<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)	 <p>I can do it!</p>	<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.