

Learning English

American Stories

The Celebrated Jumping Frog of

Calaveras County

by Mark Twain

Lesson Plan

by Jill Robbins, Ph.D.

Introduction

This lesson plan is to accompany the American Stories series episode, *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County* by Mark Twain.

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 Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County*, a story about a man who likes to gamble. That means he bets, or risks money, on the result of a contest. Do you know anyone like this? Have you ever been asked to risk money on a contest?”

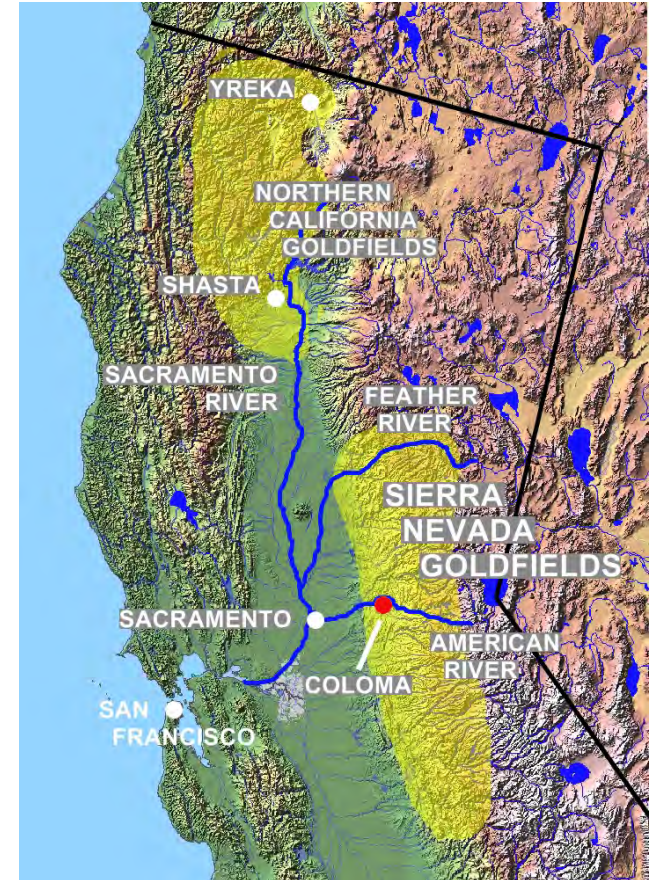
Listen to students’ comments about gambling. Encourage them to give an example (to the class or to their neighbor) of a time they were asked to gamble, or of someone they know who gambled.

Show a map and indicate where the story takes place: Angel’s Camp, California. Tell students that the story takes place in 1865, ten years after the end of the Gold Rush. The search for gold brought many from the East Coast to California. Angel’s Camp was near the Sierra Nevada mountains. Show the images on the following slides and teach the vocabulary.

Angel's Camp



California Gold Rush Area



Vocabulary

most always - *adv. US, informal; almost always*

Dan'l - *n. abbreviation of a given name, Daniel*

anyways - *adv. US, informal; anyway*

studied a minute - *v. US, informal; thought a minute*

get you a frog - *v. US, informal; get a frog for you*

plant - *v. to put or place (something or yourself) firmly or forcefully on a surface or in a particular position*

This story includes some of the informal dialect that Mark Twain liked to include in his writing. Our vocabulary has explanations of some of the expressions he used.

Present

Introduce the task to students: “As we read the story today, we will practice the strategy *classify*. When we classify, we think about information we learn from our reading. Then we use that information to help us understand the story. Today, we will classify the characters in the story, based on what they do. What does Mark Twain tell us about the people in his story? I’ll show you how to do this.”

Play or read aloud to “This showed me plainly that he thought the heroes of the story were men of great intelligence.”

Tell students, “We have three or four characters in the story. I’ll make a chart we can use to classify what we learn about them.” Explain the information you learned from the story as you fill out the chart.

Classify

Character	Description	Actions	What I think about the character
Mark Twain (author)		Asks about someone for a friend	He is curious
Simon Wheeler	fat; no hair, had a gentle and simple look upon his peaceful face	Talks seriously about Smiley Told an "endless story"	Simon is not very intelligent
Leonidas W. (Jim) Smiley			
A Stranger			

Practice

Tell students, “Now it’s your turn. As we read the next section, look for clues about the characters. Write them on your own paper. Then I will ask you to *classify* the personality of the character.”

Play or read aloud to ‘It always makes me feel sorry when I think of that last fight of his and the way it turned out.’

“Now, sit with your neighbor and write in your chart. Talk about the actions of the characters. Then classify their personalities.”

Give students time to work together in their groups. Ask students to tell you what they wrote. Fill in more of the chart.

Classify

Character	Description	Actions	What I think about the character
Mark Twain (author)		Asks about someone for a friend	He is curious
Simon Wheeler	fat; no hair, had a gentle and simple look upon his peaceful face	Talks seriously about Smiley Told an "endless story"	Simon is not very intelligent
Leonidas W. (Jim) Smiley	The strangest man; unusual; lucky	Tried to make money on anything Bet on a person's illness Bet on animal fights	A gambler; someone who gets excitement from betting money
A Stranger			

Instruct students to listen again. “With your partner, look for the description of the stranger who comes along one day. In the final section, we also learn more about the author. Remember to find information that will help you classify.”

Play or read aloud to the end of the story.

Ask students to fill in their charts. Then ask them to share with the class and fill in the chart on the board or screen.

Classify

Character	Description	Actions	What I think about the character
Mark Twain (author)		Asks about someone for a friend Walks away from Wheeler – he had heard enough	He is curious He is bored with Simon Wheeler's long story He understands what Jim Smiley is like
Simon Wheeler	fat; no hair, had a gentle and simple look upon his peaceful face	Talks seriously about Smiley Told an "endless story"	Simon is not very intelligent
Leonidas W. (Jim) Smiley	The strangest man; unusual; lucky	Tried to make money on anything Bet on a person's illness Bet on animal fights	A gambler; someone who gets excitement from betting money
A Stranger	He doubts what Jim Smiley says	Fills the frog with bullets (buckshot) to weigh him down	He is cleverer than Smiley

Self-Evaluate

Ask students to stay with their partner and compare their chart with the group chart. Ask, “Did *classifying* help you understand the people and events in this story?”

Give students time to talk about whether classifying helped them.

Instruct students, “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*?”

Listen to students’ responses.

Continue, “This strategy is helpful in both reading and listening. Classifying helps us to organize the new information we find when we read or listen. Try using this strategy tonight when you do your homework, or in your next class. Let me know how it goes!”

About the CALLA Approach

The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) is an instructional model for second and foreign language learners based on cognitive theory and research.





CALLA integrates instruction in priority topics from the content curriculum, development of the language skills needed for learning in school, and explicit instruction in using learning strategies for academic tasks.

The goals of CALLA are for students to learn essential academic content and language and to become independent and self-regulated learners through their increasing command over a variety of strategies for learning in school. CALLA can be used in ESL, EFL, bilingual, foreign language, and general education classrooms.

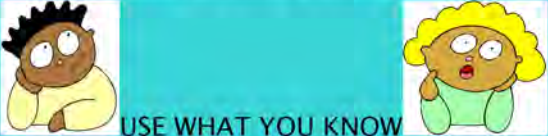




CALLA was developed by Anna Uhl Chamot and J. Michael O'Malley, and is being implemented in approximately 30 school districts in the United States as well as in several other countries.

See a list of language learning strategies below.



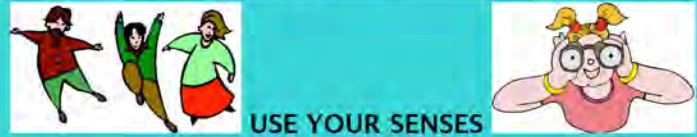


Metacognitive Strategies

CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	
METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES		
Plan / Organize	 <p>Planner</p>	<p>Before beginning a task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Set goals. -Plan the task or content sequence. -Plan how to accomplish the task (choose strategies). -Preview a text.
Monitor / Identify Problems	 <p>Check</p>	<p>While working on a task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Check your progress on the task. -Check your comprehension as you use the language. Do you understand? If not, what is the problem? -Check your production as you use the language. Are you making sense? If not, what is the problem?
Evaluate	 <p>I did it!</p>	<p>After completing a task:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Assess how well you have accomplished the learning task. -Assess how well you have used learning strategies. -Decide how effective the strategies were. -Identify changes you will make the next time you have a similar task to do.
Manage Your Own Learning	 <p>Pace Yourself</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Determine how you learn best. -Arrange conditions that help you learn. -Seek opportunities for practice. -Focus your attention on the task.

Task-Based Strategies

CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	
TASK-BASED STRATEGIES		
 <p style="text-align: center;">USE WHAT YOU KNOW</p>		
Use Background Knowledge	 <p style="text-align: center;">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 style="text-align: center;">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 style="text-align: center;">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 style="text-align: center;">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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Apply your linguistic knowledge of other languages (including your native language) to the target language. -Recognize cognates.
Substitute / Paraphrase	 Make it work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use a synonym or descriptive phrase for unknown words or expressions.
 USE YOUR SENSES		
Use Images	 See it in your mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use or create an actual or mental image to understand and/or represent information. -Use or draw a picture or diagram.
Use Sounds	 Sound Out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Say or read aloud a word, sentence, or paragraph to help your understanding. -Sound out/vocalize. - Use your "mental tape recorder" to remember sounds, words, phrases, and/or conversations.

Task-Based Strategies

CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	
TASK-BASED STRATEGIES		
Use Your Kinesthetic Sense		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Act out a role, for example, in Readers' Theater, or imagine yourself in different roles in the target language. -Use real objects to help you remember words, sentences, or content information.
  USE YOUR ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS		
Find/Apply Patterns	 abacus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Apply a rule. -Make a rule. -Recognize and apply letter/sound, grammar, discourse, or register rules. -Identify patterns in literature (genre). -Identify patterns in math, science, and social studies.
Classify/Sequence	 Life cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Categorize words or ideas according to attributes. -Classify living things; identify natural cycles. -Identify order and sequences in math, science, and social studies. -Sequence events in history.

The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County by Mark Twain

Editor's note: This story includes some of the informal dialect that Mark Twain liked to include in his writing. We have provided explanations of some of the expressions after the story.

Our story is called "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County." It was written by Mark Twain. Here is Shep O'Neal with the story.

A friend of mine in the East asked me to visit old Simon Wheeler, to ask about my friend's friend, Leonidas W. Smiley. I did as my friend asked me to do and this story is the result.

I found Simon Wheeler sleeping by the stove in the ruined mining camp of Angels.

I saw that he was fat and had no hair, and had a gentle and simple look upon his peaceful face. He woke up, and gave me "good-day." I told him a friend had asked me to find out about a friend named Leonidas W. Smiley, who he heard was at one time living in Angels Camp. I added that if Mr. Wheeler could tell me anything about this Leonidas W. Smiley, I would feel a great responsibility to him.

Simon Wheeler forced me into a corner with his chair and began telling me this long story. He never smiled, he never frowned. But all through the endless story there was a feeling of great seriousness and honesty. This showed me plainly that he thought the heroes of the story were men of great intelligence.

I let him go on in his own way, and never stopped him once. This is the story Simon Wheeler told.

Leonidas W. hm... Le... well, there was a man here once by the name of Jim Smiley, in the winter of 1849--or may be it was the spring of 1850. Anyway, he was the strangest man. He was always making money on anything that turned up if he could get anybody to try to make money on the other side. And if he could not do that, he would change sides.

And he was lucky, uncommon lucky. He **most always** was a winner. If there was a dog-fight, he would try to win money on it. If there was a cat-fight, he would take the risk. If there was a chicken-fight, he would try to win money on it. Why, if there was two birds setting on a fence, he would want you to decide which one would fly first so he could win money.

Lots of the boys here have seen that Smiley and can tell you about him. Why, it did not matter to him. He would try to make money on anything. He was the most unusual man. Parson Walker's wife was very sick once, for a long time, and it seemed as if they were not going to save her.

But one morning he come in, and Smiley asked him how was his wife, and he said she was better, thank God. And Smiley, before he thought, says, "Well, I'll risk my money she will not get well."

And Smiley had a little small dog. To look at the dog, you would think he was not worth anything but to sit around and look mean and look for a chance to steal something. But as soon as there was money, he was a different dog. Another dog might attack and throw him around two or three times. Then all of a sudden Smiley's dog would grab that other dog by his back leg and hang on till the men said it was over.

Smiley always come out the winner on that dog, at least until he found a dog once that did not have any back legs. The dog's legs had been cut off in a machine. Well, the fighting continued long enough, and the money was gone. Then when Smiley's dog come to make a grab (at) the other dog's back legs, he saw in a minute how there was a problem.

The other dog was going to win and Smiley's dog looked surprised and did not try to win the fight anymore. He gave Smiley a look that said he was sorry for fighting a dog that did not have any back legs for him to hold, which he needed to win a fight. Then Smiley's dog walked away, laid down and died. He was a good dog, and would have made a name for himself if he had lived, for he had intelligence. It always makes me feel sorry when I think of that last fight of his and the way it turned out.

Well, this Smiley had rats, and chickens, and cats and all of them kind of things. You could not get anything for him to risk money on but he would match you. He caught a frog one day, and took him home, and said he was going to educate the frog. And so he never done nothing for three months but sit in his back yard and teach that frog to jump. And you bet you he did teach him, too.

He would give him a little hit from behind. And the next minute you would see that frog dancing in the air and then come down all on his feet and all right, like a cat. Smiley got him so the frog was catching flies, and he would catch one of those insects every time.

Smiley said all a frog wanted was education, and he could do almost anything. And I believe him. Why, I have seen him set **Dan'l** Webster down here on this floor—Dan'l Webster was the name of the frog -- and sing out, "Flies, Dan'l, flies!" And quicker than you could shut your eyes that frog would jump straight up and catch a fly off the table. Then he would fall down on the floor again like a ball of dirt and start rubbing the side of his head with his back foot as if he had no idea he had been doing any more than any frog might do.

You never seen a frog so honest and simple as he was, for all he was so skilled. And when it come to jumping, he could get over more ground in one jump than any animal of his kind that you ever saw.

Smiley was very proud of his frog, and people who had traveled and been everywhere all said he was better than any frog they had ever seen.

Well, one day a stranger came in and says to Smiley, "What might be that you have got in the box?"

And Smiley says, "It's only just a frog." And the man took it, and looked at it careful, and turned it round this way and that, and says, "Hm, so it is. Well, what is he good for?"

"Well," Smiley says, easy and careless, "he can out jump any frog in Calaveras County."

The man took the box again, and took another long look, and gave it back to Smiley, and says, "Well, I don't see anything about that frog that is any better than any other frog."

"Maybe you don't," Smiley says. "Maybe you understand frogs and maybe you don't. **Anyways**, I will risk forty dollars and bet you that he can jump farther than any frog in Calaveras County."

And the man **studied a minute**. "Well, I'm only a stranger here, and I do not have a frog. But if I had a frog, I would risk my money on it.

And then Smiley says, "That's all right. If you will hold my box a minute, I will go and **get you a frog**." And so the man took the box, and put up his forty dollars and sat down to wait.

He sat there a long time thinking and thinking. Then he got the frog out of the box. He filled its mouth full of bullets used to kill small birds. Then he put the frog on the floor.

Now Smiley had caught another frog and gave it to the man and said, "Now sit him next to Dan'l and I will give the word."

Then Smiley says, "One-two-three-go!" and Smiley and the other man touched the frogs.

The new frog jumped. Dan'l just lifted up his body but could not move at all. He was **planted** like a building. Smiley was very surprised and angry too. But he did not know what the problem was.

The other man took the money and started away. And when he was going out the door, he looked back and said, "Well, I don't see anything about that frog that is any better than any other frog."

Smiley stood looking down at Dan'l a long time, and at last says, "I wonder what in the nation happened to that frog. I wonder if there is something wrong with him."

And he picked up Dan'l and turned him upside down and out came a whole lot of bullets. And Smiley was the angriest man. He set the frog down and took out after that man but he never caught him.

Now Simon Wheeler heard his name called and got up to see what was wanted. He told me to wait but I did not think that more stories about Jim Smiley would give me any more information about Leonidas W. Smiley, and so I started to walk away.

At the door I met Mr. Wheeler returning, and he started talking again. "Well, this here Smiley had a yellow cow with one eye and no tail..."

However, lacking both time and interest, I did not wait to hear about the cow. I just left.

This story was written by Mark Twain and adapted for Learning English by Karen Leggett.

Words in This Story

most always - *adv. US, informal*; almost always

Dan'l - *n.* abbreviation of a given name, Daniel


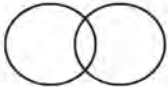


anyways - *adv. US, informal*; anyway

studied a minute - *v. US, informal*; thought a minute






get you a frog - *v. US, informal*; get a frog for you

plant - *v.* to put or place (something or yourself) firmly or forcefully on a surface or in a particular position

Task-Based Strategies

CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	
TASK-BASED STRATEGIES		
Take Notes	 <p>PDA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Write down important words and ideas while listening or reading. -List ideas or words to include in speaking or writing..
Use Graphic Organizers	 <p>A Venn diagram</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use or create visual representations (such as Venn diagrams, time lines, webs, and charts) of important relationships between concepts.
Summarize	 <p>Main Idea</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create a mental, oral, or written summary of information.
Use Selective Attention	 <p>Focus</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Focus on specific information, structures, key words, phrases, or ideas.

Task-Based Strategies

CALLA CONTENT AND LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES		
STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	
TASK-BASED STRATEGIES		
 		
USE A VARIETY OF RESOURCES		
Access Information Sources	 <p>Look it up!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use the dictionary, the internet, and other reference materials. -Seek out and use sources of information. -Follow a model -Ask questions
Cooperate	 <p>Together</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Work with others to complete tasks, build confidence, and give and receive feedback.
Talk Yourself Through It (Self-Talk)	 <p>I can do it!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use your inner resources. Reduce your anxiety by reminding yourself of your progress, the resources you have available, and your goals.