

Listening, Writing and Speaking Activities with Differentiated Instructions in an English Classroom

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I. Introduction

Students are going to learn a legend about the Trojan War adapted in length to suit their level of understanding. According to the text, students will have the chance to become acquainted with aspects of human nature such as love and jealousy. In the first warm-up activity, the teacher uses a song to arouse students' awareness of love playing its role in people's lives. Worksheets are provided when students are listening to the song, based on individual abilities. A multiple-choice song sheet is used for lower achievers, intermediate level students get a song sheet with blanks to fill in and as for the higher level students, they will have to complete whole sentences when listening to the song. After this, some questions will be asked to check students' understanding of the song together with the theme of this lesson. A movie trailer is played to enhance students' prior knowledge of the story. And then, a GO worksheet is provided for the students to complete. The teacher will then continue to the reading selection by asking students to read through the passage. Students are given three different kinds of worksheet to answer after they are done with their reading. The questions aim to serve as a post reading comprehension check. The lower achievers will be given a set of questions with true or false answers; the intermediate level students will have to choose answers out of 4 choice items. As for the higher achievers, they will have to answer the same five questions in complete sentences. When the post reading activity is completed, three different grammar worksheets are given to students to work on. The lower level group will have to choose an answer out of two. The intermediate level will have to fill in the blank with the most appropriate relative pronouns. The advanced level will have to combine two sentences into one using the correct restrictive or non-restrictive relative clauses. To close up the lesson, each level of students is given a question to discuss and then share their answers with the whole class when they finish their discussion. Extensive writing drill: Homework is given for students to write the summary of the story (lower achievers), to retell the story as a summary from a first person perspective (intermediate level) or to add a twist to the story by either putting a different ending or creating a sequel to the story (higher achievers). In this lesson plan, differentiated instruction is applied here according to students' readiness and DI in process is used throughout the whole

lesson.

II. Motivation

In Taiwan, a conventional classroom setting is that of a big class with mixed abilities. Therefore it has been a challenge for senior high teachers to plan their lessons. Given this, what most teachers bear in mind is to make sure the average students can keep up with their lessons, which is the safest thing to do. However, higher fliers as well as low achievers become victims of this philosophy because they either don't get the opportunity to learn from more challenging tasks or they fall far behind because they are not getting adequate learning.

II.1 Why was this teaching plan created?

Taiwan's Ministry of Education has implemented a new educational policy for students up to 12th grade to receive free tuition; that is, there will be a 12-year-compulsory educational system in Taiwan. Unlike the traditional way of entering senior high school, students will no longer need to take entrance examination before they enter any senior high school. This may sound like a relief to students, but on the other hand it is causing teachers to panic because there is no way to know how good the students are. To lessen teachers' uncertainty, several teaching methods are being introduced and DI is one of them.

II.2 How was this lesson plan created?

We, being five teachers from southern region, were formed into a group and were bestowed the opportunity to come up with a lesson plan using DI. Through discussion, we decided to adopt a lesson and develop a lesson-based lesson plan. Each of the 4 teachers picked a possible activity with DI and the 5th teacher was to collect all the activities and integrate them into a complete lesson plan.

III. Preparations

III.1 An activity was designed to catch students' interest by playing them a song.

While listening, they are supposed to

- a) choose from choices,
- b) fill in blanks, or
- c) complete whole sentences.

III.2 After listening to the song, teacher leads a whole class discussion as to the meaning of the song and later connects the message from the song to the story of the “Trojan War”. A GO was distributed to students for them to develop a better understanding as well as preparing for the reading passage.

III.3 When the prior knowledge section was set, students read through the story.

III.4 After the reading, a set of comprehension questions was passed to students.

Students would either answer

- a) true or false,
- b) multiple choice, or
- c) short and simple questions.

III.5 Once this was done, the teacher led a set of extensive questions in a whole class setting and each individual was given the chance to share their thoughts.

III.6 Teacher gave students grammar exercises to work on after explaining the rules.

Students would either

- a) choose an answer out of two choices,
- b) fill in the blanks, or
- c) combine two sentences using the provided rule.

III.7 An extensive writing exercise was given for students to expand their understanding of this myth. This could also serve a critical thinking purpose.

IV. Teaching Strategies:

IV.1 The students are divided into three levels by the teacher, based on the students' prior mid-term scores, together with the teacher's understanding of each student's aptitude.

4.2 Flexible groupings:

a) Homogenous grouping: Place each student with 2 students of the same level. Therefore, when they are asked to discuss some questions, they share the same perspective.

b) Heterogeneous grouping: each group has three levels of students--basic, intermediate and advanced.

When there is an assessment, the advanced level achievers can help with checking or troubleshooting for intermediate or basic level students.

IV.2 Distribute six worksheets to each group (two of each kind).

IV.3 Play the song and ask students to finish either choosing, filling blanks or answering the questions.

4.5 Teacher can collect back the song sheet and see how students have performed.

4.6 A movie trailer can be prepared for students to check their prior knowledge of this story. A GO is included in the worksheet for students to draw and show their understanding.

4.7 The teacher asks the whole class some questions to link the song to the story.

4.8 After the song, the teacher leads a set of questions.

4.9 When the process is done, the teacher can proceed to the text reading by asking students to work in the same groups.

4.10 Ensure that students understand the grammar they are working on.

4.11 The teacher can proceed to the post reading activity by passing to students worksheets designed for three levels. The lower level students can answer 5 True/False questions, the intermediate level can choose the answers out of 4-choice items and the higher achievers will answer the same 5 questions using complete sentences.

4.12 This activity serves as closure to the story.

4.13 An extra question is provided for each group of students to ponder and answer. For this particular question, 2 students of the same level from each group can orally discuss and share with the big group when their discussion is done.

4.14 The teacher can give 3 different grammar worksheets to students according to their ability. Again, the lower level achievers can choose from a range of answers; the intermediate achievers can fill in the blanks with their answers; and the higher achievers are given the more challenging task of combining two sentences into a new non-restrictive relative clause/ participial construction.

4.15 An extensive writing exercise is given as a homework assignment. Students are to complete the task based on their ability too.

V. Teaching Flow Overview

1. Checklist for Pre-teaching: Song Listening

Target	Details
DI in	process
DI by	readiness
Learning Focus	listen for single words/phrases
Grouping	heterogeneous

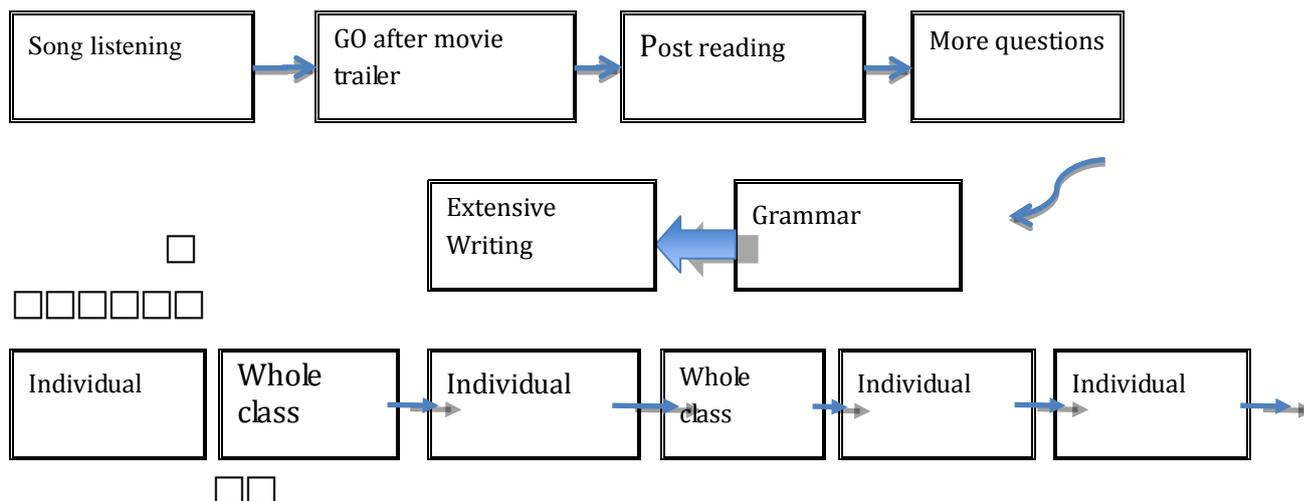
Checklist for Post-reading Comprehension Check

Target	Details
DI in	process
DI by	readiness
Learning Focus	information acquiring
Grouping	heterogeneous

Checklist for Grammar Drills

Target	Details
DI in	process
DI by	readiness
Learning Focus	Confirmation of grammar rules
Grouping	heterogeneous

2. Teaching Procedure Flow Chart



VI. Conclusion

1. The planning may not be appropriate enough.
 - a) Three levels of DI activities are too many.
 - b) The activities designed for the advanced group seemed too challenging.
 - c) Classroom management is a concern, if the teacher can not provide sufficient instructions.
 - d) Teamwork among teachers when developing a lesson plan is not easy.
 - e) Collaborative learning is a must for stimulating cooperative learning.

2. Students' feedback is positive.

Reference

Tomlinson, Carol Ann (2001). How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability classrooms

Appendix 1

Unit 7 A Human War for a Battle Among Goddesses

“Was this the face that **launch’d** a thousand ships
And burnt the topless **towers** of **Ilium**?
Sweet **Helen**, make me **immortal** with a kiss.”

—Doctor Faustus

In this famous **quote**, it is easy to see that Helen’s **beauty** was seen as the cause of the **Trojan War**. **After all**, her beauty had driven the Trojan prince **Paris** to **abduct** Helen. Helen’s husband, the king of **Sparta**, thus **declared** war on Troy. However, neither Paris’s **passion** nor the king’s anger alone burned the great city of Troy to the ground. **The seeds of** destruction had already been **planted** as a result of a **contest** among three goddesses.

In Greek **mythology**, gods and goddesses often exercised their power over mortals when there were disagreements. This is exactly what happened with the Trojan War, which actually started because **Hera**, **Athena**, and **Aphrodite** had a fight over a golden apple for the **fairest**. To avoid being blamed by the goddesses, **Zeus** had Paris make the difficult choice for him. To win the golden apple, the three goddesses promised Paris all that a man could ever want. Hera promised him the power over **Europe** and **Asia**, Athena **offered** him great battle skills and **wisdom**, and Aphrodite promised him the most beautiful woman in the world, Helen. In the end, Paris chose Aphrodite because he had already fallen in love with Helen at first sight.

Aphrodite, having won the contest, helped Paris take Helen to Troy as she had promised. The Spartan king was **furious**, and ten years of war between Sparta and Troy followed. As time **went by**, the Spartans were able to win many battles but could never **take over** Troy. The Spartans thus **turned to** Athena for help **in the hope of** ending the war. Athena, who was still angry about Paris’s choice, **provided** them with the key to winning the final **victory** by saying,

“What began with an apple must end with a horse.”

Thanks to Athena, the Spartans realized what to do. In front of Troy they left a big wooden horse, which the Trojans considered a gift of **peace**. A group of Spartan **soldiers**, having hidden themselves in the **hollow** wooden horse, **crept** out when night fell and opened the city gate. The Spartan **army** outside was able to launch a successful surprise **attack**, bringing an end to the greatest war in Greek mythology.

As in many Greek myths, it seems that the humans in the Trojan War were like **chesspieces** in the hands of gods and goddesses. As a result, it is not difficult to understand that this war probably had been just a game to them.

—By Theodore Pigott

Appendix 2

Group: _____ Student No.: _____ Name: _____

IF by Bread

Level: Basic

Instruction: Please check the box in front of the word which you hear in the song.

If a picture (paints pants) a thousand words,

Then (why what) can't I paint you?

The words will never show the you I've (gone come) to know.

If a face could (lunch launch) a thousand (ships sheep), Then where am I to go?

(Theirs There's) no one home but you,

You're all that's (laughed left) me too.

And (when then) my love for life is running dry,

You come and (poor pour) yourself on me.

If a man could be (too two) places at one time,

I'd be with you.

Tomorrow and today, beside you (all wall) the way.

If the (world word) should stop revolving spinning slowly down (to die today),

I'd spend the end with you.

And when the world was (through throw),

Then one by one the stars would all go out,

Then you and I would simply (fly fry) away

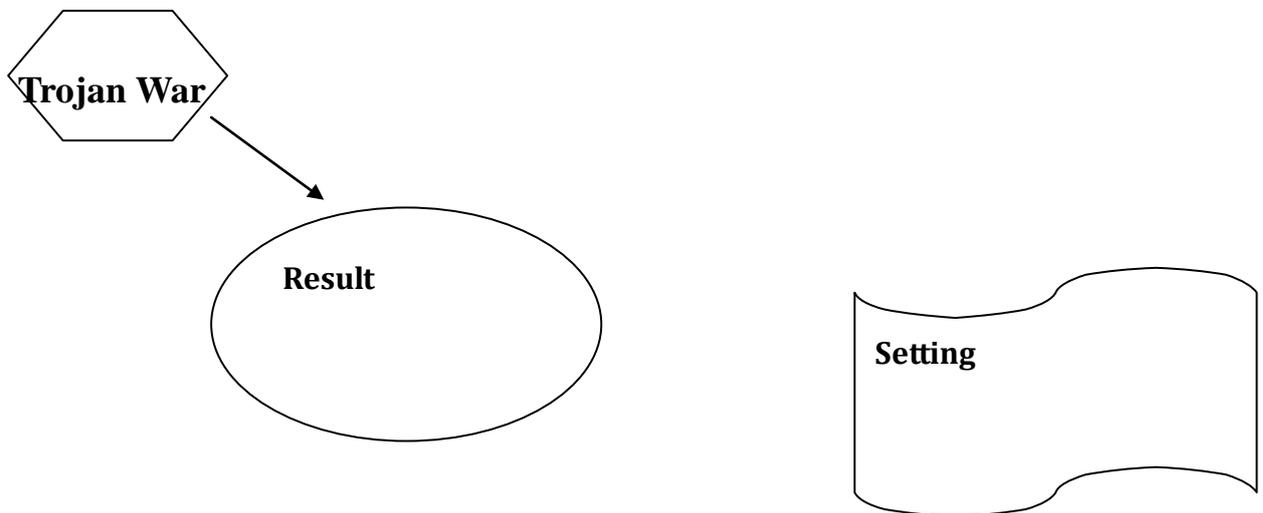
Setting the background – whole class

Comprehension questions:

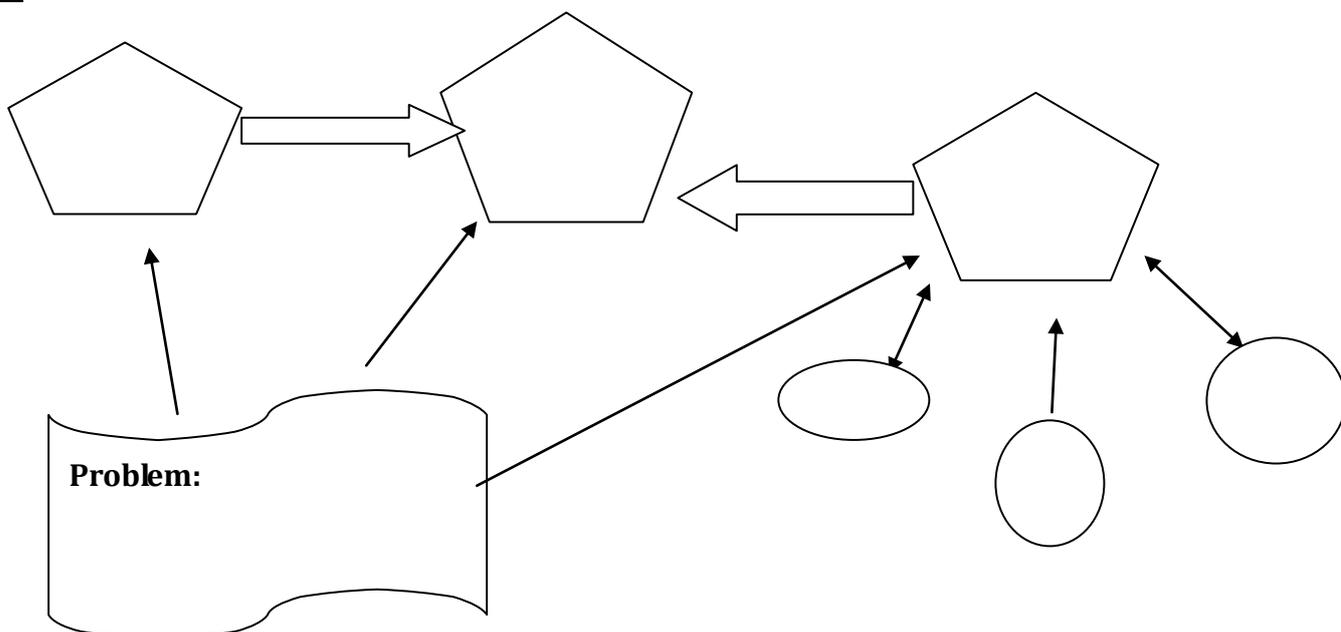
1. What is the theme of the song “If?”
2. Were you touched by the song? Why or why not?

Brainstorming: What do you know about the Trojan War?

Watch the movie trailer: Troy



Who:

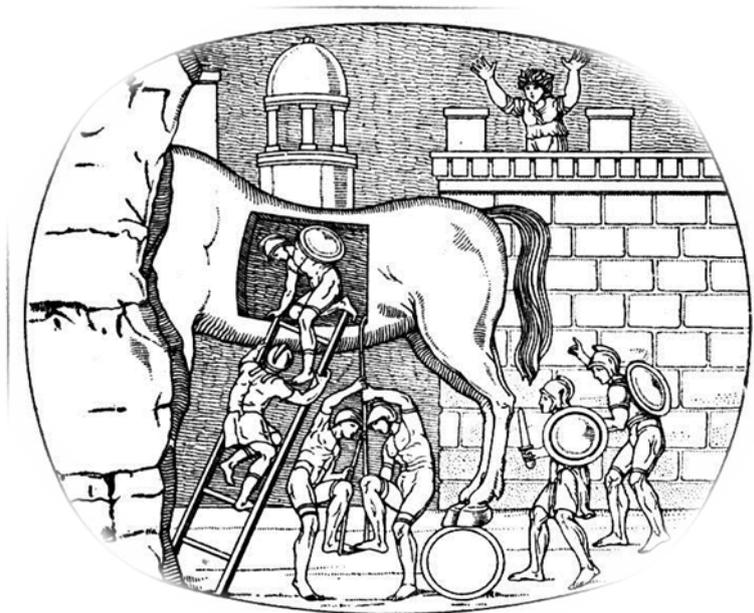


Post reading comprehension check—Basic

What do you know about this story?

Please answer the following True/False questions according to the text. Check your answers with your partner after you finish them.

1. In the story Paris, the Trojan prince, fought against the Spartans for power.
2. The three goddesses, who offered gifts to Paris, were Athena, Aphrodite and Nike.
3. Helen, the beauty, was from Troy.
4. Spartan soldiers hid inside a boat in order to get into Troy.
5. The battle between Troy and Sparta lasted for 8 years.



Patterns in Use Worksheet [Low Level]

Write the answers by using the following patterns.

1 S + V + N(P), who/which/whom/whose . . .

- 1 Cathy, _____(who / whom) I have known for a long time, is one of my friends in class.
- 2 Joe, (who / whom) is my classmate, is very active and friendly.
- 3 Yesterday we went to a French restaurant La Madeleine, (which / where) Lauren recommended to us.
- 4 Jason, (who / that) lives in Taichung, is a nurse.
- 5 The Sun, (which / who) is the center of the Solar System, gives the Earth light and heat.
- 6 Jennifer Aniston, (who / whose) eyes are green, is a famous TV star.
- 7 Mumbai, (where / which) is the largest city in India, attracts many tourists every year.
- 8 Mary just picked up Albert, (whom / who) is her little brother, at the airport.

2 V₂-ing/V₂-en . . . , V₁ . . .

- 1 Kathy, (brushing / brushed) her teeth, will go to the dentist later.
- 2 Andrew, (sitting / sat) next to me, is a lawyer.
- 3 Mr. Robinson, (speaking / spoken) Chinese and English, works as a guide in the museum.
- 4 This railway station, (building / built) in 1900, is ready to be rebuilt in two months.
- 5 Meredith, (having / had) a big bite of the hamburger, let out a scream because she saw a cockroach in it.
- 6 Those magazines, just (sending / sent) to the bookstore, will be labeled and shelved according to category.
- 7 Buenos Aires, (locating / located) in Argentina, is the second largest city in South America.
- 8 Wanhua District, (having / had) many cultural sites and historic buildings, is the oldest district in Taipei City.

Your choice: Basic level

If you were Paris, would you choose power, wisdom or Helen, and why would you choose it?

Discuss with your partners; be prepared to tell your choice to the class.

Your opinion: Intermediate level

Do you think Paris did the right thing by taking Helen away back to his land, and why?

Discuss with your partners.

Your story: Advanced level

Please create a new ending to this story. **What happens after Troy was taken by the Spartans?** What would the Spartan king and Paris do in your version of the story?

Basic Level

Guided-question Summary Writing

Write a summary of about 200 words based on the text and the following questions.

Q1: What is Helen's role in the Trojan War? What is the connection between her and the three Goddesses?

Q2: What do the three Goddesses fight for? What do they do to win the contest?

Q3: Which Goddess helps the Spartans win the war? What does she suggest? Why?

Q4: How do the Spartans win the war?

Summary:

You can continue writing on the back of this worksheet.



You can continue writing on the back of this worksheet.

Appendix 3

Group: _____ Student No.: _____ Name: _____

IF by Bread

Level: Intermediate

Instruction: Please fill in the blanks with the words which you hear in the song.

If a picture _____ a thousand _____,

Then _____ can't I paint _____?

The words will never _____ the you I've _____ to _____.

If a _____ could _____ a thousand _____,

Then where am I to go?

There's no one _____ you,

You're all that's _____ me too.

And _____ my love for life is running _____,

You _____ and _____ yourself on me.

If a man could be two _____ at one _____,

I'd be _____ you.

Tomorrow and _____, beside you _____ the way.

If the world should _____ revolving spinning slowly _____ to die,

I'd _____ the end with you.

And when the world was _____,

Then one by one the _____ would all _____ out,

Then you and I would simply _____ away

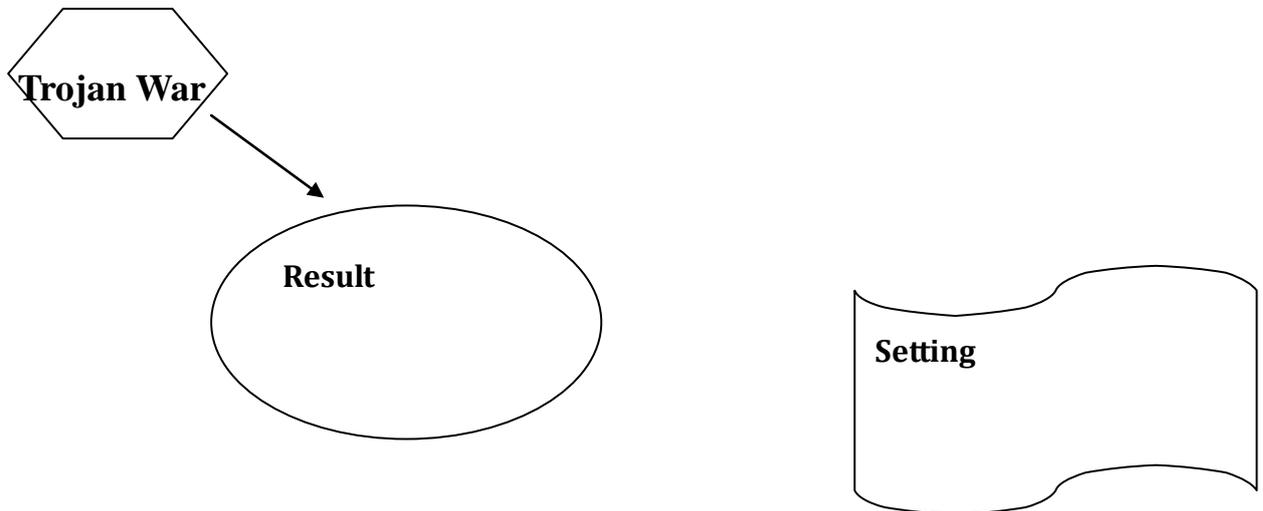
Setting the background – whole class

Comprehension questions:

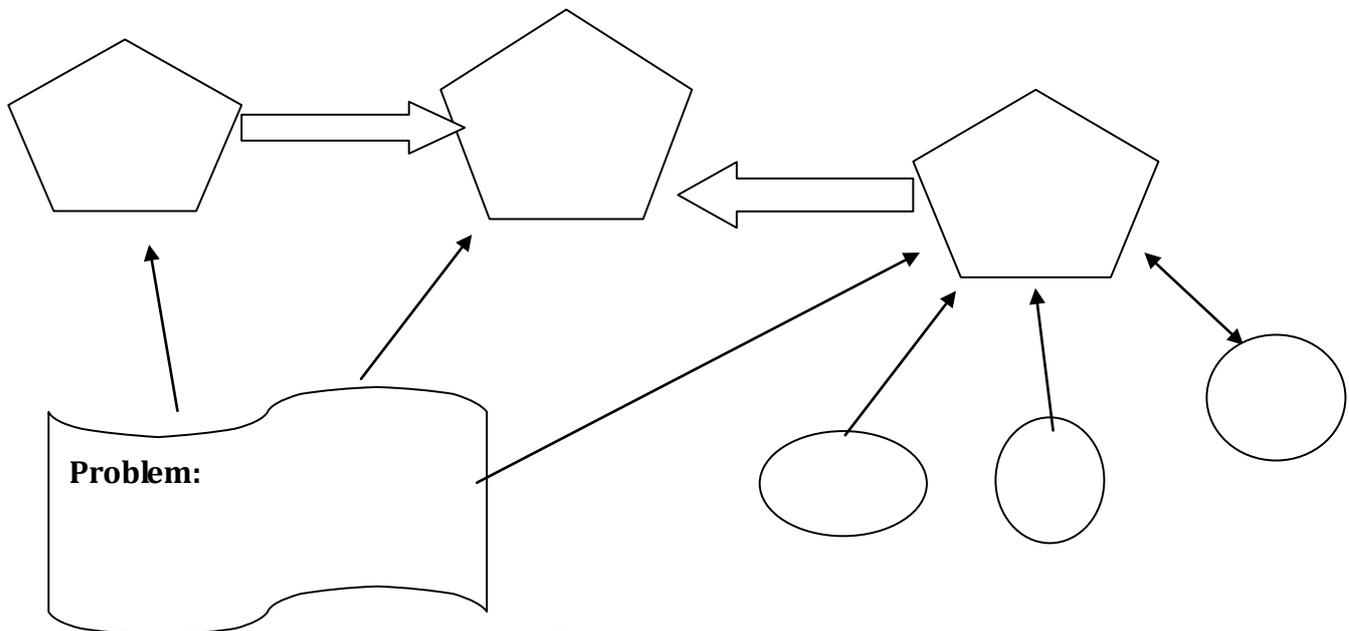
1. What is the theme of the song “If?”
2. Were you touched by the song? Why or why not?

Brainstorming: What do you know about the Trojan War?

Watch the movie trailer: Troy



Who:

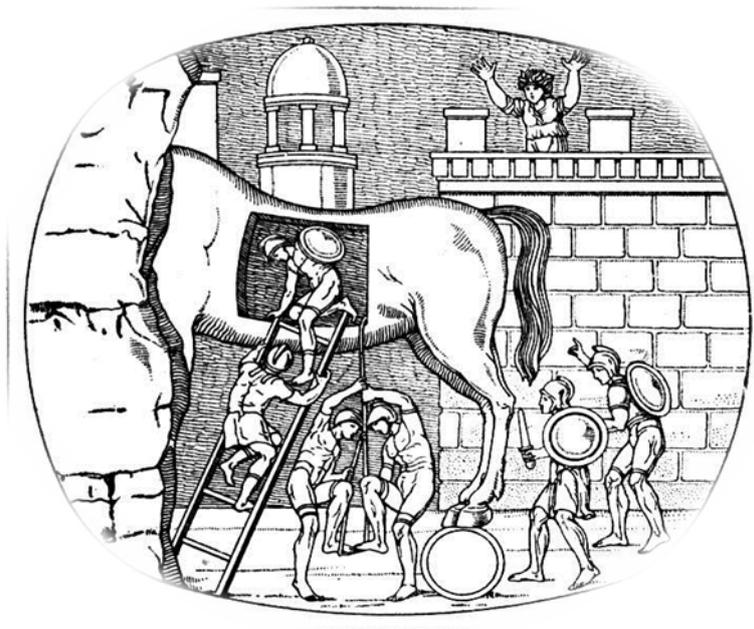


Post reading comprehension check –Intermediate

What do you know about this story?

Please answer the following questions according to the text. Check your answers with your partner after you finish them.

1. In the story, what did Paris, the Trojan Prince, fight for?
A) Power B) Wisdom C) His country D) A beautiful woman
2. Which of the following is not one of the three goddesses who offered gifts to Paris?
A) Hera B) Aphrodite C) Athena D) Nike
3. Where was Helen from?
A) Troy B) Cairo C) Sparta D) Paris
4. Where did Spartan soldiers hide themselves to get into Troy?
A) In the bush B) Inside a wooden horse
C) Under an apple tree D) Inside a boat
5. How many years did the battle between Troy and Sparta last?
A) 7 years B) 8 years C) 9 years D) 10 years



Patterns in Use Worksheet [Intermediate Level]

Write the answers by using the following patterns.

1 S + V + N(P), who/which/whom/whose . . .

- 1 Cathy, _____ I have known for a long time, is one of my friends in class.
- 2 Joe, _____ is my classmate, is very active and friendly.
- 3 Yesterday we went to a French restaurant La Madeleine, _____ Lauren recommended us.
- 4 Jason, _____ lives in Taichung, is a nurse.
- 5 The Sun, _____ is the center of the Solar System, gives the Earth light and heat.
- 6 Jennifer Aniston, _____ eyes are green, is a famous TV star.
- 7 Mumbai, _____ is the largest city in India, attracts many tourists every year.
- 8 Mary just picked up Albert, _____ is her little brother, at the airport.

2 V₂-ing/V₂-en V₁ . . .

- 1 Kathy, _____ (brush) her teeth, will go to the dentist later.
- 2 Andrew, _____ (sit) next to me, is a lawyer.
- 3 Mr. Robinson, _____ (speak) Chinese and English, works as a guide in the museum.
- 4 This railway station, _____ (build) in 1900, is ready to be rebuilt in two months.
- 5 Meredith, _____ (have) a big bite of the hamburger, let out a scream because she saw a cockroach in it.
- 6 Those magazines, just _____ (send) to the bookstore, will be labeled and shelved according to category.
- 7 Buenos Aires, _____ (locate) in Argentina, is the second largest city in South America.
- 8 Wanhua District, _____ (have) many cultural sites and historic buildings, is the oldest district in Taipei City.

Your choice: Basic level

If you were Paris, would you choose power, wisdom or Helen, and why would you choose it?

Discuss with your partners; be prepared to tell your choice to the class.

Your opinion: Intermediate level

Do you think Paris did the right thing by taking Helen away back to his land, and why?

Discuss with your partners.

Your story: Advanced level

Please create a new ending to this story. **What happens after Troy was taken by the Spartans?** What would the Spartan king and Paris do in your version of the story?

Worksheet Summary Writing from Different Perspectives

Name: _____ No. _____

Intermediate Level

Summary Writing from _____ Perspective
<p>The original story was written from a narrator’s point of view, which is usually more detached and objective. Now try to imagine that you are one of the following main characters: Paris, Helen, Athena, Hera, or Aphrodite. Retell the story from your perspective and add your own feelings and perspectives.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Summary:</p>


You can continue writing on the back of this worksheet.

Appendix 4

Group: _____ Student No.: _____ Name: _____

IF _____ by Bread

Level: Advanced

Instruction: Please answer the following questions after you listen to the song.

If a picture paints _____,

Then _____ you?

_____ show the you I've come to know.

If a face could _____,

Then where am I to go?

There's _____ you,

_____ me too.

And when my love _____,

You come and _____.

If a man could _____,

I'd be with you.

_____, beside you all the way.

If the world should _____ slowly down to die,

I'd spend the _____ you.

And when the _____,

Then one by one the _____,

Then you and I would _____.

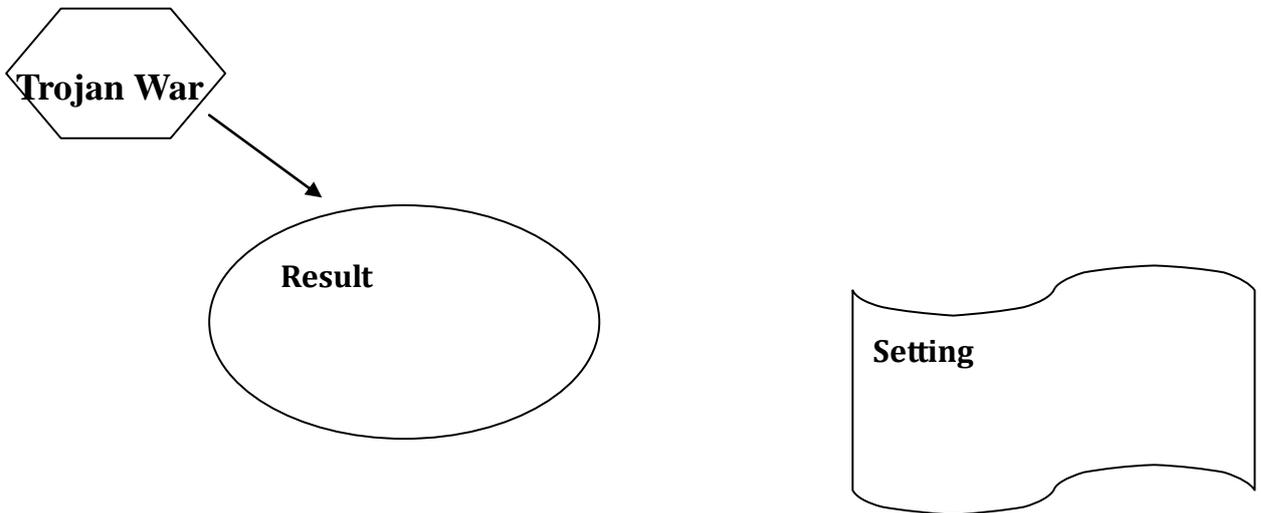
Setting the background – whole class

Comprehension questions:

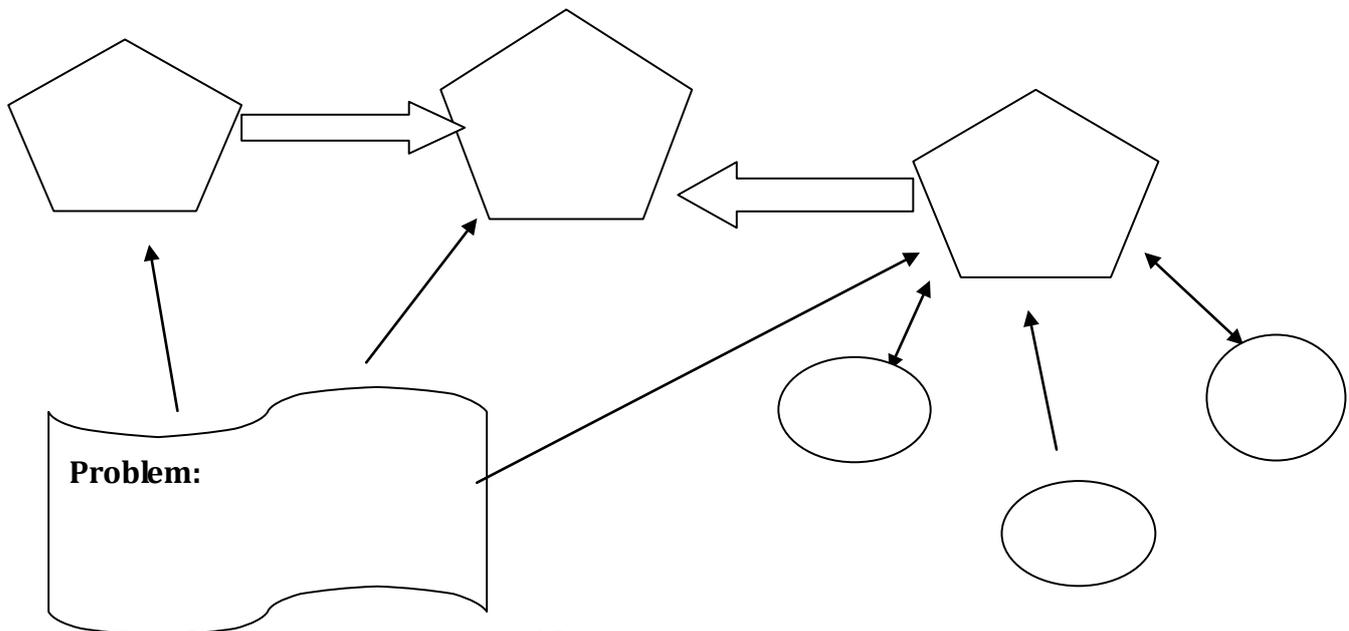
1. What is the theme of the song “If?”
2. Were you touched by the song? Why or why not?

Brainstorming: What do you know about the Trojan War?

Watch the movie trailer: Troy



Who:

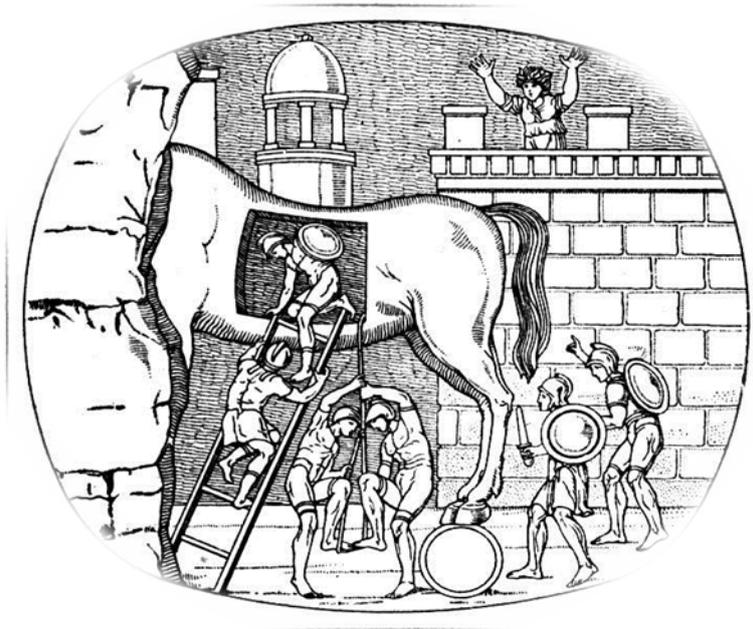


Post reading comprehension check –Advanced

What do you know about this story?

Please answer the following short answer questions according to the text. Work with your partner and ask each other these questions.

1. In the story, what did Paris, the Trojan Prince, fight for?
2. Who are the three goddesses who offered gifts to Paris?
3. Where was Helen from?
4. Where did Spartan soldiers hide themselves to get into Troy?
5. How many years did the battle between Troy and Sparta last?



Patterns in Use Worksheet [Advanced Level]

Rewrite the sentences by using the following patterns.

1 S + V + N(P), who/which/whom/whose . . .

- 1 Helen is one of my friends in class. I have known her for a long time.
 Helen
- 2 Joe is very active and friendly. He is my classmate.
- 3 Lauren recommended a French restaurant to us, La Madeleine. We went to La Madeleine yesterday.
- 4 Susan has only one sister named Ann. Ann lives in Taichung. Ann is a nurse.
 Susan's sister Ann
- 5 The Sun is the center of the Solar system. It gives the Earth light and heat.
- 6 Jennifer Aniston is a famous TV star. Her eyes are green.
- 7 Mumbai is the largest city in India. It attracts many tourists every year.
 Mumbai
- 8 Mary just picked up Albert at the airport. He is Mary's little brother.
 Mary just

2 V₁-ing/V₂-en V₁ . . .

- 1 Kathy, who is brushing her teeth, will go to the dentist later.
- 2 Andrew, who sits next to me, is a lawyer.
- 3 Mr. Robinson, who speaks Chinese and English, works as a guide in the museum.
- 4 This railway station, which was built in 1900, is ready to be rebuilt in two months.
- 5 Meredith, who just had a big bite of the hamburger, let out a scream because she saw a cockroach in it.
- 6 Those magazines, which were just sent to the bookstore, will be labeled and shelved according to category.
- 7 Buenos Aires, which is located in Argentina, is the second largest city in South America.
- 8 Wanhua District, which has many cultural sites and historic buildings, is the oldest district in Taipei City.



Your choice: Basic level

If you were Paris, would you choose power, wisdom or Helen, and why would you choose it?

Discuss with your partners; be prepared to tell your choice to the class.

Your opinion: Intermediate level

Do you think Paris did the right thing by taking Helen away back to his land, and why?

Discuss with your partners.

Your story: Advanced level

Please create a new ending to this story. **What happens after Troy was taken by the Spartans?** What would the Spartan king and Paris do in your version of the story?

Advanced Level

Choose one from the following two topics and write an article of about 300 words

Add a twist or sequel to *A Human War for a Battle Among Goddesses*

- A. If you were Paris, would you make a different choice from the three Goddesses? If so, how would you like the story to develop differently?
- B. Nothing is mentioned about the ending for Paris and Helen. Try to write a sequel for them and let your imagination run as wild as you can!

Topic _____



You can continue writing on the back of this worksheet.

Appendix 5

S1A Lesson 7 Differentiated Instruction Teaching Demonstration

One-minute-reflection result

1. Words used to describe your feeling about this class:

Words used	#	Words used	#	Words used	#
good	5	interesting	6	great	3
exciting	3	comfortable	2	helpful	1
creative	1	innovative	1	attractive	1
wonderful	1	awesome	1	happy	1
fun	1	energetic	1	perfect	1
fantastic	1	So so	1		

2. Your feeling about the design for song listening:

Very helpful	12	Suits your need	21	No help at all	0
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3. Your feeling about a the design for grammar:

Very helpful	13	Suits your need	20	No help at all	0
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4. Your attitude toward having this kind of class:

Yes (accept it)	30	No (reject it)	1
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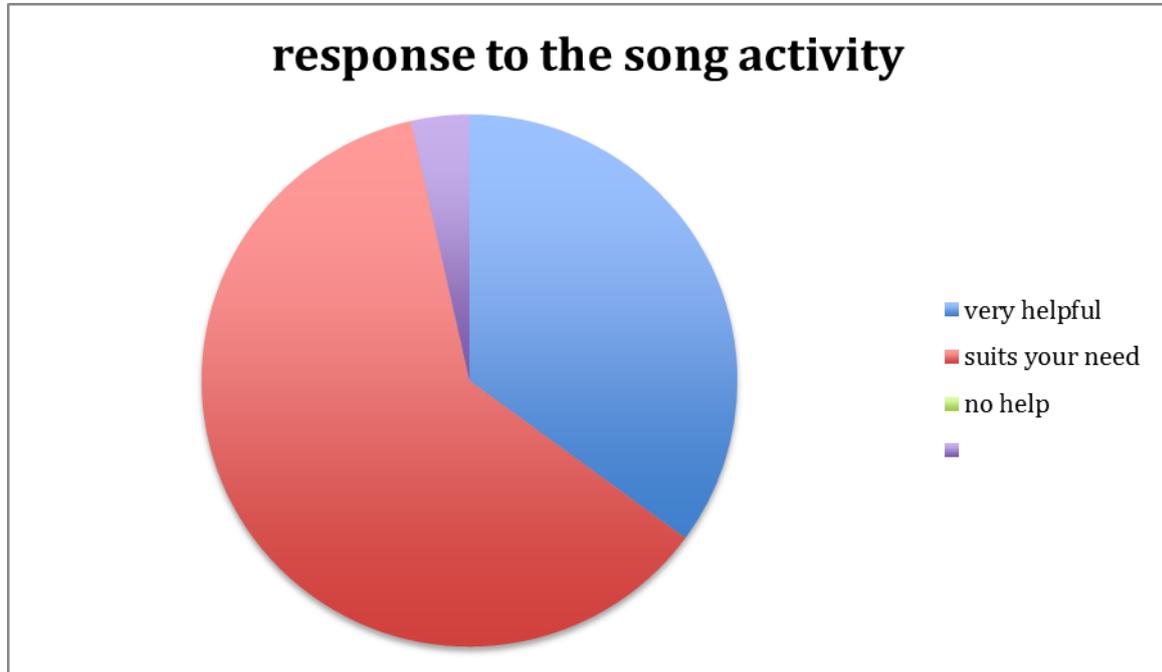
5. Suggestions to your teacher:

Good	Improvement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> This is helpful to both teacher and students. We can learn better with the worksheets designed according to different levels. It's good to have class like this. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Grammar teaching too fast. Time control. No chance to have group discussion. More music next time. Students may copy answers from lower group.

Overall students' feedback toward the whole class design:

1. 30 out of 31 students gave positive remarks.

2. Students' feedback regarding DI song activity:



3. Students' feedback toward the grammar DI activity:

The response showed similar result as the song activity.

4. Students' acceptance of DI class:

30 of 31 embraced it.