LESSON PLAN

The Returned Californian

GRADES	TIME	READING LEVEL
9+	50 min	3

Lesson flow



5 min

Opening Hook

Begin with a light-hearted anecdote about misunderstandings that arise from differing perspectives. Ask students to share any funny experiences related to this theme.

15–20 min

Story Exploration

Read the story aloud as a class. Encourage students to pay attention to the characters' interactions and the humorous elements of the narrative.

15 min

Analysis Exercises

- Break students into small groups to discuss the significance of the characters and their roles.

10 min

Application/Reflection

Ask students to write a short paragraph reflecting on a time when a change in perspective helped them cope with a challenge.

5 min

Assessment Strategy

Collect and review the paragraphs to assess comprehension of the moral and the personal connection to the story.

STORY OVERVIEW

- **Title and Moral/Theme**: The Returned Californian; The transformative power of perspective can bring hope and joy, even in dire circumstances.
- **Plot Summary**: In this humorous and thought-provoking story, a man is hanged but finds himself at the gates of Heaven, where he is confronted by Saint Peter. When asked where he is from, the man proudly claims California, prompting Saint Peter to rejoice at the “joyous tidings” he brings. The story humorously explores themes of death, origins, and the impact of perspective on happiness.
- **Key Characters**:
  - **The Man**: Represents the idea that one's experiences can be viewed positively, even in death.
  - **Saint Peter**: Symbolizes the openness to joy and the importance of perspective; his reaction highlights the story's moral lesson.

LESSON FUNDAMENTALS

- **Learning Objectives**:
  - Students will be able to identify the moral of the story.
  - Students will analyze the significance of character actions and dialogue.
  - Students will discuss how humor can be used to convey serious themes in literature.
  - Students will relate the story's themes to personal experiences and contemporary issues.
- **Discussion Questions**:
  1. What does the man's origin symbolize in the context of the story?
  2. How does humor play a role in delivering the story's moral lesson?
  3. Can you think of a real-life situation where perspective changed the outcome of a difficult situation?
- **Required Materials**:
  - Copies of "The Returned Californian"
  - Whiteboard and markers
  - Notebooks for student reflections

✓ Original text available on the story page.