

American Stories

“The Law of Life,” Part Two, by Jack London

Lesson Plan

This lesson plan is to accompany Part Two of the American Stories series episode "The Law 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

Begin, "In Part One of 'The Law of Life,' we learned that Koskoosh's tribe left him behind as they continued on their journey through the cold wilderness of Canada. Today, we will read Part Two – the remainder of the story. But first, let's remind ourselves what happened in Part One. I'm going to write some words on the board and I want you to tell your partner what you remember about these things."

Write these words on the board: Koskoosh, sled, wood sticks and moccasin.

Give students a minute to discuss this. Then, go through each word, asking volunteers to share what they remember.

Next, say, "In this part of the story, Koskoosh recalls events from his childhood. Think for a moment about a memorable event or time in your childhood. It could be a happy, annoying or funny memory."

Use a clock or timer for the next part: "Now, tell your neighbor the story. You will each have two minutes. I'll let you know when you only have 30 seconds left. This will help you finish telling your story. Be sure to listen to your partner's story carefully because you will retell their story later."

The idea of the timer/clock is to give students practice at summarizing a momentous event in a short period of time. Be sure to let students know when they have 30 seconds left. Then, allow the other students to tell their stories to their partners. Notify them when they have 30 seconds left.

Afterward, ask several volunteers to report on their partners to the whole class. This time, they only have *one* minute to report on their partner's

memory. This will further give them practice at summarizing. For example, "João told me he remembers the day that his parents brought his new baby sister home from the hospital. His family celebrated with a big meal. His grandmother cooked a special dish of fish and rice and vegetables. His uncle brought a traditional dessert. He remembers feeling happy when he first saw his new sister. The night before she came home, he was so excited that he could not sleep."

Continue: "When you shared your memory with your classmate, and then shared their memory with the whole class, you used a strategy called *Summarize*. When you summarize information, you retell or rewrite it using your own words. And, you focus on just the main ideas and important details, so you use fewer words. Today, we're going to listen to Part Two of 'The Law of Life' and practice summarizing it, or retelling the story using our own words. This strategy helps us check our understanding of something. If we can summarize information, we know we have understood what we've heard or read. First, let's review a few words from Part One and learn some new words."

Hand out copies of the vocabulary sheets and then teach the vocabulary. The sheets can found on the page following the transcript. If you have multimedia capability, show the images found on the pages following the transcript.

Using gestures can be especially helpful for teaching body parts from this part of the story. For fun, you might even try pointing to the body part first and then asking students, in pairs, to find that word on the vocabulary list.

Present

Introduce the task to students: "As we read the story today, we will practice the learning strategy *Summarize* to help us focus on important details from the story. I'll show you how to do this. I'm going to play/read a few

paragraphs and then I will summarize what we listened to."

Play or read the first two paragraphs aloud. Then, write your summary on a board or shared screen, or read the summary aloud:

"Koskoosh is remembering good and bad times from his childhood. He remembers one very bad time when there was a famine. His mother died of starvation. There were no fish or caribou for the tribe to catch. The rabbits and dogs were dying of hunger. Many children died. Then, he remembers the good times – when there was more meat than the tribe needed. A lot of the meat spoiled because they had too much food. The men seemed bored and went looking for old problems with another tribe. But, even during the good times, he lost his best friend, Zing-ha. A month after he disappeared, they found him dead in the icy river."

Then say, "Did you notice that my summary is much shorter than the original two paragraphs? When we summarize, we restate information, or retell a story, using fewer words than the original."

Practice

Put students into groups of three. Be sure each student has a few pieces of blank paper to write on. Then, hand out copies of the transcript for the story.

Say, "Now, it's your turn. I'm going to play (or read) the story and then your group will summarize it. Let's listen to some more of the story."

Play or read paragraphs 2-6 aloud.

Then, say, "With your group, I would like you to summarize what you just heard. Together, write a short, two-paragraph summary of paragraphs 2-6. If you think it's helpful, you can first reread parts of the paragraphs that were difficult for you. Remember to use your vocabulary list to help you."

Give students a set amount of time to work on this – maybe 20 minutes.

Then, ask a volunteer from each group to read their summaries aloud. Naturally, there will be some similarities but parts will also be different.

Discuss any inaccuracies, should they come up, helping the students with comprehension of parts of the story they found unclear. You can also ask their classmates to help explain the unclear parts.

Continue, "Now, let's listen to the remainder of the story. Try to listen for details that you think will be important for your summaries."

Play or read aloud to the end of the story.

Again, give students about 20 minutes to work together on this. Then, this time, ask a different volunteer from the groups to read the summaries aloud.

Self-Evaluate

Say, "Now, I'd like to ask, what do you think about using this strategy, Summarize, when you read? Did it help you understand the story? How did it help? Tell the person sitting next to you."

Give students time to discuss their reactions to the strategy. Then, ask volunteers to share their responses.

Expand

Ask students, "Are there other times when you can summarize in your school work or outside of school?" Give students a chance to respond. Then say, "We use this strategy every day. You can use it when you're listening to a lecture or when you're reading a textbook. When you take notes on these things, you don't write down every word – you summarize! And, when you read a newspaper, go to an event, or watch a film, and you tell someone about what you read, saw or experienced, you tell them the main parts and the important details. Try doing this tonight in your homework or in your next class. Let me know how it goes!"

"The Law of Life," Part Two

by Jack London

Koskoosh placed another stick on the fire and let his thoughts travel deeper into the past. There was the time of the great famine. He had lost his mother in that famine. In the summer the usual plentiful catch of fish had failed, and the tribe looked forward to the winter and the coming of the caribou. Then the winter came, but with it there were no **caribou**. Never had the like been known, not even in the lives of the old men. The rabbits had not produced any young and the dogs were skin and bone. And through the long darkness the children wept and died. So did the women and the old men. Not one in ten lived to meet the sun when it returned in the spring. That was a famine!

But he had seen times of plenty, too, when the meat **spoiled** before it could be eaten. Even the dogs grew fat and were worth nothing from eating too much. In these times they let the animals and birds go unkilld and the tents were filled with newly born children. Then it was that the men remembered old **quarrels** and crossed to the south and to the west to kill ancient enemies. He remembered, when a boy, during a time of plenty, when he saw a **moose** pulled down by the wolves. Zing-ha lay with him in the snow and watched. Zing-ha was his friend who later became the best of hunters. One day he fell through an air hole on the frozen Yukon River. They found him a month later, frozen to the ice where he had attempted to climb out.

Zing-ha and he had gone out that day to play at hunting, in the **manner** of their fathers. Near a **creek** they discovered the fresh **track** of a moose and with it the tracks of many wolves. "An old one," Zing-ha said. "It is an old one who cannot travel as fast as the others. The wolves have separated him from his brothers, and they will never leave him." And it was so. It was their way. By day and by night, never resting, biting at his **heels**, they would stay with him to the end. How Zing-ha and he had felt the desire to see blood! The finish would be a sight to remember!

Eagerly, they started up the trail. Even he, Koskoosh, who was not a good tracker, could have followed it blind, it was so wide. They were not far behind the hunt, reading its awful story at every step. Now they saw where the moose had stopped to face his attackers. On every side the snow had been **stamped** heavily. In the middle were the deep **footprints** of the moose. All about, everywhere, were the lighter footmarks of the wolves. Some had moved to one side and rested while their brothers tried to seize

the moose. The full-stretched **impressions** of their bodies in the snow were as perfect as though they had been made the moment before. One wolf had been caught in a wild dash at the moose and had died under its heavy stamping. A few bones remained as witness.

The two boys stopped again at a second stand. Here the great animal had fought with **despair**. As the snow **indicated**, he had been dragged down twice. And twice he shook off his enemies and gained his footing once more. He had finished his **task** long before, but nevertheless, life was **dear** to him. Zing-ha said it was a strange thing for a moose once down to struggle free again. But this one certainly had done so. The medicine man would see signs and wonders in this when they told him.

Then they came to the place where the moose had tried to climb the riverbank and go into the woods. But his enemies had attacked from behind, until he **leaped** high and then fell back upon them, crushing two deep into the snow. It was clear that the kill was near, because the two dead wolves had been left untouched by their brothers. The trail was red with blood now, and the distance between tracks of the great **beast** had become shorter and shorter. Then they heard the first sounds of the battle—the quick bark of the wolves which spoke of teeth tearing flesh. On hands and knees Zing-ha and Koskoosh made their way through the snow. Together they pushed aside the low branches of a young pine tree and looked forth. It was the end that they saw.

The picture, like all of **youth's** memories, was still strong with him. His eyes now watched the end acted again as clearly as in that earlier time. Koskoosh was surprised at this, because in the days which followed, he had done many great deeds. He had been a leader of men and his name had become a curse in the mouths of his enemies.

For a long time he recalled the days of his youth, until the fire grew cold and the **frost** bit deeper. He placed two sticks in the fire this time. Then he figured how much life was left by the amount of wood that remained in the pile. If Sit-cum-ha had remembered her grandfather, and gathered a larger **armful**, his hours would have been longer. It would have been easy. But she was always a selfish child. She had not honored her ancestors from the time the **Beaver**, son of the son of Zing-ha, first looked at her. Well, what did it matter? Had he not done the same in his own quick youth? For a while he listened to the silent forest. Perhaps the heart of his son might soften. Then he would return with the dogs to take his old father with the tribe to where the caribou ran thick and the fat hung heavy upon them.

He **strained** his ears. There was not a sound to be heard. Nothing. He alone took breath in the middle of the great stillness. It was very lonely. Wait! What was that? His body suddenly felt cold. A familiar cry broke the silent air, and it was close to him. Then his darkened **eyes** again saw the old moose—the bloody sides, the torn **legs**, the great branching **horns**, fighting to the last. He saw the **flashing** forms of **gray**, the bright eyes, the **dripping tongues** and the sharp **teeth**. And he saw the circle move closer until it became a dark point in the middle of the stamped snow.

A cold **nose** pushed against his face and at its touch his **soul** leaped back to the present. His hand shot into the fire and dragged out a burning stick. Overcome for the moment by his fear of man, the beast drew back, raising a call to his brothers. Greedily they answered, until a ring of gray was stretched around him. The old man listened to the steady breathing of this circle. He waved his **flaming** stick wildly, but the beasts refused to scatter. Now one moved slowly forward, dragging his legs behind. Now a second, now a third. But now, not one moved back from his flaming stick. Why should he so desire life? He asked, and dropped the burning stick into the snow. It made a slight noise and then there was no more fire. The circle murmured uncertainly but held its place. Again he saw the last stand of the old moose, and Koskoosh dropped his head hopelessly on his **knees**. What did it matter? Was it not the law of life?

Review Words

famine – *n.* a situation in which many people do not have enough food to eat

rabbit – *n.* a small animal that usually lives in holes in the ground and has long ears, soft fur, and back legs that are longer than its front legs

weep – *v.* to cry because you are very sad or are feeling some other strong emotion

lie – *v.* to be or remain in a specified state or condition (**past tense: lay**)

flesh – *n.* the soft parts of a body of an animal or person

drag – *v.* to force yourself to move or to go to a place when you are tired, busy, etc.

branch – *n.* a part of a tree that grows out from the trunk

New Words

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

spoil – *v.* to decay or lose freshness especially because of being kept too long

quarrel – *v.* an angry argument or disagreement

moose – *n.* a large animal with very large, flat antlers that lives in forests in the northern part of America, Europe and Asia

wolf – *n.* a large wild animal that is similar to a dog and that often hunts in groups (**plural: wolves**)

manner – *n.* the way that something is done or happens

creek – *n.* a small stream

track – *n.* a mark left on the ground by a moving animal, person, or vehicle

stamp – *v.* the act of bringing your foot down heavily and noisily

impression – *n.* something (such as a design or a footprint) made by pressing or stamping a surface

despair – *n.* the feeling of no longer having any hope

indicate – *v.* to show something

task – *n.* a piece of work that has been given to someone

dear – *adj.* loved or valued very much

leap – *v.* to jump from a surface

beast – *n.* an animal

frost – *n.* a thin layer of ice that forms on the ground or on grass when the air becomes cold

armful – *n.* an amount that can be carried in a person's arm or arms

beaver – *n.* a small animal that has thick, brown fur and a wide, flat tail, that cuts down trees with its teeth and builds dams (In this story, Beaver is the name of Zing-ha's son.)

youth – *n.* the time when a young person has not yet become an adult

strain – *v.* to try very hard to do or get something

eye – *n.* the part of the body that you see with

leg – *n.* one of the long body parts that are used especially for standing, walking and running

horn – *n.* one of the hard pointed parts that grows on the head of some animals

flashing – *n.* (gerund) – appearing quickly or suddenly

gray – *adj.* having a color between black and white : having a color that is like the color of smoke

dripping – *n.* (gerund) – (liquid) falling in drops

tongue – *n.* the soft, movable part in the mouth that is used for tasting and eating food and in human beings for speaking

tooth – *n.* one of the hard white objects inside the mouth that are used for biting and chewing (**plural: teeth**)

nose – *n.* the part of the face or head through which a person or animal smells and breathes

soul – *n.* the spiritual part of a person that is believed to give life to the body and in many religions is believed to live forever

draw – *v.* to move in a specified direction (**past tense: drew**)

flaming – *n.* (gerund) - having a bright or glowing red or orange color

knee – *n.* the joint that bends at the middle of your leg



Figure 1: Wolf



Figure 2: Moose

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.