

Introduction

The purpose of this lesson plan is to assist future expert teachers to learn how to create a stimulating a teaching environment to present ideas in real teaching. I chose Lungteng textbook volume 5, lesson 2 as my material for demonstration. The main goal of teaching this article/story is to help cultivate students' critical thinking ability. With the help of a graphic organizer, students will learn to visualize what happens in the story.

Some questions will be provided for the students to answer and thus to associate with the lesson later on. These include what they think is the most important ability in their lives, and how an illiterate person might feel as a result of not being able to read.

After the initial discussion and sharing of opinions, I will present more questions to the students to help them relate to the story, "See Spot Run": Teaching My Grandmother to Read. The questions include story map guidelines, such as setting, characters, problem/conflict and the possible ending to the story. I will also lead a discussion of the historical background to the article, dealing with immigration trends that have occurred in the United States. The slavery era, the Gold Rush, World War II and the end of the Vietnam War are four examples of periods of significant immigration. After this discussion, I will lead into the story line of this article, and lead the class to read the story. Here, the teacher can use a graphic organizer to help students understand the details of the story. The teacher can also check whether some new words or phrases should be explained to them. This section is presented together with a worksheet on the usage of "lest..."

After reading, I raise some deeper questions for students to ponder. These questions may include: elements of the immigrants' struggle on a foreign soil, why the young girl chose to help her grandmother read, what the value of doing this was, and what the reward for doing this was. Students are also asked to write about what they would do to help an illiterate grandmother.

Level of difficulty:



Elementary



Intermediate



Upper-Intermediate



Advanced

Focus of the lesson: critical thinking

Text structure: story

Grammar focus: "...lest..."

Reading

When I was 14 years old, and very impressed with my teenage **status**² (**looking forward to** all the rewards it would bring), I set for myself a very special goal. It was a goal that so **differentiated**³ me from my friends that I don't believe I told a single person.

My secret was a project that I **undertook**⁴ every day after school for several months. It began when I **stealthily*** **made my way** into the local elementary school—**horror**⁵ **of horrors** should I be seen. I had my pride and **dignity**⁶, after all, because I was now in junior high. I identified myself as a graduate of the elementary school and **was taken under wing** by a favorite fifth-grade teacher. She gave me a small bundle from a locked **storeroom**⁷—a bundle that I quickly dropped into a bag lest anyone see me walking home with something from the “little kids” school.

I brought the bundle home—proudly now, for within the **confines**⁸ of my home, I was proud of my project. I walked into the living room, and one by one, emptied the bag of basic reading books. They were thin books with colorful covers and large print. The words were **monosyllabic*** and **repetitive**⁹. I sat down to the secret task **at hand**.

“All right,” I said **authoritatively**¹⁰ to my 70-year-old grandmother, “today we begin our first reading lesson.”

For weeks **afterwards**¹¹, my grandmother and I sat patiently side by side—roles reversed as she, with a bit of difficulty, sounded out every word. She would then read them again, piece by piece, until she understood the short sentences. When she slowly repeated the full sentence, we both would smile and clap our hands—I felt so proud, so grown up.

My grandmother was born in a rocky little farming village in Greece where nothing much grew. She never had the time to go to school. As the oldest child, she was expected to take care of her brother and sister. But she also had to **see after** the house and prepare the family meals while her mother **tended**¹² to the gardens and her father **scratched out** what little he could from the soil.

So, despite the fact that she was not allowed to have any education, my grandmother had big plans for herself. She had heard about America: about how rich you could be; about how people on the streets would offer you a dollar just to smell the flower you were carrying; about how everyone lived in nice houses—not stone **huts**¹³ on the sides of mountains—and had nice clothes and time for school.

So my grandmother made a decision at 14—just a child, I realize now—to take a long and sickening 30-day sea **voyage**¹⁴ alone to the United States. First, she had to lie about her age to the **passport**¹⁵ officials, who would shake their heads **vehemently*** at anyone under 16 leaving his or her family. Then she gave her favorite gold earrings to her cousin, saying “In America, I will have all the gold I want,” and put herself on a ship. She landed in New York in 1916.

There is no need to repeat the story of how it went for years. The streets were not made of gold. People weren't interested in smelling flowers held by strangers. My grandmother was a foreigner. She was alone. She was a young girl who worked hard doing **piecework*** to earn enough money for meals. There was no **leisure**¹⁶ time, no new gold earrings—and no school.

She learned only enough English to help her in her daily business as she traveled about **Brooklyn***. Socially, the “foreigners” stayed in neighborhoods where they didn’t feel like foreigners. English came slowly.

My grandmother had never learned to read. She could **make out** a menu, but not a newspaper. She could read a street sign, but not a shop **directory**¹⁷. She could read only what she needed to read as, through the years, she married, had five daughters, and helped my grandfather with his restaurant.

So when I was 14—the same age that my grandmother was when she left her family, her country, and everything she knew—I **took it upon myself** to teach my grandmother something, something I already knew how to do, something that I could give to her, just as she had given me so much useful and practical knowledge: how to **cultivate**¹⁸ the rose bushes and **magnolia*** trees that **thrived**¹⁹ on her little piece of property; how to make **baklava*** and other Greek delights. Best of all, she had taught me about my **ethnic**²⁰ **heritage**²¹.

It was much harder for her, though, to learn how to read. First, we **phonetically**²² sounded out the alphabet. Then, we talked about **vowels**²³—English is such a difficult language to learn. I hadn’t even begun to explain the different sounds “gh” could make. We were still at the basics.

Every afternoon we would sit in the living room, my grandmother with a blanket covering her knees, giving up her **sewing**²⁴ for her reading lesson. I, with the patience that can come only from love, slowly coached her from the basic **reader**²⁵ to the second-grade reader, giving up my telephone **gossiping**²⁶.

Years later, my grandmother still hadn’t learned quite enough to sit comfortably with a newspaper or magazine, but it felt **awfully**²⁷ good to see her try. How we used to laugh at her pronunciation mistakes! She laughed more **heartily**²⁸ than I. I never knew whether I should laugh. Here was this old woman slowly and carefully sounding out each word, moving her lips, not saying anything aloud until she was **absolutely**²⁹ sure, and then, loudly, proudly, happily saying, “Look at Spot. See Spot run.”

When my grandmother died and we faced the sad task of emptying her home, I was **going through** her night-table drawer and came upon the basic readers. I turned the pages slowly, remembering. I put them in a paper bag, and the next day returned them to the “little kids” school. Maybe someday, some teenager will request them again, for the same task. It will **make for** a lifetime of memories.

Lesson Plan

I. Activate Background Knowledge

1. Warm-up questions:

- A. What do you think is the most important ability in a person's life?
Why do you think so? (Warm-up page on the textbook, p.26)
A: Most students thought that reading was the most important ability.
- B. Why is the ability of reading the most important?
A: Without it, they could not do many things.
- C. How would a person feel if he/she was *illiterate*?
A: They may feel frustrated, inferior, etc.
- D. What might an illiterate person confront?
A: They may be looked down upon.
- E. The United States is said to be a melting pot. There have been immigration trends.
Name some examples.
A: Slaves from Arica; Workers from China during Gold Rush; World War I.
- F. Review the historic background of immigrants to America.
- G. The quest for the American dream. Movie watching—The American Tale.

**Red-inked answers were from class discussion.

II. Presenting the Text

Directions:

A. Teacher leads the students through the reading selection.

Paragraphs 1 ~ 3. Ask if they have any questions regarding vocabulary and phrases.

1. status 2. differentiated 3. undertake 4. dignity
5. horror of horrors 6. be taken under wing by 7. confine

1.	As a teenager, what do you think your status is in this society?
2.	Have you ever thought of setting a goal that is so differentiated from your friends? What could it be?
3.	Once you set the goal, what will you undertake first?
4.	Is it beneath your dignity to go back to your elementary school to borrow some books? Why or why not?
5.	I didn't want my parents to see me wearing the short skirt I just bought; horror of horrors , I ran into them at the store!
6.	She is so lucky that she can be taken under her elementary school teacher's wing .
7.	What is the most precious thing you have within the confines of your room?

Paragraphs 4 ~ 5. Ask if they have any questions regarding vocabulary and phrases.

1. authoritative; authoritatively

1.	Among your classmates, who is the most authoritative? Did Gary often demand authoritatively that you follow his orders?
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Paragraphs 6 ~ 11. Ask students if they have any questions regarding vocabulary and phrases.

tended to	vehemently	make out	see after	scratched out
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Fill in the blanks with the most suitable words from the list above.

When grandmother was young, she had to see after the house and prepared meals for the family while her mother tended to the gardens and her father scratched out whatever he could get to support the family. When grandmother came to the States, the passport officials shook their heads vehemently, wondering why people so young would leave their countries. Without much education, she could only make out a menu.

Paragraphs 12~16. Ask students if they have any questions regarding vocabulary and phrases.

phonetically	heartily	ethnic	went through
make for	heritage	thrived	absolutely
took...upon myself to	cultivate	gossip	

Fill in the blanks with the most suitable words from the list above.

Grandmother had done so much for me. She taught me how to cultivate the rose bushes that thrived on her garden. She shared with me the ethnic heritage I got from her. How grateful I was to her!! In the mean time, when I learned how much my grandmother had suffered, I took it upon myself to teach her to read. I started it by teaching her to phonetically sound out the alphabet. I no longer cared about other teenagers' telephone gossip; when she succeeded in sounding out a word, she laughed heartily. When she laughed, she was absolutely sure and confident.

Years later when she died, I went through her belongings and found the books I used to teach her to read. I was so proud that what I did would make out a lifetime memory.

B. Grammar exercise.

I. pattern practice—"...lest..."

1. Judy read the story slowly. She did not want to pronounce any word wrong. (lest)

→ _____

2. I ran home as soon as the school bell rang. I did not want to miss my favorite TV show. (for fear)

that)

→ _____

3. The miser dug a hole in the backyard. He did not want his gold to be stolen. (in case)

→ _____

4. He drank three cups of coffee. He did not want to fall asleep. (so that)

→ _____

II. Translation--

1. 我帶把傘，惟恐下雨。(for fear of)

2. 我弟弟用功讀書，以免考試不及格。(lest)

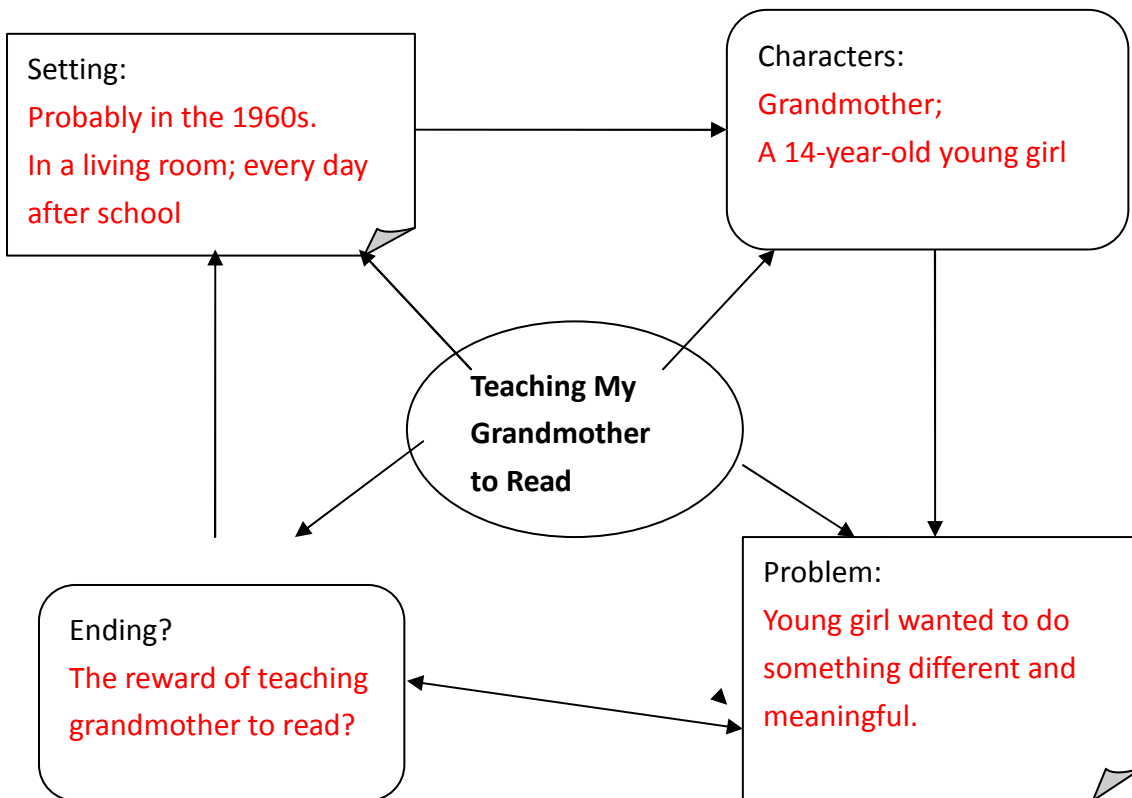
3. 我不敢超速，惟恐收到罰單。(for fear that)

III. Bridging reading to writing/Practice and personalization

Directions:

- a. Review with a story map:
 - 1. Setting of the story.
 - 2. Characters.
 - 3. Problem/conflict.
 - 4. Ending.

Story Map for this story



- b. The teacher can use a worksheet to question students for comprehension—this is one other form of graphic chart.

[Handout 1](#)

- c. Students can develop a short passage, using the comparison and contrast technique.

[Handout 2](#)

IV. Application

Directions:

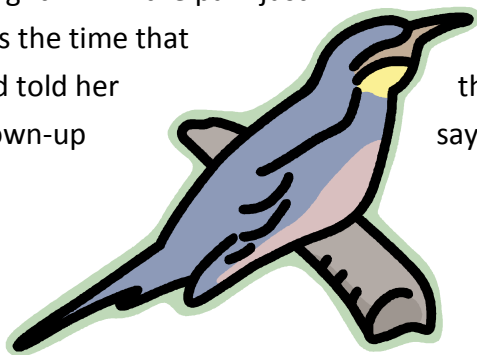
1. Students are given the following story and share with each other how they feel about the story.

“Other Worlds to Sing in” — INFORMATION PLEASE

When I was quite young, my family had one of the first telephones in our neighborhood. I remember well the **polished** oak case fastened to the wall on the lower stair landing. The shiny receiver hung on the side of the box. I even remembered the number - 105. I was too little to reach the telephone, but used to listen with fascination when my mother talked into it. Once she lifted me up to speak to my father, who was away on business. Magic! Then I discovered that somewhere inside that wonderful **device** lived an amazing person - her name was “Information Please” and there was nothing that she did not know. My mother could ask her for anybody’s number and when our clock ran down, Information Please immediately supplied the correct time.

My first personal experience with this genie-in-the-receiver came one day while my mother was visiting a neighbor. Amusing myself at the tool-bench in the basement, I **whacked** my finger with a hammer. The pain was terrible, but there didn’t seem to be of much use crying because there was no one home to offer sympathy. I walked around the house sucking my **throbbing** finger, finally arriving at the stairway. The telephone! Quickly, I ran for the footstool in the parlor and **dragged** it to the landing. Climbing up, I unhooked the receiver and held it to my ear. “Information Please,” I said into the mouthpiece just above my head. A click or two, and a small clear voice spoke into my ear. “Information.” “I hurt my fingerrr-” I **wailed** into the phone. The tears came readily enough now that I had an audience. “Isn’t your mother home?” came the question. “Nobody’s at home but me,” I **blubbered**. “Are you bleeding?” “No”, I replied. “I hit it with the hammer and it hurts”. “Can you open your icebox?” she asked. I said I could. “Then chip off a little piece of ice and hold it on your finger. That will stop the hurt. Be careful when you use the ice pick,” she **admonished**. “And don’t cry. You’ll be alright”.

After that, I called Information Please for everything. I asked for help with my Geography and she told me where Philadelphia was, and the Orinoco—the romantic river I was going to explore when I grew up. She helped me with my arithmetic, and she told me that a pet chipmunk—I had caught him in the park just that day before—would eat fruits and nuts. And there was the time that Petey, our pet canary, died. I called Information Please and told her the sad story. She listened, then said the usual things say to a child. But I was not **consoled**. Why was it that birds



should sing so beautifully and bring joy to whole families, **only to** end as a heap of feathers feet up, on the bottom of a cage? She must have sensed my deep concern, for she quietly said, "Paul, always remember that there are other worlds to sing in." Somehow, I felt better.

Another day I was at the telephone. "Information," said the now familiar voice. "How do you spell fix?" F-I-X." At that instant my sister, who took unholy joy in scaring me, jumped off the stairs at me with a **banshee shriek**- "Yaaaaaaaaaaaa!" I fell off the stool, pulling the receiver out of the box by its roots. We were both terrified—Information Please was no longer there, and I was not at all sure that I hadn't hurt her when I pulled the receiver out. Minutes later, there was a man on the porch. "I'm a telephone repairman. I was working down the street and the operator said there might be some trouble at this number." He reached for the receiver in my hand. "What happened?" I told him. "Well, we can fix that in a minute or two." He opened the telephone box exposing a maze of wires and coils, and fiddled for a while with the end of the receiver cord, tightened things with a small screwdriver. He jiggled the hook up and down a few times, then spoke into the phone. "Hi, this is Pete. Everything's under control at 105. The kid's sister scared him and he pulled the cord out of the box." He hung up, smiled, gave me a pat on the head and walked out the door.

All this took place in a small town in the Pacific Northwest. Then, when I was nine years old, we moved across the country to Boston—and I missed my **mentor acutely**. Information Please belonged in that old wooden box back at home, and I somehow never thought of trying the tall, skinny new phone that sat on the small table in the hall. Yet, as I grew into my teens, the memories of those childhood conversations never really left me; often in moments of doubt and **perplexity** I would recall the **serene** sense of security I had when I knew that I could call Information Please and get the right answer. I appreciated now how very patient, understanding and kind she was to have wasted her time on a little boy.

A few years later, on my way back to college, my plane put down in Seattle. I had about half an hour between plane connections, and I spent 15 minutes or so on the phone with my sister who lived there now, happily **mellowed** by marriage and motherhood. Then, really without thinking what I was doing, I dialed my hometown operator and said, "Information Please." Miraculously, I heard again the small, clear voice that I know so well: "Information." I hadn't planned this, but I heard myself saying, "Could you tell me, please, how to spell the word 'fix'?" There was a long pause. Then came the softly spoken answer. "I guess," said Information Please, "that your finger must have healed by now." I laughed. "So it's really still you. I wonder if you have any idea how much you meant to me during all that time..." "I wonder," she replied, "if you know how much you meant to me? I never had any children, and I used to look forward to your calls. Silly, wasn't it?" It didn't seem silly, but I didn't say so. Instead I told her how often I had thought of her over the years, and I asked if I could call her again when I come back to visit my sister when the semester was over. "Please do. Just ask for Sally." "Goodbye Sally." It sounded strange for

Information Please to have a name. "If I run into any chipmunks, I'll tell them to eat fruits and nuts." "Do that," she said. "And I expect one of these days you'll be off for the Orinoco. Well, good-bye."

Just three months later, I was back again at the Seattle airport. A different voice answered, "Information," and I asked for Sally. "Are you a friend?" "Yes," I said. "An old friend." "Then I'm sorry to have to tell you. Sally had only been working part-time in the last few years because she was ill. She died five weeks ago." But before I could hang up, she said, "Wait a minute. Did you say your name was Villard?" "Yes." "Well, Sally left a message for you. She wrote it down." "What was it?" I asked, almost knowing in advance what it would be. "Here it is, I'll read it-'Tell him I still say there are other worlds to sing in. He'll know what I mean'"

I thanked her and hung up. I did know what Sally meant.



More comprehension questions:

1. Why was the "information please" so patient to the young boy?
2. How did the young boy feel about "information please?"
3. What kind of relationship did the two have while they communicated?
4. Why did the information please say "There are other worlds to sing in?"

2. Movie: *Julie and Julia*



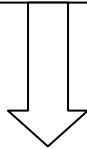
Why was this movie chosen as a supplementary activity?

Handout 1

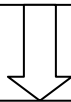
CMS Senior 2 D 2011 Worksheet – Lesson 2 Book 5 No: Name:

Answer the following questions in complete sentences:

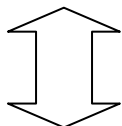
1. What are some typical things teenagers like to do in their daily lives?
2. How old was the young girl?
3. Why did she go back to her elementary school?
4. How did she feel when she went back to her elementary school? Did she do that openly or secretly?



5. Why did she decide to help her grandmother read? Did the story tell us directly? If yes, why? If not, why not?
6. Would you feel/do the same because you are a teenager and most teenagers don't do this kind of thing? If yes, why? If not, why not?
7. How did the grandmother do in her first few lessons?
8. What approaches did the young girl use to help her grandmother read? How did it turn out?



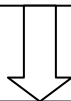
9. What was grandmother's life experience? Use at least three sentences to describe.



10. Without formal education, what could grandmother do regarding daily routines?

11. How did grandmother feel when she was going through the reading training?

12. How did the young girl feel when she was undertaking her project?



13. Who benefited most from the reading classes? The girl or her grandmother? Why do you think so?

Handout 2

CMS Senior 2 D 2011 Writing Assignment for Lesson 2 Book 5 Name:

Use the following chart to compare your grandmother and the little girl's.

The little girl's grandmother		Your grandmother	
age		age	
educational background		educational background	
ability to deal with daily life		ability to deal with daily life	
before being taught to read		???	
After being taught to read		???	

Writing exercise:

What is your grandmother's educational background? Is she capable of dealing with everything in her daily life? If your grandmother was the same as the little girl's, what would you do to help her? Why would you choose to do this?

Content	Organization	Grammar	Wording	Punctuation	Total
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5%		5%		4%		4%		2%		20%	
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