

Learning English

The Lady in Black **by Eleanor H. Porter**

Lesson Plan
by Jill Robbins, Ph.D.

Introduction

This lesson plan is to accompany the American Stories series episode, *The Lady in Black* by Eleanor H. Porter.

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 Lady in Black* by Eleanor H. Porter. This story is about being a good parent. What do you think a good mother or father does for their children?”

Listen to students’ responses. Begin by making general suggestions, like “a good parent pays attention to their child” or “a good parent spends time with their child.”

Teach the vocabulary for the story.

Vocabulary

porch - *n.* a structure attached to the entrance of a building that has a roof and that may or may not have walls

Muvver - *n.* child's pronunciation of the word 'mother'

afterward - *adv.* at a later time; after something has happened

mourning - *v.* to feel or show great sadness because someone has died

runaway - *adj.* a vehicle or animal moving in a fast and dangerous way that cannot be controlled

traces - *n.* a very small amount of something

Present

Introduce the task to students: “Today we will learn how to read between the lines. Usually you read for the details the author tells you directly. But there are times you have to read and then think, ‘What is the writer really saying?’ This is one of those stories. Let’s listen to the first part of the story. I’ll show you how to read between the lines.”

Play or read aloud to “Then, with a half-quieted cry, he left the room.”

Tell students, “I’m going to think about the two characters we see in this part. One is a little boy. The other is his mother. Let’s see what the writer tells us about them.”

Write notes as you list facts and inferences on a screen or the board.

“In this part, I read that a woman is in a small room. There are little girl’s things in the room. Her son comes to play but she sends him away. Reading between the lines, I *infer* that she is very sad because she lost a daughter. Maybe she is even depressed. She can’t find the energy to play with her son. Her son needs her, I think. I imagine he is sad, too. Remember what you said earlier about being a good parent? Do you think the mother is being a good parent to the boy?”

Read between the lines

Character	What we read	What we infer
The lady in black	She sits alone. She stopped a clock. Little girl's things are in the room. She tells the boy to go away.	She lost her daughter. She is sad. She thinks of her daughter when she sees her son.
The little boy	He comes into the room. He calls out to his mother. His face shows hurt. He cries and leaves.	He doesn't understand why his mother will not play with him.

Practice

Tell students, “Now it’s your turn. Find a partner. Take out a sheet of paper. As we read the next section, read between the lines. What do you think the writer, Eleanor Norton, wants to tell us?”

Play or read aloud to ‘Then she turned slowly and began to arrange her flowers on a grave nearby.’

“Now, sit with your partner and write on your paper. What does the writer tell us about Bobby and his father?”

Give students time to write. Then ask them to tell their partner what they got from reading between the lines. Ask several students to share with the class.

Read Between the Lines

Character	What we read	What we infer
Bobby's father (Helen's husband)	He plays with his son. He begs Helen to stay with him and Bobby.	He wants their family life to go on. He knows they can't change the past. They need to move on with their lives.
Helen – the lady in black	She yells at her husband. She goes to visit her daughter Kathleen's grave.	She is angry and doesn't want to spend time with her husband and Bobby.

Instruct students to listen again. “With your partner, listen to the next part of the story. Remember to read between the lines. In this part of the story, we find another woman in the grave yard. What do you think she really wants to tell Helen? See if she says it directly.”

Play or read aloud to ‘And she turned and hurried away.’

Ask students to work with their partners and write what they read between the lines on their paper. Ask several students to say what they think Helen will do *after* her talk with the grey-haired woman.

Read Between the Lines

Character	What we read	What we infer
The grey-haired woman	She worked for a family. The mother lost a son. The mother was so sad her family didn't want to be with her.	The grey-haired woman wants to tell Helen to pay attention to her family. They need her now more than Kathleen does.
Helen – the lady in black	After hearing the story her face turns white. "...her eyes showed a sudden fear."	She understands the message of the other woman's story. She is afraid her family will leave her.

Ask students to listen to the end of the story. “Keep reading between the lines.”

Play or read aloud to the end of the story.

Ask students to talk with their partner about the end of the story. Write them on the screen or board. Ask students, “What do you think will happen in Helen’s family after she ‘comes back’ to life?”

Self-Evaluate

Ask, “Now I’d like to ask – what do you think about using this strategy, *reading between the lines*, when you read? Did it help you understand the story?”

Give students time to discuss their reaction to using the strategy. Find out if focusing on the details helped them understand how the narrator felt about the characters in the story.

Expand

Ask students, “Are there other times when you can *read between the lines* in your school work or outside of school?”

Listen to students’ responses.

Continue, “This strategy is helpful in both reading and listening. Think carefully about what a writer or speaker is telling you. It will help you understand their message.”

“Try using this strategy tonight when you do your homework, or in your next class. Let me know how it goes!”

Our story today is called "The Lady in Black." It was written by Eleanor H. Porter. Here is Faith Lapidus with the story.

The house was very still. In the little room over the **porch**, the Lady in Black sat alone. Near her, a child's white dress lay across a chair. On the floor at her feet lay a tiny pair of shoes. A doll hung over a chair and a toy soldier occupied the little stand by the bed.

And everywhere was silence—the strange silence that comes only to a room where the clock has stopped ticking.

The clock stood on the shelf near the end of the bed. The Lady in Black looked at it. She remembered the wave of anger that had come over her when she had reached out her hand and silenced the clock that night three months before.

It had been silent ever since and it should remain silent, too. Of what possible use were the hours it would tick away now? As if anything mattered, with little Kathleen lying out there white and still under the black earth!

"Muvver!"

The Lady in Black moved restlessly and looked toward the closed door. Behind it, she knew, was a little boy with wide blue eyes who wanted her. But she wished he would not call her by that name. It only reminded her of those other little lips--silent now.

"Muvver!" The voice was more demanding.

The Lady in Black did not answer. He might go away, she thought, if she did not answer.

There was a short silence, and then the door opened slowly.

"Pe-EEK!" It was a cry of joyful discovery, but it was followed almost immediately by silence. The unsmiling woman did not invite him to come near. The boy was unsteady at his first step. He paused, then spoke carefully, "I's--here."

It was maybe the worst thing he could have said. To the Lady in Black it was a yet more painful reminder of that other one who was not there. She gave a sharp cry and covered her face with her hands.

"Bobby, Bobby" she cried out, in a release of unreasoning sadness. "Go away! Go away! I want to be alone--alone!"

All the brightness fled from the boy's face. His eyes showed a feeling of deep hurt. He waited, but she did not move. Then, with a half-quieted cry, he left the room.

Long minutes **afterward**, the Lady in Black raised her head and saw him through the window. He was in the yard with his father, playing under the apple tree.

Playing!

The Lady in Black looked at them with serious eyes, and her mouth hardened at the corners.

Bobby had someone to play with him, someone to love him and care for him, while out there on the hillside Kathleen was alone--all alone.

With a little cry the Lady in Black sprang to her feet and hurried into her own room. Her hands shook as she pinned on her hat and covered herself with her black veil. But her step was firm as she walked downstairs and out through the hall.

The man under the apple tree rose hurriedly and came forward.

"Helen, dearest,--not again, today!" he begged. "Darling, it can't do any good!"

"But she's alone--all alone. You don't seem to think! No one thinks--no one knows how I feel. You don't understand. If you did, you'd come with me. You wouldn't ask me to stay--here!" choked the woman.

"I have been with you, dear," said the man gently. "I've been with you today, and every day, almost, since--since she left us. But it can't do any good--this continuous **mourning** over her grave. It only makes more sadness for you, for me, and for Bobby. Bobby is--here, you know, dear!"

"No, no, don't say it," cried the woman wildly. "You don't understand! You don't understand!" And she turned and hurried away, followed by the worried eyes of the man, and the sad eyes of the boy.

It was not a long walk to the burial place. The Lady in Black knew the way. Yet, she stumbled and reached out blindly. She fell before a little stone marked "Kathleen." Near her a gray-haired woman, with her hands full of pink and white roses, watched her sympathetically. The gray-haired woman paused and opened her lips as if she would speak. Then she turned slowly and began to arrange her flowers on a grave nearby.

The Lady in Black raised her head. For a time she watched in silence. Then she threw back her veil and spoke.

"You care, too," she said softly. "You understand. I've seen you here before, I'm sure. And was yours--a little girl?"

The gray-haired woman shook her head.

"No, dearie, it's a little boy--or he was a little boy forty years ago."

"Forty years--so long! How could you have lived forty years--without him?"

Again the little woman shook her head.

"One has to--sometimes, dearie, but this little boy wasn't mine."

"But you care. You understand. I've seen you here so often before."

"Yes. You see, there's no one else to care. But there was once, and I'm caring now, for her sake."

"For her?"

"His mother."

"Oh-h!" It was a tender little cry, full of quick sympathy. The eyes of the Lady in Black were on the stone marked "Kathleen."

"It ain't as if I didn't know how she'd feel," said the gray-haired woman. "You see, I was nurse to the boy when it happened, and for years afterward I worked in the family. So I know. I saw the whole thing from the beginning, from the very day when the little boy here met with the accident."

"Accident!" It was a cry of concern and sympathy from Kathleen's mother.

"Yes. It was a **runaway** and he didn't live two days."

"I know! I know!" choked the Lady in Black. Yet she was not thinking of the boy and the runaway horse accident.

"Things stopped then for my mistress," continued the little gray-haired woman, "and that was the beginning of the end. She had a husband and a daughter, but they didn't seem to be important--not either of 'em. Nothin' seemed important except this little grave out here. She came and spent hours over it, bringin' flowers and talkin' to it."

The Lady in Black raised her head suddenly and quickly looked into the woman's face. The woman went on speaking.

"The house got sadder and sadder, but she didn't seem to mind. She seemed to want it so. She shut out the sunshine and put away many of the pictures. She sat only in the boy's room. And there, everything was just as it was when he left it. She wouldn't let a thing be touched. I wondered afterward that she didn't see where it was all leadin' to, but she didn't."

"Leadin' to'?" The voice shook.

"Yes. I wondered she didn't see she was losin' 'em--that husband and daughter; but she didn't see it."

The Lady in Black sat very still. Even the birds seemed to have stopped their singing. Then the gray-haired woman spoke:

"So, you see, that's why I come and put flowers here. It's for her. There's no one else now to care," she sighed, rising to her feet.

"But you haven't told yet--what happened," said the Lady in Black, softly.

"I don't know myself really. I know the man went away. He got somethin' to do travelin' so he wasn't home much. When he did come he looked sick and bad. He come less and less, and he died. But that was after she died. He's buried over there beside her and the boy. The girl--well, nobody knows where the girl is. Girls like flowers and sunshine and laughter and young people, you know, and she didn't get any of them at home. So she went--where she did get 'em, I suppose.

"There, and if I haven't gone and tired you all out with my talkin'!" said the little gray-haired woman regretfully.

"No, no. I was glad to hear it," said the Lady in Black, rising unsteadily to her feet. Her face had grown white, and her eyes showed a sudden fear. "But I must go now. Thank you." And she turned and hurried away.

The house was very still when the Lady in Black reached home. She shivered at its silence. She hurried up the stairs, almost with guilt. In her own room she pulled at the dark veil that covered her face. She was crying now, a choking little cry with broken words running through it. She was still crying as she removed her black dress.

Long minutes later, the Lady--in black no longer--moved slowly down the stairway. Her eyes showed **traces** of tears, but her lips were bravely curved in a smile. She wore a white dress and a single white rose in her hair. Behind her, in the little room over the porch, a tiny clock ticked loudly on its shelf near the end of the bed.

There came a sound of running feet in the hall below, then:

"Muvver!--it's Muvver come back!" shouted a happy voice.

And with a little sobbing cry Bobby's mother opened her arms to her son.

Words in This Story

porch - *n.* a structure attached to the entrance of a building that has a roof and that may or may not have walls

Muvver - *n.* child's pronunciation of the word 'mother'

afterward - *adv.* at a later time; after something has happened

mourning - *v.* to feel or show great sadness because someone has died

runaway - *adj.* a vehicle or animal moving in a fast and dangerous way that cannot be controlled

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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.

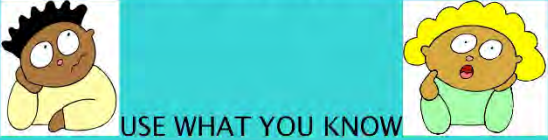




CALLA was developed by Anna Uhl Chamot and J. Michael O'Malley, and is being implemented in approximately 30 school districts in the United States as well as in several other countries.

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		
		
Use Background Knowledge	 I know.	<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	 Use Clues	<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	 Crystal Ball	<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	 Me	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Relate new concepts to your own life, to your experiences, knowledge, beliefs and feelings.


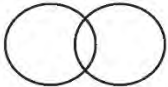


Task-Based Strategies

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.

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.