



American Stories

The Story of an Eyewitness

by Jack London

Lesson Plan
by Jill Robbins, Ph.D.

Introduction

This lesson plan is to accompany the American Stories series episode, *The Story of an Eyewitness* 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.

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

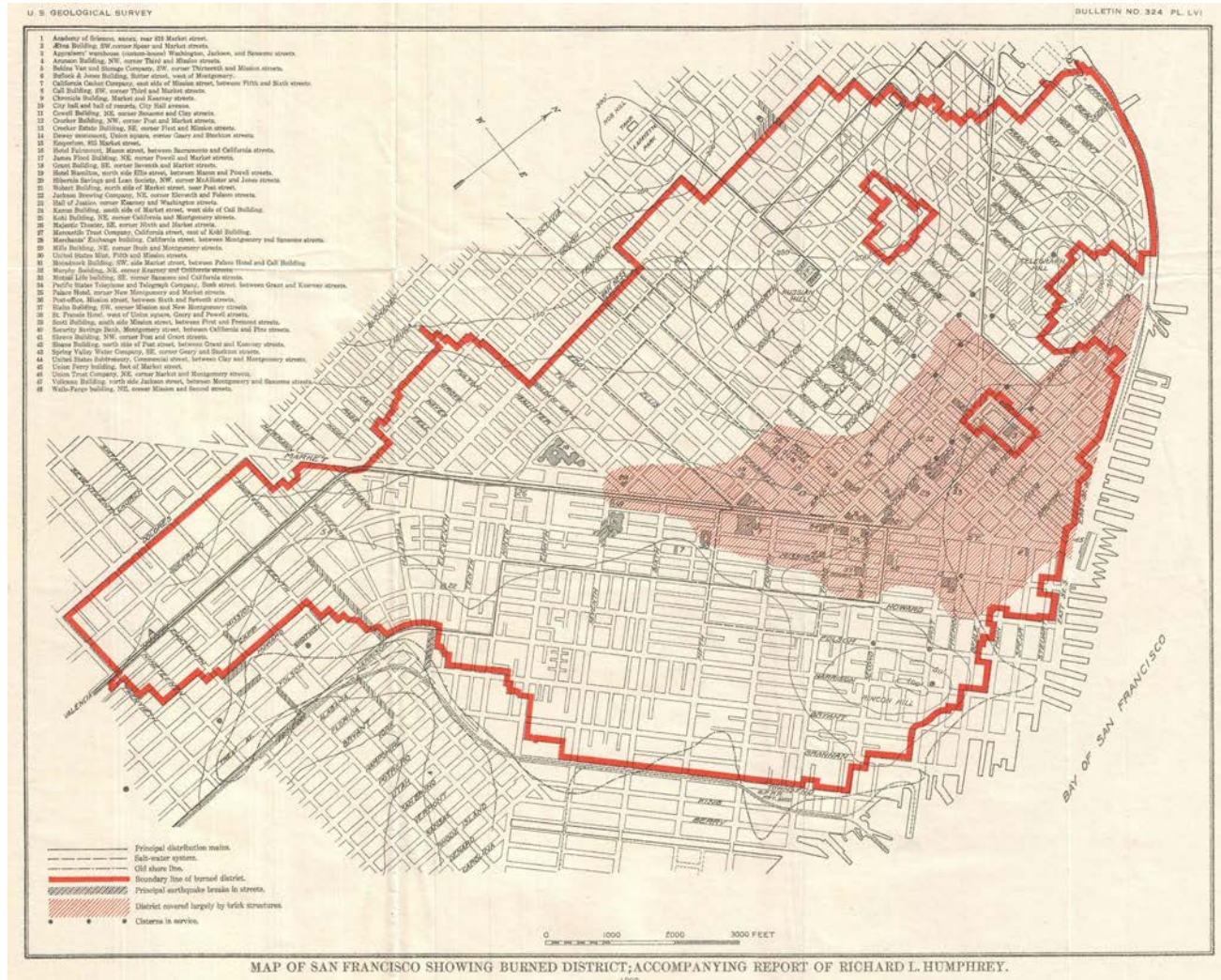
Introduce the story. “Today we will read *The Story of an Eyewitness*, by Jack London. Do you know what an eyewitness is? It is a person who sees something in person. This story tells how Jack London saw what happened in San Francisco after a big earthquake. What do you know about earthquakes? Have you heard of the San Francisco earthquake of 1906?

Listen to students’ answers. If students live in an area with earthquakes, they can tell of their personal knowledge of the aftermath of a quake. If not, lead then to an understanding of the destructive power of an earthquake, not just from shaking, but also from fire.

Show the map of San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake (next slide). It can be accessed at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1907_Geological_Survey_Map_of_San_Francisco_after_1906_Earthquake_-_Geographicus_-_SanFrancisco-humphrey-1907.jpg Point out that the red line shows the area of the city that burned.

Teach the vocabulary for the story.

San Francisco, California after 1906



Map Courtesy of US Geological Survey

Vocabulary

smash - *v.* : to break into many pieces; to shatter or destroy

atmosphere - *n.* the whole mass of air that surrounds the Earth

surrender - *v.* to agree to stop fighting, hiding, resisting, etc., because you know that you will not win or succeed

retreat - *v.* to move or go away from a place or situation especially because it is dangerous, unpleasant, etc.

survivor - *n.* a member of a group who continues to live after other members have died

firestorm - *n.* a very large fire that destroys everything in its path and produces powerful winds

jammed - *v.* to fill (a place) completely

Present

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

Play or read aloud to “I passed Wednesday night in the path of the fire and in all those terrible hours I saw not one woman who cried, not one man who was excited, not one person who caused trouble.”

Model the strategy: “The first part of the story describes the damage and fire caused by the quake. Then Jack London tells us how the people reacted to the problems the earthquake caused. Let’s make a chart separating these two kinds of information.”

Make a chart like the one on the next slide. Tell the students that in the disaster, London first saw there was no organization. He tells us about the fire and damage done by the quake. Then he begins to tell about the people. What did the people do?

Classify

<u>Damage</u>	<u>How people react</u>
homes are destroyed	people tried to save their possessions
And the great water pipes had burst. (no water is available to fight the fire)	use explosives to destroy buildings (to make a fire break)
the whole city crashed and roared into ruin	not one person ... caused trouble

Practice

Prepare students for the next part, “Now it’s your turn. Let’s listen to some more of the story. Take out a piece of paper. Write a chart with two columns. As we listen, think about what you learn from the story. *Classify* it as about the damage or about the people.”

Play or read aloud to “From every side came the roaring of flames, the crashing of walls and the sound of explosives.”

Have students sit with a classmate and compare how they classified the information. Ask several students to share what they have written with the class. The following page shows possible answers.

Classify

<u>Damage</u>	<u>How people react</u>
The fire was spreading through the city	People left their houses to avoid the fire. People put their treasures in trunks and carried them up the hills.
The fires destroyed homes and restaurants	Government set up tents and fed people
Union Square was full of trunks	They left their trunks behind and retreated

Ask students to listen again. “As we read the rest of the story, think about the information you are getting. Is Jack London telling you about the city or the people? Add the information to your chart in the correct column.”

Play or read aloud to the end of the story.

Ask students to share their classification charts with their classmate. Have several report on how they classified.

Classify

<u>Damage</u>	<u>How people react</u>
smoke filled the air	men and women came out of the smoke
the fire kept destroying the city	refugees jammed into homes outside the city
San Francisco was like a volcano	about 100,000 people left the city
No food is available in homes	Government is feeding people
The city is completely destroyed	Bankers and business people plan to rebuild the city

Self-Evaluate

Ask students to stay with their partner and talk about the end of the story: “What do you think Jack London wants his readers to feel at the end of the story? Why does he tell us about rebuilding the city?”

Give students time to talk about the end of the story.

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

Expand

Ask students, “Are there other times when you can *classify* as you read?”

Listen to students’ responses.

Continue, “This strategy is helpful in both reading and listening. *Classifying* helps you remember what you read. This can also work well when you are studying a science lesson, or a history lesson. This strategy helps you organize what you are learning so it makes more sense to you. Try using this strategy tonight when you do your homework, or in your next class. Let me know how it goes!”

More advanced students can read the original report by Jack London at <http://www.sfmuseum.net/hist5/jlondon.html>

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.

The western American city of San Francisco, California suffered a huge earthquake on April 18th, 1906.

More than three thousand people are known to have died. The true number of dead will never be known. Two hundred fifty thousand people lost their homes. Just a few hours after the terrible earthquake, a magazine named Collier's sent a telegraph message to the famous American writer Jack London. They asked Mr. London to go to San Francisco and report about what he saw.

He arrived in the city only a few hours after the earthquake. The report he wrote is called, "The Story of an Eyewitness."

Not in history has a modern city been so completely destroyed. San Francisco is gone. Nothing remains of it but memories and a few homes that were near the edge of the city. Its industrial area is gone. Its business area is gone. Its social and living areas are gone. The factories, great stores and newspaper buildings, the hotels and the huge homes of the very rich, are all gone.



Watching the fire advance

Within minutes of the earthquake the fires began. Within an hour a huge tower of smoke caused by the fires could be seen a hundred miles away. And for three days and nights this huge fire moved in the sky, reddening the sun, darkening the day and filling the land with smoke.

There was no opposing the flames. There was no organization, no communication. The earthquake had **smashed** all of the modern inventions of a twentieth century city. The streets were broken and filled with pieces of fallen walls. The telephone and telegraph systems were broken. And the great water pipes had burst. All inventions and safety plans of man had been destroyed by thirty seconds of movement by the earth.



Pulling down buildings after the quake

By Wednesday afternoon, only twelve hours after the earthquake, half the heart of the city was gone. I

watched the huge fire. It was very calm. There was no wind. Yet from every side, wind was pouring in upon the city. East, west, north and south, strong winds were blowing upon the dying city.

The heated air made a huge wind that pulled air into the fire, rising into the **atmosphere**. Day and night the calm continued, and yet, near the flames, the wind was often as strong as a storm.



Using explosives to stop fire

There was no water to fight the fire. Fire fighters decided to use explosives to destroy buildings in its path. They hoped this would create a block to slow or stop the fire. Building after building was destroyed. And still the great fires continued. Jack London told how people tried to save some of their possessions from the fire.

Wednesday night the whole city crashed and roared into ruin, yet the city was quiet. There were no crowds. There was no shouting and yelling. There was no disorder. I passed Wednesday night in the path of the fire and in all those terrible hours I saw not one woman who cried, not one man who was excited, not one person who caused trouble.

Throughout the night, tens of thousands of homeless ones fled the fire. Some were wrapped in blankets. Others carried bedding and dear household treasures.

Many of the poor left their homes with everything they could carry. Many of their loads were extremely heavy. Throughout the night they dropped items they could no longer hold. They left on the street clothing and treasures they had carried for miles.

Many carried large boxes called trunks. They held onto these the longest. It was a hard night and the hills of San Francisco are steep. And up these hills, mile after mile, were the trunks dragged. Many a strong man broke his heart that night.

Before the march of the fire were soldiers. Their job was to keep the people moving away from the fire. The extremely tired people would arise and struggle up the steep hills, pausing from weakness every five or ten feet. Often, after reaching the top of a heart-breaking hill, they would find the fire was moving at them from a different direction.

After working hour after hour through the night to save part of their lives, thousands were forced to leave their trunks and flee.

At night I walked down through the very heart of the city. I walked through mile after mile of beautiful buildings. Here was no fire. All was in perfect order. The police patrolled the streets. And yet it was all doomed, all of it. There was no water. The explosives were almost used up. And two huge fires were coming toward this part of the city from different directions.

Four hours later I walked through this same part of the city. Everything still stood as before. And yet there was a change. A rain of ashes was falling. The police had been withdrawn. There were no firemen, no fire engines, and no men using explosives. I stood at the corner of Kearney and Market Streets in the very heart of San Francisco. Nothing could be done. Nothing could be saved. The **surrender** was complete.

It was impossible to guess where the fire would move next. In the early evening I passed through Union Square. It was packed with refugees. Thousands of them had gone to bed on the grass. Government tents had been set up, food was being cooked and the refugees were lining up for free meals.

Late that night I passed Union Square again. Three sides of the Square were in flames. The Square, with mountains of trunks, was deserted. The troops, refugees and all had **retreated**.

The next morning I sat in front of a home on San Francisco's famous Nob Hill. With me sat Japanese, Italians, Chinese and Negroes. All about were the huge homes of the very rich. To the east and south of us were advancing two huge walls of fire.

I went inside one house and talked to the owner. He smiled and said the earthquake had destroyed everything he owned. All he had left was his beautiful house. He looked at me and said, "The fire will be here in fifteen minutes."

Outside the house the troops were falling back and forcing the refugees ahead of them. From every side came the roaring of flames, the crashing of walls and the sound of explosives.

Day was trying to dawn through the heavy smoke. A sickly light was creeping over the face of things. When the sun broke through the smoke it was blood-red and small. The smoke changed color from red to rose to purple.

I walked past the broken dome of the City Hall building. This part of the city was already a waste of smoking ruins. Here and there through the smoke came a few men and



Tent with food supplies for refugees

women. It was like the meeting of a few **survivors** the day after the world ended.

The huge fires continued to burn on. Nothing could stop them. Mister London walked from place to place in the city, watching the huge fires destroy the city. Nothing could be done to halt the **firestorm**.

In the end, the fire went out by itself because there was nothing left to burn. Jack London finishes his story:

All day Thursday and all Thursday night, all day Friday and Friday night, the flames raged on. Friday night saw the huge fires finally conquered, but not before the fires had swept three-quarters of a mile of docks and store houses at the waterfront.

San Francisco at the present time is like the center of a volcano. Around this volcano are tens of thousands of refugees. All the surrounding cities and towns are **jammed** with the homeless ones. The refugees were carried free by the railroads to any place they wished to go. It is said that more than one hundred thousand people have left the peninsula on which San Francisco stood.

The government has control of the situation, and thanks to the immediate relief given by the whole United States, there is no lack of food. The bankers and businessmen have already begun making the necessary plans to rebuild this once beautiful city of San Francisco.

"The Story of an Eyewitness" was written by Jack London and adapted by Paul Thompson. It was published in Collier's Magazine, May 5, 1906. Your narrator was Doug Johnson.

Words in This Story

smash - *v.* : to break into many pieces; to shatter or destroy

atmosphere - *n.* the whole mass of air that surrounds the Earth

surrender - *v.* to agree to stop fighting, hiding, resisting, etc., because you know that you will not win or succeed

retreat - *v.* to move or go away from a place or situation especially because it is





dangerous, unpleasant, etc.

survivor - *n.* a member of a group who continues to live after other members have died







firestorm - *n.* a very large fire that destroys everything in its path and produces powerful winds

jammed - *v.* to fill (a place) completely







Metacognitive Strategies

CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	
METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES		
Plan / Organize	 Planner	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	 Check	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	 I did it!	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	 Pace Yourself	–Determine how you learn best. –Arrange conditions that help you learn. –Seek opportunities for practice. –Focus your attention on the task.





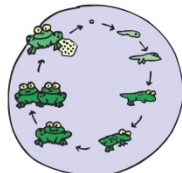
Task-Based Strategies

CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	
TASK-BASED STRATEGIES		
<div></div> <p>USE WHAT YOU KNOW</p>		
Use Background Knowledge	 <p>I know.</p>	<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	 <p>Use Clues</p>	<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	 <p>Crystal Ball</p>	<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	 <p>Me</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Relate new concepts to your own life, to your experiences, knowledge, beliefs and feelings.


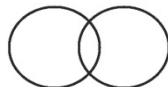


Task-Based Strategies

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