“Encouraging optimal language practice through communicative approaches to language learning”

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Four Cases from *The Man Who Mistook his Wife for a Hat* by Oliver Sacks

I. **Preparation**

*Meet with students who have read the same case you have read.*

*Discuss the following points as you prepare to present to a mixed group of students: 1) Person afflicted / Name of affliction; 2) Symptoms of patient; 3) Explanation / Treatment / Other related cases?*

II. **Information-gap**

*Mix into groups of 4 with different cases. Interview each other about the different cases described by Oliver Sacks. You will use this information in the writing task that follows.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Person afflicted / Name of affliction</th>
<th>Symptoms of patient</th>
<th>Explanation / Treatment / Other Cases?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>The Man Who Fell out of Bed</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Cupid’s Disease</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Eyes Right!</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>The Dog Beneath the Skin</em></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
III. **Categorization of Information**

Looking at the 4 cases above, what elements do they share? Divide them into two groups of two cases. Write a category description and which case fits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common category</th>
<th>Example Case 1</th>
<th>Example Case 2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

Find another way to group the four cases into two groups...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common category</th>
<th>Example Case 1</th>
<th>Example Case 2</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>

IV. **Paragraph Writing**

Write a paragraph about these cases: 1) Create a topic sentence that links the 4 cases; 2) Introduce two of the cases (examples) by a common point that you established in Part III with a sentence; 3) Introduce the other two cases the same way; 4) Write a conclusive sentence that wraps up the paragraph.

![Diagram of paragraph structure]

**Topic Sentence**

- Sentence .example .example
- Sentence .example .example

**Conclusive Sentence**
In the article, the author uses a multitude of descriptors to describe McCarthy. Notice how much can be said about one man, how many different words can be used to describe the same characters. Here are some of the descriptors presented in alphabetical order. Try to categorize them under the headings which have been provided for you on the next page.

anti-intellectual  loathed
audacious       lout
base-born        laut
broken-hearted   low
censured          mean
charming           mischief-maker
cheater            mob-organizer
con man             monster

cruel
dangerous
dead-end kid
defeated
demagogue

demon

despised
destroyer
destructive
detested
disowned
evil
exaggerated
fabricator

fake
fanatic

feared
fighter
fishy

formidable
foul
foul-mouthed
frivolous

frustrated
galvanizer


generous


gifted


glory-driven
halft-truths


hated
hell-raiser


hopeless
humiliated


hypocrite


hysterical


illiberal


indifferent


lier


liked
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of Desciptors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need for political control</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dishonest behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His positive traits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stirring up trouble in society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made others afraid</td>
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<tr>
<td>His own feelings about not reaching his goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public's reaction to him at the end</td>
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<tr>
<td>Out for his own gain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extreme behaviors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intentional hateful character</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loser character</td>
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<tr>
<td>Careless approach to his crusade</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**WORD DEFINITIONS:**

**ban:** a legal prohibition

**constitutional:** of or relating to the basic principals and laws of the United States

**defamation:** the act of disgracing another

**epithet:** disparaging or abusive word or phrase

**First Amendment:** of the Constitution of the United States
It reads:
"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

**incitement:** action which excites into activity

**Ku Klux Klan:** a post Civil War society advocating white supremacy; a 20th century secret fraternal group held to confine its membership to American-born Protestant whites

**lynch:** put to death by mob action without legal sanction

**neo:** new; recent

**pluralism:** a state of society in which members of diverse ethnic, racial, religious, or social groups, maintain an autonomous participation in and development of their traditional culture or special interest with the confines of a common civilization

**pornography:** material that depicts erotic behavior and is intended to cause sexual excitement

**slur:** insulting or disparaging remark

**statute:** a law enacted by the legislative branch of government

**swastikas:** a symbol or ornament in the form of a Greek cross with the ends of the arms extended at right angles all in the same rotary direction

**synagogue:** a Jewish congregation
**SEMANTIC FEATURE ANALYSIS**  
"Time to Outlaw Racial Slurs?"

Directions: Work in groups. Discuss the relationship between the vocabulary items and important concepts. For each vocabulary item, place a "+" if you think it is closely related to a concept, a "-" if you think it is not related to a concept, and a "?" if you think it is somewhat related to a concept.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Racism</th>
<th>American Democracy</th>
<th>Outlaw/Censorship</th>
<th>Violence</th>
<th>Free Expression</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ku Klux Klan</td>
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<td>swastikas</td>
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<td>racial slurs &amp; epithets</td>
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<td>lynching of blacks</td>
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<td>burning of synagogues</td>
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<td>group defamation</td>
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<td>group-defamation statutes</td>
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<td>constitutional</td>
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<td>First Amendment</td>
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<td>bans</td>
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<td>neo-Nazi group</td>
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<td>pornography</td>
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<td>incitement to violence</td>
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<td>psychological pain</td>
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<td>prohibiting hate speech</td>
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<tr>
<td>pluralism</td>
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<td>robust political debate</td>
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Questionnaire #2

A. Read the text.

"A House in the Sky" (from Countdown!)

Birds live high in trees, but this tree house, on an island in Washington State, is not for birds. It is a summer house for a young couple, Jeff and Judith Bodony. Jeff is a carpenter. He and his wife built their house around a very tall tree. The tree grows through the center of the house. The tree house is 44 feet (13m) above the ground. The Bodonys built the house in five weeks. It was very, very cheap. It cost only $700.

When people go in or out of the house, they climb a tall ladder. They use a rope to pull up water and food. The tree house is cool and comfortable in the summer but very cold in the winter. From October to May, the Bodonys live in the city.

B. Answer the questions in Group A and Group B. Circle the best answer.

Group A:
1. Jeff and Judith Bodony have ___________.
   a. many birds   b. more than one house   c. an island

2. Jeff and his wife built a tree house because they ___________.
   a. are carpenters   b. needed a place to live   c. wanted a vacation home

3. Living in this house is always ___________.
   a. difficult   b. comfortable   c. cold

Group B:
4. The tree house is for ___________.
   a. birds   b. people   c. children

5. The tree house cost ___________.
   a. $700   b. $7000   c. $70,000

6. When you go in the tree house, you ___________.
   a. climb stairs   b. climb a ladder   c. take an elevator

C. Ask for the answer key. Correct your answers.

D. Answer the following questions. Circle a, b or c.

1. Which group of questions was more difficult to answer?
   a. Group A   b. Group B   c. Group A and Group B are the same.
   Why?

2. Which group of questions helped you learn more?
   a. Group A   b. Group B   c. Group A and Group B are the same.
   Why?

3. Which group of questions was more interesting?
   a. Group A   b. Group B   c. Group A and Group B are the same.
   Why?