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The Last Leaf

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Target Skills		
1. Critical Thinking Skills		
1-1	Facts and Opinions	✓
1-2	Definition & Meaning of Words	✓
1-3	Argument Structure=Assertion +Reason +Evidence	✓
1-4a	Types of Reasoning— Deductive	
1-4b	Types of Reasoning— Inductive	
1-5	Strong vs. Weak Reasons	
1-6	Common Fallacies	
1-7	Types of Evidence	✓
1-8	Test of Evidence	
1-9	Making inferences	✓
2. Argumentative Discourse Skills		
2-1	Soliciting and Expressing Opinions	✓
2-2	Introducing and Challenging Reasons and Support	✓
2-3	Agreeing	
2-4	Disagreeing	
2-5	Questioning	✓
2-6	Using Disclaimers	

In this lesson, students will learn how to make reasonable inferences by applying their prior knowledge and extracting relevant information from the reading. Besides, they will learn to ask factual questions based on the reading and to introduce their stance and justification concerning a real-life debate on a medical issue which can be branched out from the reading.

Reading

Paragraph 1-14:
At the top… last leaf fell.

Teaching Tips

● Read through the story, and then try to think of some factual questions (factual questions are questions based on the information provided in the text. They can be started with such key words as "What is (are)...? Who...? When...? How much...? How many...? What is an example of...?") For example, if the text states that "**At the top of a three-story brick building…Sue and Joanna had their studio,**" then you can ask, "Where did Sue and Joanna have their studio?"

Worksheet

Asking Factual Questions (Appendix One) (1-1, 2-5)

Encourage students to look deeper into the story by defining the word "masterpiece" and give their interpretation of the word.

● Take a further look at an important word in the story. Where is the word "masterpiece" located in the text?

> Ans: paragraph 6, 7, and 14

Worksheet

Definition and Meaning of a Word (Appendix Two) (1-2)

● Read the story again and learn to make inferences from the story.[1]. For example, when do you think the story takes place? What makes you say so?" Where can you find the evidence from the text? (1-9)

Possible Answers and Follow-up Questions

> S1:That was in May. In November the cold, wet weather brought sickness.
> →**T's response:** How can you combine the evidence with your prior knowledge?
> S1: November is the winter for the northern hemisphere. People tend to get sick in the winter.
> →**T's response:** So your inferences would be?
> S1: The story takes places in winter.

Encourage students to take the following steps to learn how to make inferences (a strategy that requires people to combine contextual evidence with their prior knowledge):

1. Pair up and read the questions on your worksheet

2. Seek evidence from the text, and associate the evidence with your prior knowledge.

3. Make inferences based on the contextual evidence and your prior knowledge.

Worksheet

Making Inferences (Appendix Three) (1-9)

● [1] The teacher can show them two clips from YouTube:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSUpA3w7gzc&feature=related and

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gg0Mzj-iSws&feature=related

● Seek the evidence from the text, associate it with your prior knowledge, and discuss which of the statements can be reasonably inferred from the story, and why.

Worksheet

Test of Inferences (Appendix Four) (1-9)

● In the story, the doctor told Joanna that if she has strong will to live, then she will live. Do you agree one's will power play an important role when it comes to a life or death situation? If yes, should the doctor tell her that she is very ill honestly, or should the doctor withhold the prognosis so that she can believe she will live?

Now divide the class into groups of four. Each group will discuss the proposition, "Health care professionals should withhold the prognosis from dying patients (12 years old and above)," by listing in the worksheet the pros and cons and the support they can come up with off the top of their head for those reasons (i.e., facts, examples, statistics, testimonies and/or some explanation). Students then, as a group, will be asked to do some research at home with each student logging onto one of the four websites suggested by the teacher (see below) and jot down the information either in Chinese or English (depending on the language used for disseminating the information) in the worksheet.

Worksheet

To Tell or Not to Tell, That is a Question (Appendix Five) (1-3, 1-7, 2-1, 2-2)

Websites:

1. "Should health care professionals ever withhold the prognosis from dying patients (12 years old to adult)"

http://www.uky.edu/Classes/PHI/350/truth.htm　(英文)

2. 醫學倫理

http://www.tma.tw/ethical/ethical_01.asp (中文)

3. Is it ethical for a doctor to withhold information from a patient?

http://www.helium.com/debates/518803-is-it-ethical-for-a-doctor-to-withhold-information-from-a-patient/side_by_side

4. Truth-telling and Withholding Information

http://depts.washington.edu/bioethx/topics/truth.html

5. Documentary:多桑的代辦事項　Ending Notes

http://www.atmovies.com.tw/movie/film_fejp71941516_now.html

Appendix One

Asking Factual Questions:

After reading the story, please think of some factual questions, i.e. questions based on the direct recall of the facts in the text, and write the questions down on the left column. Then ask your classmates the questions and write down their answers to your questions.

Factual Questions:

Key words: What is (are)...? Who...? When...? How much...? How many...? What is an example of...?

Questions	Answers from your classmates:
Where did Sue and Joanna have their studio?	Their studio was at the top of a three-story building in Greenwich Village.

Appendix One—**Answer Key**

Asking Factual Questions:

After reading the story, please think of some factual questions, i.e. questions based on the direct recall of the facts in the text, and write the questions down on the left column. Then ask your classmates the questions and write down their answers to your questions.

Factual Questions:

Key words: What is (are)...? Who...? When...? How much...? How many...? What is an example of...?

Questions	Answers from your classmates:
Where did Sue and Joanna have their studio?	Their studio was at the top of a three-story building in Greenwich Village.
Where does the story take place?	It takes place in Greenwich Village. (in New York)
Where did Sue and Joanna first meet?	They met at a restaurant.
When did Sue and Joanna meet?	They met in May
Who are the main characters in the story?	Sue, Joanna, and Mr. Behrman
What time of the year did Joanna get pneumonia?	Joanna got pneumonia in November.
How many leaves were there on the ivy vine when Joanna started counting backward?	There were twelve leaves on the ivy vine.
What was Mr. Behrman's occupation?	He was a painter.
How old was Mr. Behrman?	He was past sixty.
What was an example of Mr. Behrman's failure in art?	He had never painted a masterpiece. He painted nothing but spent much of time drinking.
What was found in Mr. Behrman's room when he got sick?	A lantern, a ladder, and some brushes and a palette with green and yellow colors mixed on it.
What happened to Mr. Behrman in the end of the story?	He died of Pneumonia.
What was Mr. Behrman's masterpiece?	It was the last leaf that he painted on the wall for Joanna.

Appendix Two

Definition and Meaning of a Word

What is a Masterpiece?

Please locate the word "Masterpiece" in the text, and look it up in the traditional or online dictionaries. Then discuss the meanings with your classmates and form your own meaning based on the present story.

Name of the Dictionary	**Definitions**
• Merriam-Webster Dictionary http://www.m-w.com/	Masterpiece
• Cambridge Dictionaries Online http://dictionary.cambridge.org	Masterpiece
• Wordsmyth http://www.wordsmyth.net	Masterpiece
• Name (and url) of Your own dictionary: _____ _____	Masterpiece

Based on the definitions you have read, discuss with your classmates how you would define the word "masterpiece" in your own words.

Why was the painting of the leaf in O'Henry's story "The Last Leaf" considered a masterpiece?

Appendix Two—**Answer Key**

Definition and Meaning of a Word

What is a Masterpiece?

Please locate the word "Masterpiece" in the text, and look it up in the traditional or online dictionaries. Then discuss the meanings with your classmates and form your own meaning based on the present story.

Name of the Dictionary	**Definitions**
• Merriam-Webster Dictionary http://www.m-w.com/	Masterpiece *1. a work done with extraordinary skill;* especially *: a supreme intellectual or artistic achievement* *2. a piece of work presented to a medieval guild as evidence of qualification for the rank of master.*
• Cambridge Dictionaries Online http://dictionary.cambridge.org	Masterpiece *1. a work of art such as a painting, film or book which is done or made with great skill, and is often a person's greatest work* *2. a skilful or clever example of something*
• Wordsmyth http://www.wordsmyth.net	Masterpiece *1. a work of art of the highest quality* *2. a person's finest piece of work, esp. that of an artist or craftsperson*
• Name (and url) of Your own dictionary: *Macmillan Dictionary http://www.macmillandictionary.com/*	Masterpiece *1. an excellent painting, book, piece of music, etc., or the best work of art that a particular artist, writer, musician, etc. has ever produced* *2. an extremely good example of something*

Based on the definitions you have read, discuss with your classmates how you would define the word "masterpiece" in your own words.

A masterpiece is a great work of art, like the painting of "last leaf" in the story. It is a fantastic creation, the highest achievement and the best in one's ability as an artist.

Why was the painting of the leaf in O'Henry's story "The Last Leaf" considered a masterpiece?

By painting the last leaf clinging to its stem against the wall, Mr. Behrman sacrificed his life to keep his friend's hope alive and thus saved her through his art. That is the greatest achievement in his life.

Appendix Three   *Making Inferences*

Question	Evidence from Text	Prior Knowledge	My Inference
1. When do you think the story takes place? What makes you say so?	*...That was in May. In November the cold, wet weather brought sickness...*	*November is one of the winter months for the northern hemisphere. People tend to get sick in winter.*	*The story takes place in winter.*
2. What does Greenwich Village look like? What can we see on the street in that neighborhood?			
3. Do you think Sue and Joanna were well-off? Please explain your answer.			
4. Why did Sue say she must go talk to Mr. Behrman after she heard what Joanna said about the leaves? (What does this reaction of Sue's say about their relationship with Mr. Behrman?)			
5. When did Mr. Behrman first have the idea of painting the leaf on the wall?			
6. How did Joanna later feel about her original wish to die?			
7. How would Joanna feel after knowing Mr. Behrman died because of drawing the leaf for her?			

Appendix Three—**Answer Key**

Making Inferences (p.1=paragraph 1)

Question	Evidence from Text	Prior Knowledge	My Inference
1. When do you think the story takes place? What makes you say so?	*…That was in May. In November the cold, wet weather brought sickness…(p.2)*	*November is one of the winter months for the northern hemisphere. People tend to get sick in winter.*	*The story takes place in winter.*
2. What does Greenwich Village look like? What can we see on the street in that neighborhood?	*…Greenwich Village, where many artists lived. Sue and Joanna had their studio. (p.1)*	*Places where many artists live tend to be located in poor communities. There may be some art displays in the neighborhood.*	*We may see some graffiti on the wall. There may be some musicians playing music on the street. And the buildings may look somewhat old or even shabby.*
3. Do you think Sue and Joanna were well-off? Please explain your answer.	*…where many artists lives…They decided to become roommates. (p.1)…wet weather brought sickness…ill with pneumonia. (p.2)*	*Poor people, for not being able to afford their own place, tend to share a room or apartment with others. Also, unable to pay for the electricity bill for the heat, they could get sick more easily in winter.*	*They were not well-off because they were artists who shared an apartment together. And one of them got sick because of the cold and wet weather, which might mean that they don't have a cozy environment to live in.*
4. Why did Sue say she must go talk to Mr. Behrman after she heard what Joanna said about the leaves? (What does this reaction of Sue's say about their relationship with Mr. Behrman?)	*"Oh, I have never heard of such nonsense"…paint a masterpiece. (p.5~7)*	*When we cannot help someone we care deeply about, we might turn to someone who cares about us, whom we feel close to, and whom we trust.*	*Sue felt helpless about Joanna's illness so she turned to their elder friend and neighbor, Mr. Behrman, to help Joanna. We can see that Mr. Behrman liked them and he was willing to help them. They must be very close.*
5. When did Mr. Behrman first have the idea of painting the leaf on the wall?	*Sue told Behrman...will paint a masterpiece. Yes! (p.7)*	*When friends consult us about their problems, we normally would tell them what they can do. When we think their problems are beyond them, we usually would step in and do something to help them.*	*Behrman had the idea when Sue told him about Joanna's feeling about the falling leaves. So Behrman said he would paint a masterpiece. We can know that the masterpiece he said might be the leaf.*
6. How did Joanna later feel about her original wish to die?	*I've been a bad girl...how wrong I was. It is a sin to want to die. (p.11)*	*We should not commit suicide nor lose our will to live. The wish to die is not encouraged in many societies and religions such as Christianity.*	*Joanna was regretful about her previous pessimistic attitude toward life. She said she was wrong. She might be a Christian and that's why she said her wish to die was a*

			"sin."
7. How would Joanna feel after knowing Mr. Behrman died because of drawing the leaf for her?	*Old Mr. Behrman…fond of Sue and Joanna. (p.6) …I've been a bad girl…a sin to want to die. (p.11) …Didn't you wonder why it never moved…last leaf fell. (p.14)*	*If a close friend died because of us, we would be in deep grief. It was like the friend sacrificed him/herself to save our lives.*	*She would be grieving over the death of her old friend. She also would regret feeling so pessimistic waiting to die, which she considered a "sin" later on. If she could have had strong willpower to live, her old friend wouldn't have to sacrifice his life for her.*

Appendix Four:

Test of Inferences

Inference	Evidence from Text	Prior Knowledge	reasonable or not
1. Neither the girls nor Mr. Behrman was wealthy.	*...where many artists lives...They decided to become roommates. (p.1)...wet weather brought sickness...ill with pneumonia. (p.2)Old Mr. Behrman was a painter...failure in art...spent much of his time drinking (p.6)...when someone found him in the room...(p,14)*	*Artists tend to be poor unless they find fame. During O Henry's time, Greenwich was a place for poor artists. Poor people would share rooms together and they would get seriously ill in winter, for they are not able to afford proper medical care. Besides, we learn from TV dramas or movies that poor people may try to escape the harsh reality via alcohol.*	*Reasonable, because they don't seem to be famous painters. The girls shared apartments together, and the old man was a failure painting nothing but only drinking. When they were sick, they tended to get more serious without good medical care.*
2. Sue and Joanna were lesbians.			
3. Though living in the same building, Mr. Behrman and the girls didn't have much interaction because Mr. Behrman was a fierce old man and drank a lot.			
4. Mr. Behrman already had the idea of helping Joanna by painting the leaf on the wall when he said he would paint a masterpiece one day.			
5. The building Sue and Joanna lived in was in a close distance from the building the ivy vine was crawling on.			

6. Mr. Behrman left all his possessions to those two girls.			
7. Sue knew all along that Mr. Behrman painted the leaf on the wall just to save Joanna's life.			

Appendix Four—Answer key

Test of Inferences   (p.1=paragraph 1)

Inference	Evidence from Text	Prior Knowledge	reasonable or not
1. Neither the girls nor Mr. Behrman was wealthy.	*…where many artists lives…They decided to become roommates. (p.1)…wet weather brought sickness…ill with pneumonia. (p.2)Old Mr. Behrman was a painter…failure in art…spent much of his time drinking (p.6)…when someone found him in the room…(p,14)*	*Artists tend to be poor unless they find fame. During O Henry's time, Greenwich was a place for poor artists. Poor people would share rooms together and they would get seriously ill in winter, for they are not able to afford proper medical care. Besides, we learn from TV dramas or movies that poor people may try to escape the harsh reality via alcohol.*	*Reasonable, because they don't seem to be famous painters. The girls shared apartments together, and the old man was a failure painting nothing but only drinking. When they were sick, they tended to get more serious without good medical care.*
2. Sue and Joanna were lesbians.	*They had met at a restaurant…become roommates. (p.1) Sue cried and cried…(p.4) …Sue came to her bed and put one arm around her. (p.13) …Darling, look out the window…(p.14)*	*Our impressions of artists are people who are more liberal. And sometimes Hollywood movies depict artists as homosexuals while this might be a myth.*	*Unreasonable. We need to more specific information to allow us to draw the conclusion that Sue and Joanna are lesbians. The facts that they were female artists who live together in New York, where there is freedom of expression and sexual identity, that Sue cared so much about Joanna and tried to help her in every way, and that Sue showed intimacy in her words and physical contact are still not sufficient enough for the conclusion that they are lesbians.*
3. Though living in the same building, Mr. Behrman and the girls didn't have much interaction because Mr. Behrman was a fierce old man and drank a lot.	*…I must go talk to Mr. Behrman. (p.5) Old Mr. Behrman was a painter…fond of Sue and Joanna. (p.6)Sue told Behrman…Yes! (p.7)*	*We usually don't like to talk to our neighbors who drink a lot. If this kind of neighbor likes us, we might have more interactions. If not, we don't bother to interact much with them.*	*Unreasonable. If they didn't have much interaction, the fierce old Behrman wouldn't be willing to help them. Besides, the text already mentioned, he was fond of them, which means they must have*

			interaction. In addition, when facing problems, Sue immediately thought about turning to Behrman.
4. Mr. Behrman already had the idea of helping Joanna by painting the leaf on the wall when he said he would paint a masterpiece one day.	*Sue told Behrman what …I will paint a masterpiece…(p.7)*	*If we like someone, we are more willing to help him/her in whatever way we can. Besides, we know the title of the literary work usually captures the crux of the story.*	*Reasonable. The title, Joanna's depressing words about leaves, and Behrman's response about his intention to paint a masterpiece already suggests that the masterpiece might be the leaf.*
5. The building Sue and Joanna lived in was in a close distance from the building the ivy vine was crawling on.	*The next morning…what had happened? …It was the last on the vine. (p.8)Yet…the lone ivy leaf clung to its stem against the wall…(p.10)*	*We thought that we could tell if something is real or not within a close range. It wouldn't be as easy to tell when the thing is being placed at a distance.*	*Unreasonable. Joanna would be able to tell the difference between a real leaf or an artifact within a closer distance, especially when it was a lone ivy leaf against the wall.*
6. Mr. Behrman left all his possessions to those two girls.	*Old Mr. Behrman was a painter who lived…fond of Sue and Joanna. (p.6) …Mr. Behrman died of …when someone found him…It's Behrman's masterpiece… (p.14)*	*We usually make a will in which we specify to whom we will leave our possessions when we know we're about to die, and when we indeed have valuables to pass on. For people who are poor and thus probably do not have many possessions and for those who don't foresee their imminent death, it's less likely that they will make a will.*	*Unreasonable. Although Behrman didn't seem to have other close friends in the story and he was fond of the girls, he probably didn't have much to give to them, for he was poor. Besides, he was in a hurry to carry out his plan to save Joanna and he didn't know he was about to die so it's less likely that he would draft a will of any kind.*
7. Sue knew all along that Mr. Behrman painted the leaf on the wall just to save Joanna's life.	*Sue told Behrman…masterpiece. Yes!(p.7)*	*When we turn to someone for help and get his/her consent, we know he/she will help us in some way.*	*Unreasonable. When Sue saw the leaf drawn on the wall, she might know it was Mr. Behrman's work. But there is not enough information in the reading suggesting she knew about this plan of Mr. Behrman's all along.*

Appendix Five

To Tell or not to Tell, That is a Question

Step I. Together with your group members brainstorm and fill in your <u>reasons</u> **for** and **against** the proposition, "Healthcare professionals should withhold the prognosis from dying patients (12 years and above)," and the relevant <u>support</u> (facts, examples, statistics, testimonies and/or explanation). After you have gone over all the reasons and support you and your group members have come up with, please fill in your stance, however, temporary, on the issue.

Pros	Cons
Reason 1: *Support:*	Reason 1: *Support:*
Reason 2: *Support:*	Reason 2: *Support:*
Reason 3: *Support:*	Reason 3: *Support:*

I hold_____(affirmative/negative)position considering the issue that healthcare professionals should withhold the prognosis from dying patients (12 years and above). I take that position because _____
_____
(fill in the reason and support that are most convincing to you). My biggest problem with the opposing position is the reason that _____
_____
(fill in the reason and support that are least persuasive to you). Because of these reasons, at this point I believe healthcare professions _____ (should/should not) withhold the prognosis from dying patients (12 years and above).

Step II. As a group, each of you will do some research at home by logging onto one of the five websites and write in the box below the reasons and support in Chinese or English, depending on the language used on the website.

Pros	Cons
Reason 1: *Support:*	Reason 1: *Support:*
Reason 2: *Support:*	Reason 2: *Support:*
Reason 3: *Support:*	Reason 3: *Support:*

My original stance is healthcare professionals _____(should/should not) withhold the prognosis from dying patients (12 years and above). I take that position because
_____
_____
(fill in the reason and support that were most convincing to you). The biggest problem I originally had with the opposing position is the reason that _____ _____
_____
(fill in the reason and support that are least persuasive to you). After the research my group members and I did and information we've found on the issue, I _____ (remain/change) my original position. This is because _____
_____
(the reason/support that you found via research that confirms/sways your position). In view of the above reasons, I'm convinced that healthcare professions _____ (should/should not) withhold the prognosis from dying patients (12 years and above).