

American Stories

“Love of Life,” Part One, by Jack London

Lesson Plan

This lesson plan is to accompany Part One of the American Stories series episode “Love of Life” 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.

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.

And now for today's lesson:

Prepare

Before using this lesson in class, inform your students that they will need to bring paper English dictionaries to class (and/or provide the dictionaries to students). The dictionaries can be English-English or English-Native Language. They will be used for looking up words from the story.

When students arrive in class, make sure most of them brought one of these items, or that you can provide them for students to use.

Introduce the story: "Today, we will read Part One of 'Love of Life,' by Jack London. Jack London was an American novelist, journalist, and social activist who lived in San Francisco. He was a strong defender of the rights of workers. London wrote many novels and short stories, including science fiction. The story we are reading today – 'Love of Life' – is about two men who struggle to escape the wilderness of Canada during a cold winter. The word 'wilderness' means a wild and natural area where very few – or no – humans live. Have you ever driven, hiked or ridden a boat through the wilderness? Who did you go with? What kinds of things did you see? If you were afraid at some point, who or what helped you feel safe? Tell your story to the person next to you."

Give students about three to five minutes to discuss this, depending on how much they have to share. Then, ask several volunteers to share their stories with the class. Be sure that no one student shares for more than a minute.

Then say, "If the two characters in the story had *cooperated*, their journey

through the cold wilderness might have been less difficult. Do you know what the word 'cooperate' means? It means to work together, helping others to reach a goal or solve a problem. When you cooperate with others, it can help you use the English language. Today, we will use the learning strategy *Cooperate* to help us understand the meanings of words and sentences in the story. But first, let's learn some of the new vocabulary."

Hand out copies of the vocabulary sheets and then teach the vocabulary. The sheet can found on the page following the transcript. If you have multimedia capability, show the images of caribou and pine trees on a shared screen. These images can also be found on the pages following the transcript.

If you find it helpful, use gestures or draw images on the board or shared screen to help students understand word meanings. You can also try acting out the word first and then asking students, in pairs, to find that word on the vocabulary sheet.

(Note that this story will introduce students to many new words that are not on the vocabulary sheet. Students will use their dictionaries during the activities to look up the words and understand the story better.)

Present

Introduce the task to students: "As we read the story today, we will cooperate – we'll work together to understand the story better."

Make a two-column table on the board, like the one below.

A sentence that is difficult to understand	What we think it means after cooperating

Ask students to listen carefully to what they are about to hear. Then, play or

read the first paragraph aloud.

Write the following sentence in the left column: "They were heavily burdened with blanket packs which were tied to their shoulders." It should look like this:

A sentence that is difficult to understand	What we think it means after cooperating
"They were heavily burdened with blanket packs which were tied to their shoulders."	

Model the strategy: "As you'll notice, this sentence contains some words that are not familiar. So, I'd like your cooperation to help everyone understand the sentence. First, I want you to discuss the sentence with the person sitting next to you until you have discovered how much you each understands. Then, only use your dictionaries for words you both do not know or cannot guess. Then, work together to write down what the sentence means in your own words. You can write more than one sentence."

After students have had a couple of minutes to work together, ask a volunteer from a few pairs to share their responses.

Based on their responses, write your summary sentence/s in the right column, as shown below.

A sentence that is difficult to understand	What we think it means after cooperating
"They were heavily burdened with blanket packs which were tied to their shoulders."	The two men were carrying very heavy blankets. The blankets were rolled up and attached to their

	backs, like a backpack / rucksack. The weight was making their journey more difficult.
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Now say, "Do you see how working together helped everyone understand the meaning of the sentence? This is what happens when we cooperate. With cooperation, we can help other people *and* ourselves. Now, you're going to cooperate in small groups."

Practice

Put students into groups of three. Try to ensure that the groups are evenly divided based on language skill levels. If some students need to move to different chairs, remind them to bring their dictionaries with them. (A group of three students can share one or two dictionaries if they don't each have one.) Make sure each student also has one or two sheets of blank paper. They'll use this to write down their ideas about the meanings of difficult paragraphs in the story.

Hand out copies of the transcript and cooperation instructions.

Have two students read the instructions aloud to the class before the groups begin the activity. Then, remind students that they should discuss the paragraphs in detail to find out what the people in their group understand. Tell them that, if each person in their group understands a small part of what they read, it's possible they will not need to use dictionaries. Say, "You'd be surprised how much we can learn by cooperating!"

Continue, "As we listen to next part of the story, underline words and sentences that you are not sure you understand."

Play or read aloud to the note that reads: "[END OF SECTION 2]."

Refer students back to their Cooperation Instructions. Then, give students time to work on the activity. Afterward, ask a person from each group to

read their summaries to the class. When all summaries have been read, discuss any discrepancies between their summaries and briefly answer questions about any content that may still be unclear.

Say, "Let's listen to the next section of the story. Remember to underline words or sentences that you are not sure you understand."

Play or read aloud to the note that reads: "[END OF SECTION 3]."

Proceed with this activity exactly as you did for the previous activity, including answering any questions students may have.

Say, "Let's listen to the rest of the story. Remember, again, to underline words or sentences that you may not understand."

Play or read aloud to the end of the story.

Proceed with this activity exactly as you did for the previous activity, including answering questions.

Self-Evaluate

Ask, "Do you think the learning strategy *Cooperate* helped you to better understand difficult parts of the story? On a sheet of paper (or on the back of your transcripts), write a few sentences about how cooperating was better than working alone to understand the story."

Give students a few moments to do this. Then, ask a few volunteers to share their responses with the class.

Expand

Wrap up the lesson by asking students to think of other times they can cooperate. Ask several students to share their responses.

Continue, "Cooperation is useful in so many parts of our lives, in school and outside of school. For example, if you want to cook a fancy meal for a large group, cooperating with a few people can make it easier on you. Maybe you

can ask a friend or family member to do the shopping. Then, someone else can cut up the vegetables and meat. You can do the cooking. After the meal, someone else can wash the dishes or put them in the dishwasher. Many types of workers also rely on cooperation. For instance, people who design websites must work on teams. One person may write the computer codes to make the website work. Another person may design the look, or style, of the web pages. Someone else decides what information will be on each web page. When you go home tonight or in your next class, try using the strategy *Cooperate*. Let me know how it goes!"

"Love of Life," Part One

by Jack London

The two men moved painfully down the **bank** and fell among the rocks that were scattered everywhere. They were tired and weak. Their faces showed the patient appearance that results from difficulty long endured. They were heavily burdened with blanket packs which were tied to their shoulders. Each man carried a gun. They walked in a leaning position, the shoulders forward, the head farther forward, the eyes fixed upon the ground.

"I wish we had a couple of those **cartridges** that are lying in our cache," said the second man.

His voice was completely without expression. And the first man, walking into the milky **stream** that flowed over the rocks, made no reply.

The other man followed at his heels. They did not remove their shoes, although the water was icy cold. It was so cold that their feet soon were without feeling. In places, the water dashed against their knees, and both men found it difficult to remain standing.

The man who followed slipped on a smooth rock and nearly fell. He recovered his footing with a great effort, at the same time uttering a sharp cry of pain. He seemed **faint** and stretched one hand forward, seeking support against the air. When he had steadied himself, he stepped forward. But he slipped again and nearly fell. Then he stood still and looked at the other man, who had never turned his head.

The man stood still for fully a minute, as if he were deciding something. Then he called: "I say, Bill, I hurt my foot."

Bill struggled ahead through the milky water. He did not look around. The man watched him go, and although his face lacked expression, as before, his eyes had the look of a wounded animal.

The other man climbed the farther bank of the stream and continued straight ahead without looking back. The man in the stream watched him. His lips **trembled** a little.

"Bill!" he cried.

It was the despairing cry of a strong man in trouble, but Bill's head did not turn. The man watched him go, struggling forward up the hill toward the skyline. He watched him go until he passed over the hilltop and disappeared.

Then he turned his gaze and slowly examined the circle of the world that remained to him now that Bill was gone.

The sun was low in the sky, almost hidden by a cover of clouds. The man looked at his watch, while supporting his weight on one leg. It was four o'clock in the afternoon. The season was near the end of July or the first of August. He did not know the exact date within a week or two, but that was enough to know that the sun marked the northwest. **[END OF SECTION 2]**

He looked to the south and decided that somewhere beyond those hills lay the Great Bear Lake. Also, he knew that behind the same hills the Arctic Circle cut its way across the plains of northern Canada, called the Barrens. This stream in which he stood flowed into the Coppermine River, which in turn flowed north and emptied into the Arctic Ocean. He had never been there, but he had seen it once on a map.

Again his gaze completed the circle of the world about him. It was not a cheerful sight. Everywhere was soft skyline. The hills were all low-lying. There were no trees, no grasses. There was nothing but a vast emptiness that brought fear into his eyes.

"Bill!" he whispered, once, and twice, "Bill!"

He stood trembling in the milky water, feeling the vastness pressing in upon him with great force. He began to shake as with a disease, until the gun falling from his hand into the stream brought him back to reality. He fought with his fear and regaining his self-control, he recovered the gun from the water. He pushed his pack more toward his left shoulder. This helped to take a portion of its weight off the foot he had hurt. Then he proceeded, slowly and carefully, in great pain, to the bank of the stream.

He did not stop. With a worry that was madness, unmindful of the pain, he hurried up the hill to the top, over which his companion had disappeared. But at the top he saw a valley, empty of life. He fought with his fear again and won. Then once more he moved the pack farther toward his left shoulder and struggled down the hill.

The bottom of the valley was very wet. Thick plant life held the moisture close to the surface and the water flowed from under his feet at every step. He picked his way carefully across the valley and followed the other man's footsteps along the rocks which made small islands in a sea of wet plant life.

Although alone, he was not lost. Farther on, he knew, he would come to where dead **pine** trees bordered the shore of a little lake. In the language

of that country it was called the "land of little sticks." Into that lake flowed a small stream, the water of which was not milky. There was grass along that stream, but no trees. He would follow the stream until it divided. He would cross this place of dividing to another stream, flowing to the west. This he would follow until it emptied into the river Dease. Here he would find a cache under an upturned boat and covered with many rocks. In this cache there would be cartridges for his empty gun, and fishhooks and lines. Everything he needed for catching food would be there. Also he would find flour, a little meat, and some **beans**.

Bill would be waiting for him there, and they would find a boat and **row** south down the Dease to the Great Bear Lake. And south across the lake they would go, ever south, until they came to the Mackenzie River. And south, always south they would go, while the winter raced after them and the ice formed in the streams, and the days grew cold. South they would go, to some warm place where the trees grew tall and full and there was food without end. **[END OF SECTION 3]**

These were the thoughts of the man as he struggled forward. But as strongly as he struggled with his body, he struggled equally with his mind. He tried to believe that Bill had not deserted him. Surely Bill would wait for him at the cache. He was forced to think this thought. Otherwise, there would not be any reason to continue, and he would lie down and die.

As the ball of the sun sank slowly into the northwest, he recalled every inch of his and Bill's flight south ahead of the oncoming winter. And he thought again and again of the food in the cache. It had been two days since he had anything to eat. It was a far longer time since he had had enough to eat. Often he picked **muskeg berries**, put them into his mouth, and ate them. A muskeg berry is a small seed in a drop of water. In the mouth, the water melts away and the seed tastes bitter. The man knew there was no real food value in the berries; but he ate them patiently with a hope greater than his experience.

At nine o'clock that night he hit his toe on a rocky surface, and from weakness and tiredness he fell to the ground. He lay for some time, without movement, on his side. He took his pack from his back and **dragged** himself into a sitting position. It was not yet dark. While some light remained he felt among the rocks for pieces of dried plants. When he had gathered a pile, he built a fire and put a tin **pot** of water on it to boil.

He unwrapped his pack. The first thing he did was to count his **matches**. There were 67. He counted them three times to be sure. He

divided them into several portions, wrapping them in paper. He put one portion in his empty tobacco pack, another in the inside band of his hat, and a third under his shirt against his flesh. This accomplished, he began to worry whether he had counted correctly. He unwrapped them all and counted them again. Yes, there were 67.

He dried his wet shoes and socks by the fire. The **moccasins** were badly torn. His socks were worn through in places, and his feet were bleeding. The area between his foot and leg, the ankle, was very painful. He examined it. It had swelled until it was as large as his knee. He cut a long strip from one of his two blankets and bound the ankle tightly. He cut other strips and bound them about his feet to serve both for moccasins and socks. Then he drank the pot of hot water, wound his watch, and pulled his blankets around him.

He slept like a dead man. The brief darkness at midnight came and went. Then the sun rose in the northeast. It can better be said that day dawned in that quarter of the sky, because the sun was hidden by gray clouds.

At six o'clock in the morning he waked, quietly lying on his back. He gazed straight up into the gray sky and knew that he was hungry. As he lifted himself on his elbow, he was frightened by a loud noise. There was a **caribou** looking at him **curiously**. The animal was not more than 50 feet away, and instantly, into the man's mind came the picture of caribou meat cooking over a fire. From habit, he reached for the empty gun and aimed it. The caribou leaped away and disappeared across the rocks.

New Vocabulary

bank - *n.* the higher ground that is along the edge of a river or stream

cartridge - *n.* a tube which you put into a gun and which contains a bullet and explosive material

stream - *n.* a natural flow of water that is smaller than a river

faint - *adj.* weak and dizzy

tremble - *v.* to shake slightly because you are afraid, nervous, excited, etc.

pine tree - *n.* a tree that has long, thin needles instead of leaves and that stays green throughout the year

bean - *n.* a seed that is eaten as a vegetable and that comes from any one of many different kinds of climbing plants

row - *v.* to move a boat through water using oars

muskeg berry - *n.* a type of berry that grows in areas of soft, wet land

drag - *v.* to move along the ground or floor while being pulled

pot - *n.* a deep, round container that is used for cooking

match - *n.* a short, thin piece of wood or thick paper with a special tip that produces fire when it is scratched against something else

moccasin - *n.* a flat shoe that is made of soft leather and is similar to a shoe originally worn by some Native Americans

caribou - *n.* a large type of deer that lives in northern parts of the world

curiously - *adv.* in a way that shows a desire to learn or know more about something or someone



Figure 1: Caribou



Figure 2: Pine Tree

Cooperation Instructions

1. Underline words and sentences from this section of the story that you do not understand. Find out if your group members know the meanings and then ask them to explain them to the group.
2. Use your dictionaries only for words that no one in your group already knows.
3. Work together to write a summary of the paragraphs we just listened to. The summary should be no more than two paragraphs in length.
4. Read the summary aloud to your group to make sure everyone agrees that the events and details are correct. Make revisions if necessary.
5. Decide on one person from your group to read the summary to the class.

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.