

American Stories

“William Wilson,” Part One by Edgar Allan Poe

Lesson Plan

This lesson plan is to accompany the American Stories series episode “William Wilson,” Part One, by Edgar Allan Poe.

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.

American Stories lesson plans are based on the CALLA approach. See the end of each lesson for more information and resources on teaching with the CALLA approach.

CALLA has five lesson elements:

Prepare: Engage students in the topic and identify objectives for the lesson. Find out what students already know about it and motivate them to learn more. Teach new vocabulary.

Present: Present new information. Explain the target learning strategy for the lesson. Model what the students are asked to do. Discuss connections to students’ prior knowledge.

Practice: Give students an authentic, active task that they can do in a small group or in pairs. Remind students to use the target learning strategy.

Self-Evaluate: Question students so they will reflect on their own learning. Ask students to evaluate their own learning rather than wait for the teacher to assess them. Find out if using the learning strategy helped students' understanding.

Expand: Guide students on how to apply what they learned to their own lives. Point out other contexts where the learning strategy may help. Make connections between content and language or to the student's first language. When appropriate, request that parents contribute to learning.

Now for this week's lesson.

Prepare

Introduce the story: "Today, we will read Part One of 'William Wilson' by Edgar Allan Poe. It is a story about a man who is retelling events from his life. The man has done something bad, but we don't know yet what it is."

Ask students, "Have you ever heard the phrase 'alter ego'? An alter ego is a second self which is believed to be different from someone's normal personality."

Give students an example from your own life or someone you know.

Say, "For example, my family thinks of me as being a teacher and a serious person. But, when I am around my close friends, I make a lot of jokes and we laugh all the time. Have you ever had a good or bad or interesting or creative part of your personality that only a few people see - or that no one else sees? Or, do you wish you had those qualities? Tell your neighbor a little about this."

Elicit a few samples of the differences.

"In today's story, the narrator tells us things about himself, his experiences, and the other characters that are not the full story. Some authors give you details about a character or the events in a story *directly*. Other authors want you to read and then think, 'What is the author trying to tell us?' or 'What does the author *really* want us to understand?' "William Wilson" is one of those stories. The author wants us to do something called *making inferences*. To make an inference means to reach a conclusion or form an opinion about something based on the facts you know. When we make inferences, we look for clues; we look for language that suggests something *more* than what the narrator or characters say or claim."

Teach the new vocabulary for the lesson (below). Use images or items for visual aids. The vocabulary also appears on a separate page at the end of the lesson for printing and handing out to students.

New Words

horror - *n.* a very strong feeling of fear, dread, and shock

degree - *n.* an amount or level that can be measured or compared to another amount or level

church - *n.* a building that is used for Christian religious services

bell - *n.* a hollow usually cup-shaped metal object that makes a ringing sound when it is hit

suffer - *v.* to experience illness, or injury, or physical or emotional pain

playground - *n.* an outdoor area where children can play

garden - *n.* an area of ground where plants (such as flowers or vegetables) are grown

delightful - *adj.* very pleasant : giving or causing delight

branch - *v.* to divide into smaller parts: to separate into branches

perhaps - *adv.* possibly but not certainly

Present

Hand out the transcript of the story.

Introduce the task to students: "As we hear the story today, we will practice the strategy *Make Inferences* to help us understand what the author is trying to tell us about the narrator and events."

Say, "The narrator of this story is also the main character. He tells us many things about himself, his family, his childhood memories of his school, and his experiences with his classmates. But, even though he says a lot, there are things that he leaves *unsaid*. The author wants us to understand more

about the narrator and the events in the story than what the narrator says. As we listen to the first part of the story, follow along with your transcript. Look at the narrator's choice of words and things he may state indirectly to better understand the story."

Play the first section of the story up to, "I became the master of my own actions." (This sentence is at the end of paragraph four.)

Model the strategy: "Let's look at an example. In paragraph two, the narrator is talking about something bad that he did. Although we do not know yet what that is, the narrator says, '...I have been in the power of forces beyond my control.' He also says, 'I would have them agree that what happened to me never happened to other men.' What can we infer, or understand, about the narrator from reading this?"

Write the quotes on the board (shortened quotes, if that helps) in one column called "What we read." Then, make another column called "What we infer" and then elicit responses from students. When the students give answers, be sure to ask them to briefly explain why they inferred this. If you think they make strong points, write their inferences in the "What we infer" column. If students' responses are not like the ones listen in the following table, you can add those (or say them aloud for students to hear them).

What we read	What we infer
<p>"...I have been in the power of forces beyond my control" and "I would have them agree that what happened to me never happened to other men" (2)</p>	<p>The narrator is not taking full responsibility for the bad thing/s he did.</p> <p>He does not believe his crime or bad deed is his fault.</p> <p>He believes some powerful, unexplained force made him do the bad thing/s he did.</p>

Notice that the number of the paragraph appears at the end of the quote on the left as "(2)." It is a good idea for students to do the same, as this will help them locate the quotes easier during the activities.

A copy of sample inferences appears at the end of the lesson. This is solely to support you as the teacher. If you prefer, you can select different quotes and make inferences that you think are more fitting.

Practice

Now, have students sit in groups of three. Put them with people who they don't typically sit next to.

Say, "Now it's your turn. Let's listen to some more of the story. As we listen, mark or underline the sentences in the story that you think you can make inferences from."

Play or read aloud to, "...or perhaps when father or mother or a friend came to take us away for a few days" (end of paragraph 8).

Hand out the *blank* Inferences Table. Students will use this blank table to record quotes and inferences. (If they need additional writing space, they can write on the back of the two pieces of paper.)

Say, "Now, write the quotes you chose in the left column. And, write your inferences in the right column. You can use short pieces of the quotes if that makes it easier. Listing the number of the paragraph next to the quote also helps. After you write your inferences, share them with your group. Talk about whether you agree with each one."

Allow students time to work on the activity. Then, elicit examples from each group. Ask students what some inferences their group agreed on and some they disagreed on were. Ask them to point to exact quotes from the story to support their claims.

Say, "Let's listen to the rest of the story."

Play or read aloud until the end of the story.

Once again, allow students time to write in their Inference Table and then to work together in their group. As before, once they finish, elicit examples from the groups.

Self-Evaluate

Now ask, "What did you think about this strategy – Make Inferences – when you read? Did it help you understand the story better?"

Give students time to discuss their reaction to using the strategy.

Then ask, "How do they think the narrator *really* felt about William Wilson? Why do you think the narrator feels this way about William Wilson? Write a

few sentences on a sheet of paper about how making inferences helped you today. Then, turn it in to me at the end of the class."

Expand

Ask students, "Aside from reading literature, there other times or situations when making inferences can help you understand something better?"

Elicit examples from students.

Say, "This strategy is helpful inside and outside of school. For example, think about when you seen an advertisement on TV or in print. It shows popular, beautiful people using a product. You know that the advertiser is trying to make you infer, 'If I use this product I will be popular and beautiful, too!' But, now you know about inferences, so you can see the real or hidden truth of the advertisement."

Continue, "And, in school, you can make inferences in reading and listening. For example, when a teacher, friend, or family member tells you a story, you can listen to clues about what they are *truly* trying to tell you but might not say directly. You can often even discover the real meaning of something when you read emails or text messages from friends and family members. For example, if you text your friend to ask for help with something and their response does not include the words 'yes' or 'no' or 'I can' or 'I can't,' they may be want you to notice clues that tell you the answer. They may say, 'I am very busy right now,' so you can guess that what they really mean is 'no, I'm sorry. I can't right now.' They may want you to infer this answer. Try using this strategy in your next class or when you leave school tonight. Let me know how it goes!"

"William Wilson," Part One

By Edgar Allan Poe

Let me call myself, for the present, William Wilson. That is not my real name. That name has already been the cause of the horror – of the anger of my family. Have not the winds carried my name, with my loss of honor, to the ends of the earth? Am I not forever dead to the world? – to its honors, to its flowers, to its golden hopes? And a cloud, heavy and endless – does it not hang forever between my hopes and my heaven?

Men usually become bad by degrees. But I let all goodness fall from me in a single moment, as if I had dropped a coat. From small acts of darkness I passed, in one great step, into the blackest evil ever known. Listen while I tell you of the cause that made this happen. Death is near, and its coming has softened my spirit. I desire, in passing through this dark valley, the understanding of other men. I wish them to believe that I have been, in some ways, in the power of forces beyond human control. I wish them to find for me, in the story I am about to tell, some small fact that proves I could only have only what I did. I would have them agree that what happened to me never happened to other men. Is it not true that no one has ever suffered as I do? Have I not indeed been living in a dream? And am I not now dying from the horror and the unanswered question — the mystery of the wildest dream ever dreamed on earth?

I am one of a family well known for their busy minds. As a small child I showed clearly that I, too, had the family character. As I became older it grew more powerful in me. For many reasons it became a cause of talk among friends, and the hurt it did me was great. I wanted people always to do things my way; I acted like a fool; I let my desires control me.

My father and mother, weak in body and mind, could do little to hold me back. When their efforts failed, of course my will grew stronger. And from

then on my voice in the house was law. At an age when few children are allowed to be free, I was left to be guided by my own desires. I became the master of my own actions.

I remember my first school. It was in a large house about 300 years old, in a small town in England, among a great number of big trees. All of the houses there were very old. In truth, it was a dream-like and spirit-quieting place, that old town. At this moment I seem to feel the pleasant coolness under the shade of the trees, I remember the sweetness of the flowers, I hear again with delight I cannot explain the deep sound of the church bell each hour breaking the stillness of the day.

It gives me pleasure to think about this school — as much pleasure, perhaps, as I am now able to experience. Deep in suffering as I am — suffering only too real — perhaps no one will object if for a short time I forget my troubles and tell a little about this period. Moreover, the period and place are important. It was then and there that I first saw, hanging over me, the terrible promise of things to come. Ah, let me remember.

The house where we boys lived and went to school was, as I have said, old and wide. The grounds about it were large, and there was a high wall around the outside of the whole school. Beyond this wall we went three times in each week, on one day to take short walks in the neighboring fields, and two times on Sunday to go to church. This was the one church in the village, and the head-teacher of our school was also the head of the church. With a spirit of deep wonder and of doubt I used to watch him there! This man, with slow step and quiet, thoughtful face, in clothes so different and shining clean — could this be the same man who with a hard face and clothes far from clean stood ready to strike us if we did not follow the rules of the school? Oh, great and terrible question, beyond my small power to answer!

I well remember our playground, which was behind the house. There were no trees, and the ground was as hard as stone. In front of the house there was a small garden, but we stepped into this garden only at very special times, such as when we first arrived at school, or when we left it for the last time, or perhaps when father or mother or a friend came to take us away for a few days.

But the house! — what a delightful old building it was — to me truly a palace! There was really no end to it. I was not always able to say certainly which of its two floors I happened to be on. From each room to every other there were always three or four steps either up or down. Then the rooms branched into each other, and these branches were too many to count, and often turned and came back upon themselves! Our ideas about the whole great house were not very far different from the thoughts we had about time without end. During the five years I was there, I could never have told anyone how to find the little room where I and some 18 or 20 other boys slept. The schoolroom was the largest room in the house — and I couldn't help thinking it was the largest in the world. It was long and low, with pointed windows and heavy wood overhead. In a far corner was the office of our head-teacher, Mr. Bransby. This office had a thick door, and we would rather have died than open it when he was not there.

Inside the thick walls of this old school I passed my years from 10 to 15. Yet I always found it interesting. A child's mind does not need the outside world. In the quiet school I found more bright pleasure than I found later, as a young man, in riches, or, as an older man, in wrongdoing.

Yet I must have been different indeed from most boys. Few men remember much of their early life. My early days stand out as clear and plain as if they had been cut in gold. In truth the hotness of my character and my desire to lead and command soon separated me from the others. Slowly I

gained control over all who were not greatly older than myself — over all except one. This exception was a boy who, though not of my family, had the same name as my own, William Wilson. This boy was the only one who ever dared to say he did not believe all I told him, and who would not follow my commands.

This troubled me greatly. I tried to make the others think that I didn't care. The truth was that I felt afraid of him. I had to fight to appear equal with him, but he easily kept himself equal with me. Yet no one else felt, as I did, that this proved him the better of the two.

Indeed, no one else saw the battle going on between us. All his attempts to stop me in what I wanted to do were made when no one else could see or hear us. He did not desire, as I did, to lead the other boys. He seemed only to want to hold me back. Sometimes with wonder, and always without pleasure, I saw that his manner seemed to show a kind of love for me. I did not feel thankful for this; I thought it meant only that he thought himself to be very fine indeed, better than me. Perhaps it was this love he showed for me, added to the fact that we had the same name, and also that we had entered the school on the same day, which made people say that we were brothers. Wilson did not belong to my family, even very distantly. But if we had been brothers we would have been near to each other indeed, for I learned that we were both born on the 19th of January, 1809. This seemed a strange and wonderful thing.

New Words

horror - *n.* a very strong feeling of fear, dread, and shock

degree - *n.* an amount or level that can be measured or compared to another amount or level

church - *n.* a building that is used for Christian religious services

bell - *n.* a hollow usually cup-shaped metal object that makes a ringing sound when it is hit

suffer - *v.* to experience illness, or injury, or physical or emotional pain

playground - *n.* an outdoor area where children can play

garden - *n.* an area of ground where plants (such as flowers or vegetables) are grown

delightful - *adj.* very pleasant : giving or causing delight

branch - *v.* to divide into smaller parts : to separate into branches

perhaps - *adv.* possibly but not certainly

Inferences Table (for students)

Character or place	What we read	What we infer
The narrator		
His family		
His school		

Character or place	What we read	What we infer
Mr. Bransby (the head teacher and head of the church)		
The other boy at his school		

Sample Inferences (for teacher)

Character or thing	What we read	What we infer
<p>The narrator</p>	<p>"From small acts of darkness, I passed, in one great step, into the blackest evil ever known." (2)</p> <p>"Death is near and its coming has softened my spirit." (2)</p> <p>"...I have been in the power of forces beyond my control" "I would have them agree that what happened to me never happened to other men" (2)</p>	<p>The narrator committed some unspeakable crime</p> <p>He feels relieved that he will die soon because the guilt and regret he feels is causing him pain.</p> <p>He is not taking full responsibility for the bad thing he did. He does not believe his crime is totally his fault.</p>

Character or thing	What we read	What we infer
	<p>"I wanted people always to do things my way; I acted like a fool; I let my desires control me" (3)</p>	<p>The narrator had very little self-control as a child.</p>
<p>His family</p>	<p>The name William Wilson "has already been the cause of the horror – of the anger of my family" (1)</p> <p>His family is known for their "busy minds" and he is like them (3)</p> <p>His father and mother were "weak in body and mind, and could do little to hold me back."</p> <p>"And from then on my voice in the house was law." (4)</p>	<p>The narrator has done something bad that affects his family in a negative way.</p> <p>He is very excitable, just like his family.</p> <p>He was disrespectful to his parents and he took advantage of their kindness.</p> <p>He was a bully to his parents. He probably caused them great emotional pain.</p>

Character or thing	What we read	What we infer
<p>His school</p>	<p>"There was a high wall around the outside of the whole school" (7)</p> <p>The boys only left the school a few times per week – and two of those times were for church (7)</p> <p>The playground had no trees and "as hard as stone" (8)</p> <p>They "stepped into this garden only at very special times..."</p> <p>The school "what a delightful old building it was"</p>	<p>The students feel like they are trapped inside.</p> <p>The students have very little freedom.</p> <p>The playground was not very enjoyable. It seems like the administration does not care whether the students enjoy themselves.</p> <p>The boys are not allowed to enjoy the garden or do any gardening, which also suggests the administrators did not care about the students' enjoyment.</p> <p>The school was large, unending, and prison-like. We know that the narrator</p>

Character or thing	What we read	What we infer
	<p>(school had many rooms; felt endless; was easy to get lost in; was like "time without end"; low ceilings with "heavy wood overhead"; had "thick walls") (8,9)</p> <p>"perhaps when father or mother or a friend came to take us away for a few days" (8)</p> <p>"...the little room where I am some eighteen or twenty other boys slept" (9)</p>	<p>is currently (depressed) about his crime. Looking back, the school may only seem pleasant in comparison to his current mental state.</p> <p>Notice that the narrator did not say, "take us home" or specify where they were being taken. The word "away" suggests the students are being removed from something unpleasant.</p> <p>The fact the so many boys sleep in a "little" room in a very large "palace" indicates that the boys may not be treated well.</p>
<p>Mr. Bransby (the head teacher and head of the church)</p>	<p>At church he had a "...slow step and quiet, thoughtful face...could this be the same man who with a hard face and</p>	<p>Mr. Bransby likes leading church services but he does not like working in the school.</p>

Character or thing	What we read	What we infer
	<p>clothes far from clean stood ready to strike us...[at school]?" (7)</p> <p>"..and we would rather have died than open [Mr. Bransby's door] when he was not there" (9)</p>	<p>He is very strict. He is also probably mean to the boys. Maybe he doesn't like children.</p>
<p>The other boy</p>	<p>"...only boy who dared to say he did not believe all I told him, and who would not follow my commands" (11)</p> <p>"All his attempts to stop me...were made when no one else could see or hear us" (13)</p> <p>"...I saw that his manner seemed to show a kind of love for me" (13)</p>	<p>The narrator is a bully. He wants to control the other boys.</p> <p>The narrator is imagining things. The other boy isn't trying to "stop" him from doing anything.</p> <p>This supports the idea that the other boy is not really trying to harm him or control him.</p>

Character or thing	What we read	What we infer
	<p>The two boys had the same name and entered school on the same day. They were also bor on the same day. "which made people say [they] were brothers."</p>	<p>Something very strange is happening. Does the boy really exist? There are too many coincidences. Maybe the boy does not exist. If not, the narrator is experiencing mental health issues. (He is retelling the story as an adult and still seems to think the other boy existed.)</p>

About the CALLA Approach

This lesson is based on 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.

A list of CALLA learning strategies follows. These strategies were researched by J. Michael O'Malley and Anna Uhl Chamot.

See a list of language learning strategies below.

METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

Plan / Organize

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

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

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

Determine how you learn best.

Arrange conditions that help you learn.

Look for Ways to Practice.

Focus your attention on the task.

TASK-BASED STRATEGIES - USE WHAT YOU KNOW

Use Background Knowledge

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 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

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

Relate new concepts to your own life, to your experiences, knowledge, beliefs and feelings.

Transfer / Use Cognates

Apply your linguistic knowledge of other languages (including your native language) to the target language.

Recognize cognates.

Substitute / Paraphrase

Use a synonym or descriptive phrase for unknown words or expressions.

TASK-BASED STRATEGIES - USE YOUR SENSES

Use Images

Use or create an actual or mental image to understand and/or represent information.

Use or draw a picture or diagram.

Use Sounds

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.

Use Your Kinesthetic Sense

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.

TASK-BASED STRATEGIES - USE YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

Find/Apply Patterns

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

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.

Take Notes

Write down important words and ideas while listening or reading.

List ideas or words to include in speaking or writing.

Use Graphic Organizers

Use or create visual representations (such as Venn diagrams, time lines, webs, and charts) of important relationships between concepts.

Summarize

Create a mental, oral, or written summary of information.

Use Selective Attention

Focus on specific information, structures, key words, phrases, or ideas.

TASK-BASED STRATEGIES - USE A VARIETY OF RESOURCES

Access Information Sources

Use the dictionary, the internet, and other reference materials.

Seek out and use sources of information.

Follow a model

Ask questions

Cooperate

Work with others to complete tasks, build confidence, and give and receive feedback.

Talk Yourself Through It (Self-Talk)

Use your inner resources. Reduce your anxiety by reminding yourself of your progress, the resources you have available, and your goals.