

## **Daydream by Roberta Allen: A Reading Lesson**

### **Introduction:**

This activity is for students with high beginner to middle intermediate skills; they are beginning to know enough English to work with others reading, speaking and writing. Communication has begun.

### **Pre-reading:**

1. Spelling. The students spell words as the teacher pronounces them. Students correct misspellings guided by the teacher and discuss what part of speech each word is.
2. Writing in a group. Using correction marks. Students work in groups figuring out how to spell words, define them and use them correctly in sentences. Working together, students can observe each other and learn how to work better on their own.
3. Individual Work. Index Cards. Students work alone. After choosing a word, on one side of an index card, students write the word and indicate what part of speech it is. On the other side, they define it and write a sentence using it. Then students take turns standing in front of the class to spell their word, say what part of speech it is, define it, and give a sentence using it.

### **Reading:**

The story is read aloud by the teacher, silently by the students, and then guided by the teacher, students read sentences aloud, and make observations about the sentences, guided by the teacher as they go along.

### **Post-reading:**

1. Writing and speaking. A short essay (a paragraph) is written by the students about their favorite daydreams, and corrected by the teacher. These essays become speeches that each student gives in front of the class. Rubrics that have been created by the class are used by the students to critique each speech.
2. Fill-in-the-Blanks. Students review the words they have learned and read in the story.

### Objective:

The main objective of this lesson is to give students the best tools and skills possible for reading a story in English.

### Method:

Teacher talk and direction  
Individuals, groups of three

### Materials:

The story *Daydream*  
Bilingual dictionaries

Index cards, hand outs  
Newsprint and markers

### Pre-reading One: Spelling Test

1. Before reading *Daydream*, students spell words from the story, decide what part of speech they are, define them, and write sentences using them.

First, students have pencil and paper, and are ready to listen and write. The teacher says the word, repeats it, and may use the word in a sentence. And may say the word again:

daydream	tight	bend
shriek	backseat	plead
gambler	press	wilder
mountains	gleefully	steep
top speed	hairpin	either
roller-coaster ride	honk	disturb
lose	round	row

2. The teacher writes the correct spelling on the board while the students look at the words and correct the spelling mistakes that they have made. It's not important for the teacher to see or correct their mistakes. Let them do it.

3. Review what part of speech each word is. Is it a noun, verb, adjective, or an adverb?

Nouns:	Verbs:	Adjectives:	Adverbs:
daydream	daydream	tight	gleefully
shriek	shriek	round	either
gambler	lose	hairpin	
mountains	honk	wilder	
top speed	round	steep	
roller-coaster ride	bend		
backseat	plead		
press	steep		
hairpin	disturb		
honk	row		
round			
bend			
row			

One discussion can be about how some words in English can be both nouns and verbs. The teacher can mention obvious ones like *bend*, *row*, *honk*, *daydream*, and *shriek*. *Round* can be a noun, verb or adjective.

How many words do the students know? Students should be using their bi-lingual dictionaries as the discussion goes along. If students don't know a word, tell them to look it up.

**To the teacher:** Parts of Speech Review. A good exercise is to review the parts of speech. I have a simple Parts of Speech Review that examines nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. You will find it at the end of this lesson in the Hand Outs.

### Pre-reading Two: Defining Words, Writing Sentences and Correcting Them

Put students in groups of three, and assign each group four, five or six words. Have them write sentences together on newsprint.

When students are finished, hang up the newsprint, and have students read and correct any mistakes.

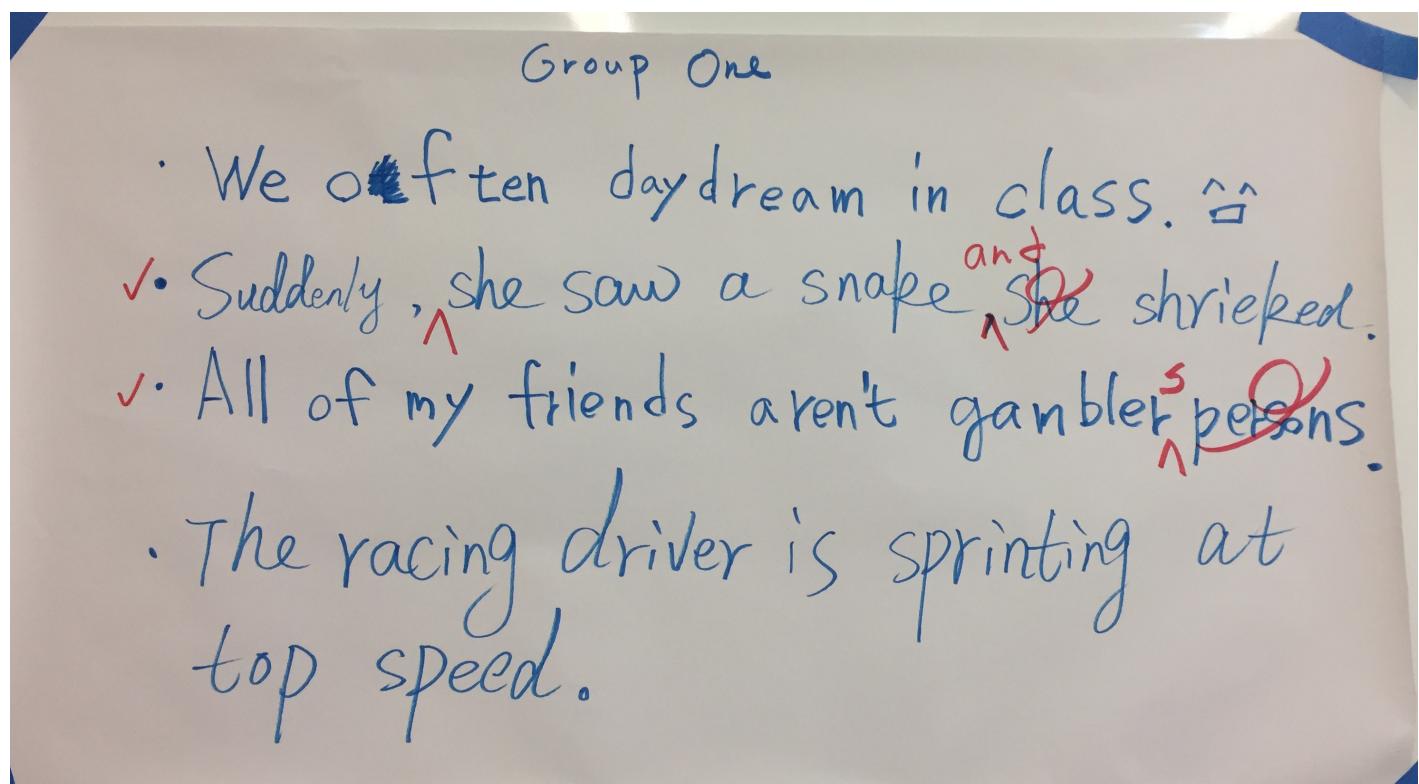
## To the teacher:

I did the corrections in this particular lesson, not the students. It was the first time the class worked together so I modeled the correcting. Honestly, any correction mark, even a simple check, will do as long as it designates the spot where an error has occurred: knowing where the mistake is is what is important.

Using specific correction marks allows teachers to indicate mistakes without correcting the work themselves. Letting students know what kind of correction is needed alerts them to the kind of mistake they have made so they can figure out what they need to do to correct it.

There can be several drafts where teacher and student work together toward a perfect paper, but on each draft the teacher indicates where the correction is needed and the student makes the correct correction. The teacher should never rewrite the student's paper. The student must do that.

For this particular lesson, I first put a check before each sentence that had a mistake in it. I asked the class to look at those sentences to see if they could find the mistakes. Then I used correction marks, and often wrote in the correction as well because it was also a lecture about syntax and parts of speech.

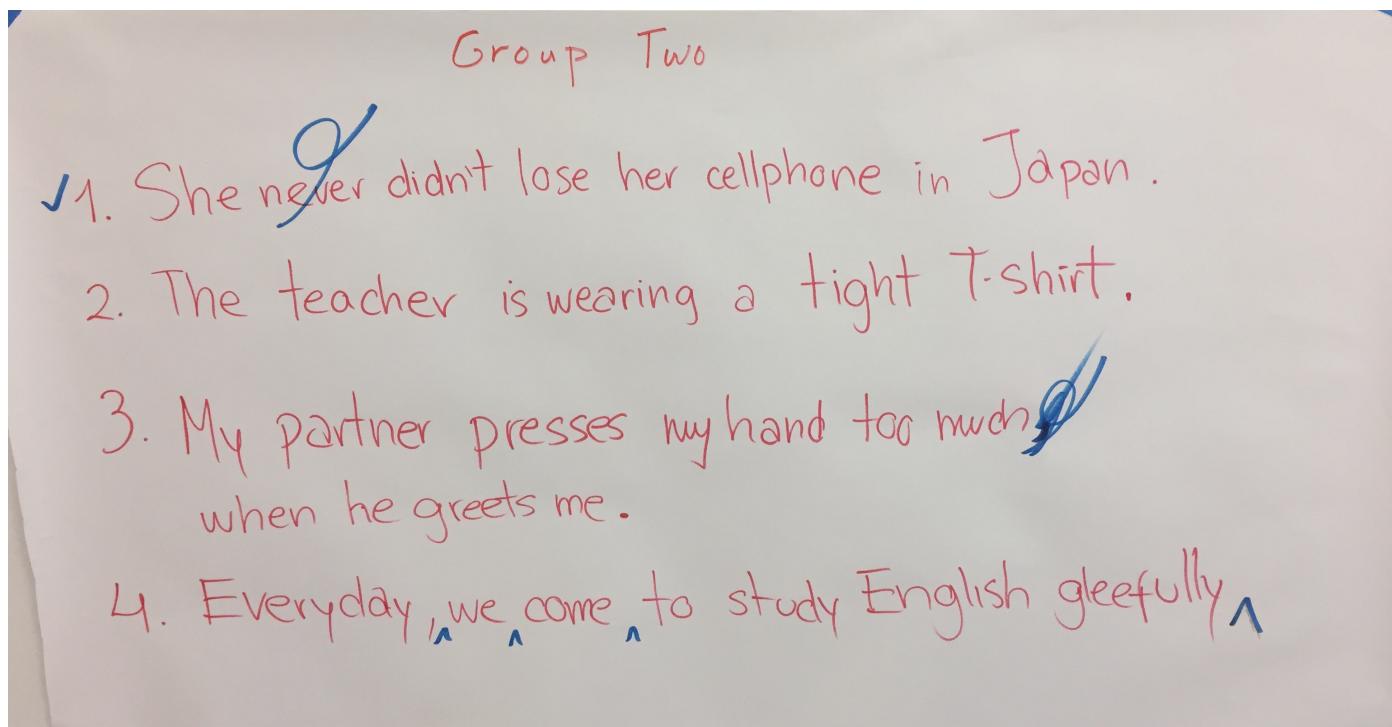


In Group One, for the sentence, *Suddenly, she saw a snake, she shrieked*, there was a discussion about how to write it better. Students came up with

*Suddenly, when she saw a snake, she shrieked.*

*Suddenly, she saw a snake. She shrieked.*

*Suddenly, she saw a snake and shrieked.* Students liked the last sentence best



With Group Two's work, the class discussed, in sentence one, the use of negatives in an English sentence. No double negatives! So the sentence could be written two ways.

*She never lost her cellphone in Japan*

*She didn't lose her cellphone in Japan.*

The class decided that *didn't* was better than *never*.

In sentence four, the class discussed how adverbs can be placed in several positions in a sentence. *Gleefully* could go just about anywhere.

## Group Three

- ✓ 1. When I stop at the traffic signal, don't honk <sup>at</sup> me.

✓ 2. I bend something when I am angry.

3. Lawyer <sup>s</sup> ~~is~~ people who plead with someone in court.

4. The ~~mostly~~ animals in the zoo are wild.

Group Three's sentences gave the class the chance to discuss adjectives. Anger is a noun so in sentence two, *angry* had to replace it. We also discussed the use of the comparative adjective. I wrote out several examples and then wrote a sentence using *wilder* correctly: *The tiger is wilder than the house cat.*

Group Four's work allowed the class to review sentences in the singular third person in the simple present, past and future.

## Group Four

1. She can have either tea or coffee.

2. ✓ Someone disturb me.      Someone disturbance me.  
                                        " disturbed me.

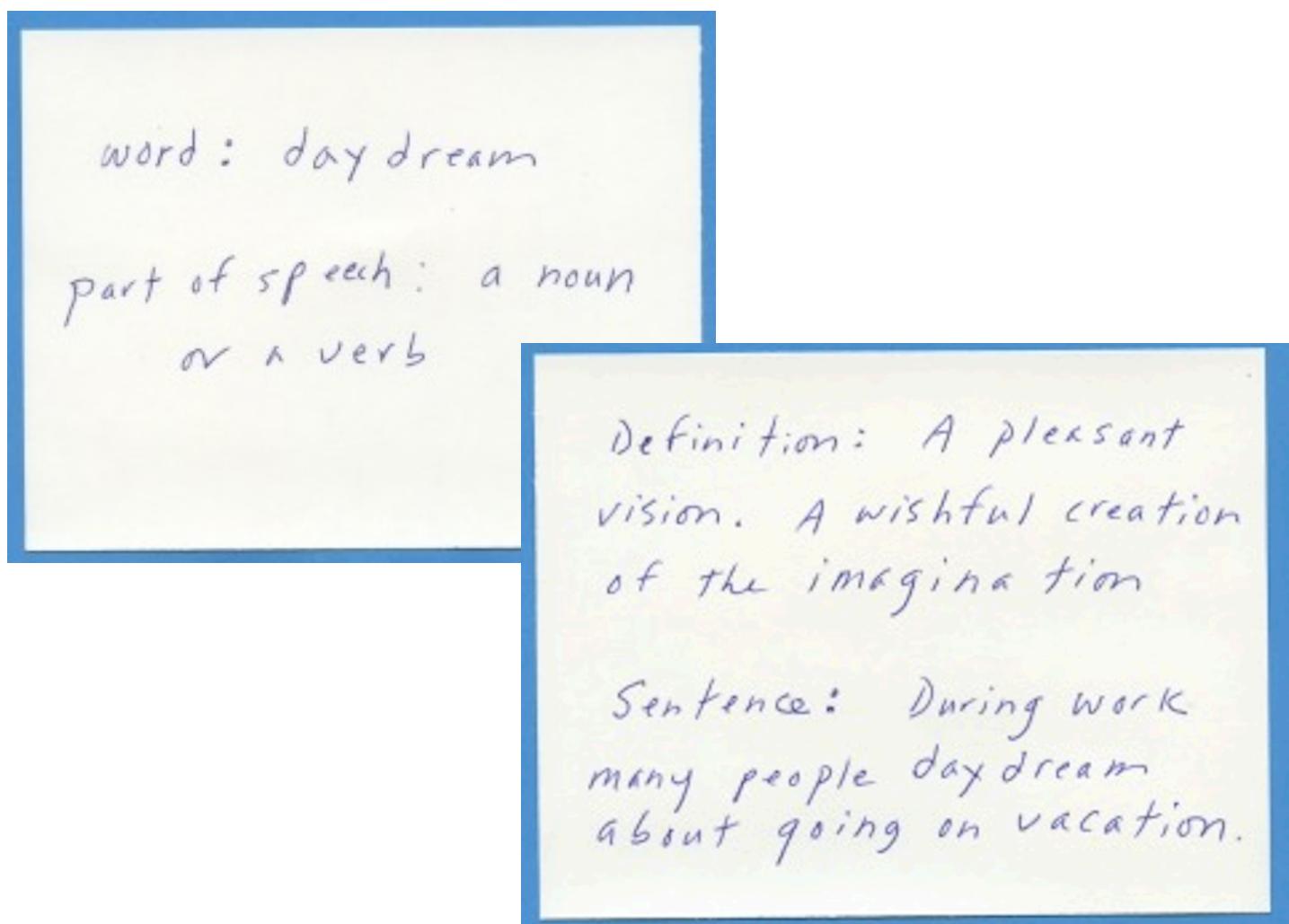
3. ✓ We rowed <sup>the</sup> boat all day.      " will disturb me.

4. The stairs were very steep.

### Pre-reading Three: Index cards.

1. Students pick a word they don't know or want to know better. Once a word is taken, students must choose another. There are twenty-one words so if the class is larger than twenty-one, a few students may do the same word.
2. Hand out index cards. Students are instructed to write their word and the part of speech it is on one side of the card. On the other side of card, they write the definition of the word, and then they write the word in a sentence of their own creation.
3. Speaking. Each student will get up in front of the class, write their word on the board, and tell the class what part of speech it is. Then they will tell the class the definition of the word and read their sentence using it.

*It is always good to give students a little applause before they sit down.*



## **Reading: *Daydream***

Now that the students are familiar with words in the story, hand it out.

First, the teacher reads *Daydream* aloud.

Next, the students read the story silently to themselves. Give them about five minutes. Look around to see when most have finished before going on.

Now, have students read *Daydream* a sentence or two at a time. Open it up for discussion. A lot of this will be improvisation coming from what is generated by the students and the teacher. Let it be fluid. The teacher can lead with questions too. When a student reads the first sentence, a few questions can be asked by the teacher.

"How many subjects and verbs are in the sentence?" There are two: *My half-sister* and *her husband*

"What are the verbs and what tenses are they?" There are two verbs, both in the present, the present progressive and the simple present:

*My half-sister is shrieking.*      *Her husband races.*

"How would these sentences look in the negative and in a Yes/No Question?

*My sister isn't shrieking.*      *Is my sister shrieking?*

*Her husband doesn't race.*      *Does her husband race?*

Subjects and verbs can be examined in every sentence. As the story goes along, the relationships of the people in the car can be discussed in more detail. Who are the oldest and the youngest? What is a little strange about that? What does the age difference between the narrator and the half-sister tell you?

What are the differences between a half sister, a step-sister, and a sister?

Unlike everybody else in the car, the narrator isn't screaming or acting crazy. Why is the narrator so calm? What is the narrator daydreaming about? Is the daydream helping the narrator stay calm? How? Do you think the narrator is a man or a woman? Why?

## **Post-reading Exercises: Writing, Speaking and Filling in the Blanks**

### **Post-reading Exercise One: Writing**

1. Have the students write about something that they daydream about. Let them write a paragraph about it.
2. Sit with each student, or have them come to your desk, one at a time.
3. Make corrections while they watch, and discuss what is good about what they've written, and where they can improve spelling and sentence syntax.
4. Tell them to rewrite it and bring the revised version back to you. Follow the same process again. If students want to write a third draft, let them. But they can end with a second draft.

### **Post-reading Exercise Two: Speaking**

1. Have the students give a little speech about their favorite daydream. They can simply read what they have already written. Repetition is good.
2. Before the speeches, however, the teacher and the class can brainstorm and create a rubric to critique the speeches. This rubric can be very simple with just a few criteria. It does not have to be critical. There can very be simple scores such as

Very good      Good      Needs Improvement

There can be three or four criteria such as

Posture      Eye-contact      Pronunciation      Confidence

### **Post-reading Exercise Three: Fill in the Blanks**

Hand Out. I have created a very simple Fill-in-the-Blanks with the words the students worked on and read in *Daydream*. Give them this exercise in a following class. It could be the next day or next week. The Fill-in-the-Blanks follow in the Hand Outs.

1. Some people \_\_\_\_\_ about travel and some \_\_\_\_\_ about love.
2. Have you ever \_\_\_\_\_ a boat?
3. A simple diet with exercise is the best way to \_\_\_\_\_ weight.
4. Please don't \_\_\_\_\_ the baby. The baby is sleeping.
5. On the \_\_\_\_\_ ride the children \_\_\_\_\_.
6. I wish the driver would stop \_\_\_\_\_ his horn.
7. I did park the car, but it was a \_\_\_\_\_ space to get into.
8. These stairs are \_\_\_\_\_ so be careful when you use them.
9. She \_\_\_\_\_ the lemons very hard to get the juice out.
10. It took the whole day to walk through the high \_\_\_\_\_.
11. He \_\_\_\_\_ with the policeman not to give him a ticket.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ you eat the cake or I will.
13. You have to \_\_\_\_\_ your lips to blow into the flute.
14. The tiger is \_\_\_\_\_ than a Siamese cat.
15. How strong must you be to \_\_\_\_\_ a stick?

daydream honking either mountains tight steep pressed rowed shrieked

roller-coaster daydream lose pleaded bend gleefully disturb round wilder

- ✗ delete = ~~delete~~ ~~delete~~
- C<sup>sp</sup> spelling = ~~speling~~
- O change = range
- ↑ insert = do here
- U reverse these : (these reverse)
- / separate : I like you
- ✓ join : in to
- O → move this : Move this word
- not good English : they is no here
- Change : new york city
- ↗ Indent : First line of paragraph

*Daydream*

**Roberta Allen**

My half sister's husband laughs gleefully as he makes a hairpin turn on the steep mountain road without slowing down or honking the horn first. As we round each bend, my half sister lets out a scream and begs him to slow down. The more she pleads, the wilder he drives. "You'll kill us all!" she cries. But her husband is having too much fun to listen. I don't listen either. I don't let anyone disturb my daydream: I am home in New York with this French boy named Jean. We are rowing on the lake in Central Park. We are having a very good time.

My half sister is shrieking in the front seat of the car while her husband—a gambler like our father—races through the mountains at top speed. This trip feels like a roller-coaster ride. My half sister's husband can't wait to reach Las Vegas and lose his wife's money. Their son and daughter hold each other tight in the backseat where I sit too. My half sister's daughter—who is older than me!—is also shrieking. I keep my nose pressed against the window glass. I am not afraid.