Materials Development for a Japanese University CLIL Class

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Abstract

This paper discusses sequenced materials development for content/language integrated learning (CLIL) in a team-taught Content/English introductory philosophy class at Miyazaki International College (MIC), Japan. A short introduction situates the authors' particular CLIL approach, one developed for an English as a Second Language (ESL) environment in a Japanese liberal arts college. They then offer a template for a sequence of language exercises that are adaptable to a variety of discipline-specific content texts and lectures of varying degrees of language difficulty. The approach can be used in team-taught or solo-taught courses. The authors also reflect on implementing their materials in an active-learning classroom to enhance the CLIL advantages.
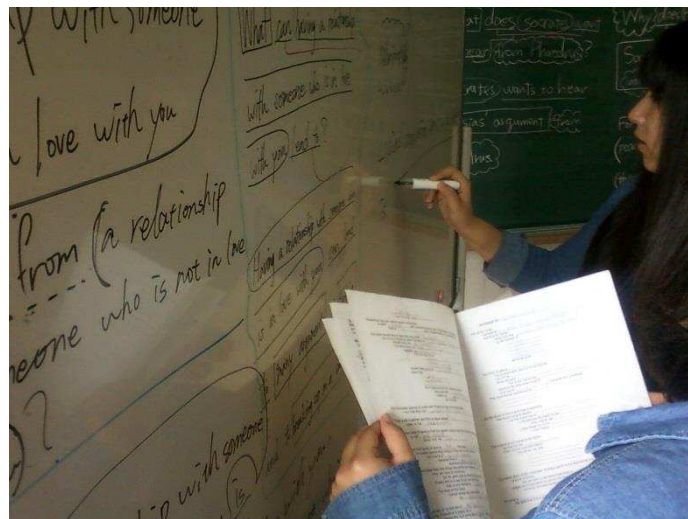
Figure 1: Teamwork at the boards

Our approach to CLIL

Perhaps educational history could provide examples of forerunners of CLIL, considering that Chinese was the vehicular language of education for centuries in Korea and Japan, Greek was

the academic language of the Roman world, and Latin of medieval Europe. Without an in-depth historical survey, we can at least note that the internationally organized practice of academic learning in a language not native to the students is one with a long history. The pedagogy has evolved, and pressing needs in the increasingly globalized classroom have urged considerable adaptation.

This paper shares what the authors have learned regarding materials development for a Japanese CLIL environment. The term CLIL was coined in 1994 by David Marsh, and here it is used to emphasize the integration of content and language in our approach. Marsh clearly highlights this integration in his definition of CLIL as:

> a tool in the learning of a non-language subject in which both language and the subject have a joint role. […] It does not give emphasis to either language […] or to content teaching and learning, but sees both as integral parts of the whole. (Marsh, 2002, p. 59)

The content to be learned is usually understood as specific to an academic discipline or subject that is taught in schools and universities.

In our CLIL classes, the approach is 'content first', meaning that academic content drives the language vocabulary and structures to be learned. The facts, concepts, ideas, and methods of the content discipline necessarily dictate the vocabulary and grammatical structures being used to communicate them. Language learning is an objective equal in value to the content, and we, too, have found that the 'content first' approach to materials-development "safeguard(s) the subject being taught whilst promoting language as a medium for learning as well as [being] an objective of the learning process itself" (Coyle, in Marsh, 2002, p. 37).

The sequenced language activities we currently employ have grown from materials developed by Professor Charles Parish at the Niigata, Japan campus of Southern Illinois University (SIU) 25 years ago. Dr Parish developed his language materials specifically for a group of students who had passed through the school's intensive English program, but still did not have the required 550 TOEFL score to register for full-time university classes. We have also found that this approach works best with students at that level of proficiency or

below. Students at higher proficiency levels simply do not need the high level of vocabulary and grammar reinforcement that these sequenced exercises are designed to provide. We have adapted CLIL to address the particular needs and capacities of our first-year Japanese university students, who must eventually complete a graduation thesis in English in their senior year. Hence a key objective of the course design process discussed in the article is to coach students to produce a series of increasingly challenging discursive essays.

CLIL materials production

In producing CLIL materials, using our sequenced-materials method, the teacher must first define the objectives for the unit. The next step is to produce the three components of the unit's 'raw materials': (1) a detailed outline of the content to be taught; and from that detailed outline, (2) a list of scanning questions; and then (3) the text itself. From these three components, a teacher can create a dozen or more sequenced language exercises and activities. The authors outline fourteen such activities below. These activities also make up the example unit, which is an appendix to the current article.

The outline (see Appendix, 4a) is a skeletal, indented plan of the content to be taught in the unit. This provides the internal structure of the unit, and is a reference for the materials to be developed as exercises and activities. When writing this essential component, it is helpful to write it as notes for a lecture, and this outline is in fact used most straightforwardly in the five-to-ten-minute mini-lectures that are given in most class meetings. Although the mini-lectures include information already covered by other activities such as the cloze or dictogloss exercises, it ensures that the students receive the content information, including any points they might have missed in other exercises, while improving their academic lecture note-taking skills.

The detailed scanning questions are then written in running order from the content outline. These are generally kept as basic WH-questions. These questions are used as (1) the initial listening scan that commences each unit; (2) the note-scan team game for oral questions and answers (these activities are explained below); and (3) homework for comprehension question-and-answer writing.

Then, completing the three essential components of the unit, the text is written, again from the outline. The order of this procedure ensures that (i) all the comprehension questions will be answerable, that (ii) all the content material has been covered without needless repetition, and that (iii) the teacher has an outline of lecture notes to use as the basis for the mini-lectures. The students will use the mini-lectures for note-taking practice, which integrates their listening, writing, and study skills.

In our present term-length courses, three to five CLIL units, or content units, suffice for a fifteen-week semester. For each unit, a text of no more than three pages per unit works best. It is a good idea to base the very first unit on a one-page text. This allows the different activity-types to be introduced, and efficiently demonstrates the sequence of routine exercises to follow in subsequent classes and units during the course. It also allows the students to begin to work on longer writing assignments more quickly, after only a few class meetings. Then the teacher can address early on the initial essay-writing problems that otherwise might not surface until several weeks into the course.

From these three initial components (i.e. the content outline, the scanning questions, and the text) the teacher can then produce sequenced exercises to structure the CLIL units. In what follows, material is developed from the outline, questions, or the text. It is important that the sequence (in this case, activities 1-14) of materials be developed in running order, so that activity 1, the listening scan, use the first paragraph of the text and the first few scanning questions, that activity 2 should use the second and third paragraphs, and so on. We have found the following sequence of activities effective for teaching modular units in our Introduction to Philosophy ESL class. These activities are illustrated in the complete example unit (with explicit instructions), in the Appendix to the current article.

1. Listening scan, using the first few scanning questions (Appendix, 1)

The first paragraph of the text is read to the students. Then the class is asked the scanning questions corresponding to paragraph 1. They are asked not to answer out loud, but just to raise their hands if they think they know the answer. This is done three times, with the number of students raising their hands for each question marked on the board. Invariably, the second and third times see more hands raised than the first. As well as being an effective way to give students confidence in starting a new module, this stage of the process provides

students with an experience in knowing what to listen for, so that their listening can become more attuned to what is needed.

2. *Listening cloze* (Appendix, 2)

The material for this activity is taken from the text and every fifth word is replaced with an underline blank so the students can fill in the missing words. Although this is a fairly passive activity, the tasks progress along a continuum from passive to active, and progressively active skills are encouraged even at this stage. Students must turn over the page while listening, and cannot write their answers until the teacher has finished reading. In this way students need to retain information rather than merely hear it and write it down immediately. Students are also instructed, after the final reading, to read out the cloze paragraphs to each other and to discuss in English what they think the right answers are.

3. *Reading cloze* (Appendix, 3)

This material is produced in the same fashion as the listening cloze exercises, except that the missing words are now provided in a box below the cloze passage. Because these clozes can be done solo, they are assigned for homework, and are checked in the next class by having students read aloud in small groups and by discussion in English before the teacher verifies the answers.

4. *Dictation* (Appendix, 6)

The dictation sentences are taken from the next paragraph in the text. The sentences are then numbered and written on separate lines. Long sentences might need to be written here as two sentences. Students hear the text read three times. The first time is read at normal speed, to give the main idea. The second time is dictated one sentence at a time. Students number their paper and write the sentences as they hear them. The entire passage is read a third time for checking.

5. *Keyword exercise, a fluency activity* (Appendix, 7)

Again, this activity derives from the next paragraph or paragraphs in the text. A keyword exercise is an activity in which grammar inflection (except word order), pronouns and function words such as prepositions have been removed from the sentences. Again, sentences are numbered (or lettered) and written on separate lines. Above that, the same sentences are

reduced so that, to refer to the Appendix unit, 'Nothing is told to us about Sisyphus in the underworld' becomes 'Nothing tell us Sisyphus underworld'. Students start reviewing this material for homework by reading through the complete sentences a few times out loud. They then use the reduced keyword sets to help them narrate the story in complete grammatical sentences by supplying the missing grammar inflection, pronouns and function words. Finally, they are tested by completing the exercise in front of a teacher.

6. Dictogloss, reconstructing short passages into paragraphs (Appendix, 8)

This established TEFL activity is a sophisticated development from dictation, and we derive its content from the next paragraph in the unit text. A very short passage (three or four sentences) is read out. This is done twice. The lecturer is not reading sentences (a difference from dictation) but is reconstructing sentences from keywords, so that the passage is not said in exactly the same way the second time. The students are asked to write down not the whole text, but notes on the salient facts of the passage, i.e. a string of key information words. Students then reconstruct the sense and information points as close to exactly as possible, using these notes and their own knowledge of the grammatical structure involved. Finally, they write their answers on the board and have the class as a whole edits for errors.

7. Information-gap mini-lecture note-taking (Appendix, 4a)

The teacher typically uses the unit outline for this activity. While he or she has the lecture notes and reads them aloud, the students' version has much of the information blanked out. Students are encouraged to ask questions for clarity or repetition any time, and they are shown that this activity gives them the information needed to complete many of the other tasks. As well as taking notes, the students also practice giving the mini-lecture to each other. It should be noted that the mini-lectures are used throughout the unit, and are therefore a feature in most classroom meetings.

8. Note scan (Appendix, 5)

The note scan is another activity that uses the scanning questions (while the others are the listening scan, outlined above, and the written answers to scanning questions, detailed next). This activity is a game involving the whole class arranged into groups of three, and is used to help students review their mini-lecture notes. Student have their mini-lecture notes in front of them and are instructed to scan these notes to find the answers to the questions asked by the

teacher. Each student is given a number (ONE to THREE) and only student ONE may answer questions 1, 4, 7, etc., only student TWO may answer questions 2, 5, 8, etc., and so on for student THREE. If, in some groups, student 2, for example, does not know the answer, the other two students can point to the relevant part of the mini-lecture notes. This method ensures that every student has a chance to speak and that all students are scanning their mini-lecture notes.

9. Writing full-sentence answers to scanning questions *(Appendix, 5)*

Again, this activity is taken from the scanning questions. This time, however, the answers are to be written out of class as homework, and in complete sentences. The task is completed as group-work in the next class. Like the mini-lectures, this activity continues throughout the unit.
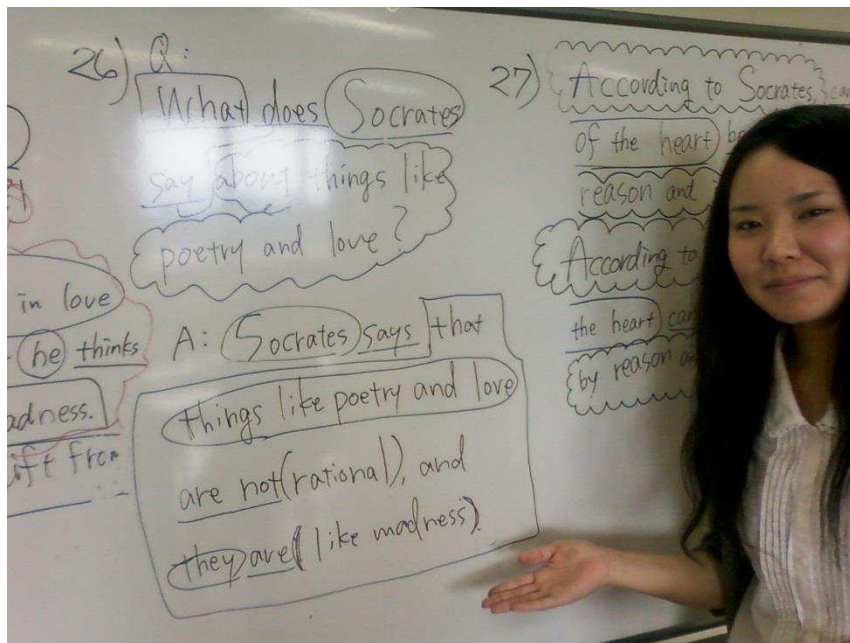

Figure 2: Question and answer diagrams

10. Writing question and answer sentences on the whiteboards (Appendix, 5)

In groups at the boards, students diagram the sentence structures for the scanning questions and answers into subject, verb, object/complement, and adverbial/prepositional phrases (see Figure 2, question and answer diagrams). This diagramming facilitates self-correction and reinforces the students' working knowledge of English grammar. Having students at the boards requires them to stand up and walk around the class, and the authors have found that

this allows for more interaction, which is kept in English and adds some fun energy to the classroom.

11. Paragraph outlining (Appendix, 9)

At this point the students are given the text for the first time. They are asked to outline the ideas presented in a paragraph (in the unit given in the Appendix, it is paragraph 9), separating the main ideas subtopics and details using bulleted hanging indention.

12. Reading Outline: Rough outline of complete text (Appendix, 10)

This exercise encourages the students to continue to outline each paragraph in the text. It allows them to think about the organization of paragraphs and of the whole texts, and in this manner is a kind of reverse-engineering activity.

13. Summarizing complete text (Appendix, 11)

From the text outlines that they have recently produced, students now summarize the complete text in one or two paragraphs, using all the material in their outline.

14. Essay test (Appendix, 12)

In the final class of the unit students will be asked to write an in-class essay. While the whole unit has been preparing students for this step, the previous one or two class meetings before the essay test should include instruction and practice regarding producing essay outlines.

The outline is the first of the materials created by the teacher, and it is the master document from which the content of the sequenced activities follows (1-14 above). For example, the listening scan exercise, which introduces students to the basic concepts and terminology of the unit, is generated from the introductory paragraph of the text. It works like a reading scan exercise, but the students only listen to the teacher reading the text aloud before answering oral questions. The listening cloze is composed from the next paragraph, and so on with the other activities.

In addition to these mainstays created directly from the text, other activities are sometimes added, such as role-play, for example acting out Plato's 'Prisoners in the Cave' story. The purpose of such activities, which are adjuncts to the main elements outlined above, is to

provide engaging ways for the students to use the language and content recently learned in the kind of group activities that ensure the topic and the language are being assimilated flexibly. By flexible assimilation, we mean that what is being learned is being done in a fluid, active-learning environment, one that ensures not only greater retention but also shows students that what they have learned in the classroom can, with a little imagination, be transferred to many different kinds of situation.

It should be noted that these exercises are only tools; they are not inviolable, and some content-core materials require the exercises to be adapted. The main point here is that the exercises are purposefully sequenced from the beginning of the unit outline to the end. The text itself is not presented to the students until the end. Otherwise, it would be too easy for students to simply copy the text for various answers. Also, if the text were given earlier, answers could simply be lifted from the text, but that would not usually provide the grammar appropriate to the way the question is framed.

This sequence of activities has a pedagogical rationale, progressing from practicing passive skills to active; generally listening before speaking, reading before writing; and from teacher-centered to student-centered activities. This method reflects an understanding of learning a second language as being similar to the way the first was learned: passive skills being developed first, with attention to listening and watching, with the active practice following.

In our approach to CLIL courses, the skills developed throughout the exercises culminate in the students producing an in-class essay. This essay is not only the concrete end-product of the unit, but it also works at making this task a clear focus to the activities. Each piece of content information is given at least three times, in different ways. Firstly, information is learned from activities such as the listening cloze, or the keyword exercise; then, during the mini-lecture note-taking, the information is reinforced; and again, during scanning questions and written homework, students review this information. Moreover, students review this data in a holistic way when they are finally given the text to analyze and break into an outline and summary, when studying in the classes before their essay test. After 'reverse engineering' an outline from the text handout, the students are then instructed in producing their own outlines as a basis for responding to possible essay questions that might feasibly be set for the unit.

The students' essay writing is not, therefore, merely an exercise in memory and reproduction, but in using and reorganizing material toward a specific academic purpose.

After each unit, students can compare their latest essay with previous ones, gaining valuable feedback and encouragement. The teachers mark the essays using a correction code to indicate grammatical errors, such as a subject-verb agreement problem, or an incomplete sentence. Unlike grammatical errors, which should be indicated for self-correction (but not corrected by the teacher), content errors, such as matters of fact, can be efficiently corrected at this stage through the teacher's written comments. Common errors that the students in general make can be addressed after the essays for each unit have been marked, and this step is a particularly effective one for helping students improve their essay performance. Essays are marked according to content, organization, vocabulary (specific to the unit), and language (grammar and communicative performance), equipping the teacher with concrete assessment evidence to indicate how well the course has gone and how each student has progressed.

Classroom management issues and our sequenced CLIL approach

The sequenced materials developed in our CLIL practice means that the dynamic of each unit progresses from passive to active skills development. Implementing this dynamic process requires some fluid changes from activity to activity in the learning scenario. The particular materials and sequence we have developed require the teacher to use various seating arrangements, modes of working (solo, pair-work, small group work, and whole class work), and other active-learning techniques. A corollary to this active-learning CLIL focus is that activities that can be done solo are generally assigned for homework. All classroom time is thus spent advancing through the modular material in groups checking, discussing, and deciding in English.

One practical technique in classroom management that has proved very useful in our CLIL teaching experience is to group students in threes. Because of the nature of the materials and activities, students need to participate actively, but it is hard to manage a student-centered, active class of up to thirty. As a result, with groups of three, the teacher can deal with ten groups, rather than thirty individuals. This allows even large classes to have a small group dynamic, as groups of three work together as teams.

This grouping also relieves the burden of the 'spotlight'. Especially in Japan, even when quite a few students know the answer, to be the one who answers the questions is not done. In such a situation, it is hard to get a response when the teacher asks the whole class a question. However, that reticence transforms into a positive way when groups of three are addressed. This way, no individual is addressed, and the motive to work for the group encourages students to take turns answering the questions. The whole experience becomes more communal, with the focus on turn-taking, making the activity a lot more fun for all involved.

Figure 3: Mini-lecture

Advantages for learning with CLIL

A CLIL approach recommends itself to language learning in an academic setting because it addresses several aims of university education at once. As the title implies, both academic content and language learning objectives are integrated, and are simultaneous aims of a CLIL syllabus. This integration of key aims helps to explain why it is an excellent vehicle to facilitate thinking in the target language, which should be the primary objective in any language class.

The learning-centred benefits of syllabi designed around thematically integrated units have received recent attention in educational philosophy (O'Brien, Millis, & Cohen, 2009). Having the teacher dovetail content in logical, meaningful order also remedies the problem that

"[u]nfortunately, many language textbooks contain poorly motivated and illogically sequenced texts and dialogues that do not reflect real-world language" (Shrum & Glisan, 1994, p. 28). In contrast, the sequence for course material production that the current authors outline above ensure (i) an essential integration of content and language and (ii) a meaningful relation of exercises where each progresses logically to the next.

Another important benefit of CLIL is that throughout the entire course, the target language is being used as the medium of study in such a way that the students must think in English. Because of the nature of the activities, the students cannot just keep up by translating from the first language to the target language or by using other fallbacks that hinder immersion and thinking in the target language. The students are kept on the target language in various ways, due to the interrelated units being sequenced from passive skill exercises to progressively more active skill exercises.

To clarify, at the start of each unit the focus is on passive listening skills. The listening cloze activity, for example (Appendix, section 2), rewards attentive listening and straightforward retention of the words, which the students are then asked to recall. There is no need for translation here, and doing so would only make the activity more difficult, because the students can succeed at this level by attention, retention and recall. Naturally there is room for more active skills even here, as students are encouraged to see how applying grammatical knowledge can help to both infer the correct answers, and to rule out many incorrect ones.

Further along the unit, we come to the note scan exercise (Appendix, section 4b). To reiterate, this series of comprehension questions (there are 53 in the appended example unit) is usually completed as homework. The answers are constructed from the notes that the students took during the in-class mini-lectures (Appendix, section 4a). Now it is important that the source for the answers be the students' self-made notes, which is why the complete text for the course is not given to the students until almost the very end of the unit. These notes have been written within a framework where the teacher has given a few of the salient words and plenty of marginal blank space so that the students can write down key points, phrases, definitions, examples, and so on. The CLIL student is thus required to stock and use English vocabulary and grammar in order to think about the content material and to apply the relevant

concepts through actively practicing language skills: listening and speaking, and reading and writing.

In CLIL, when a new concept is learned, it is very often a new idea for the students altogether, i.e. one that has not yet been encountered in the first language. Because the concept is a novel one altogether for most students in the class, there is less reason or incentive for them to attempt to translate back-and-forth between the first and target languages. To take an example from the philosophy class, when students first learn about Lockean primary and secondary qualities, they try to understand the revolutionary, often shocking idea that colours do not objectively exist in the external object. Within each student's mental effort, the ideas, and the concepts that articulate them, are accommodated and assimilated through question-and-answer sessions, and plenty of practice speaking and writing in English. These new ideas, then, are primarily encountered entirely within the target language. Rather than wading through in English content already learned in the native language, learning truly new material in this way provides a kind of intellectual baptism in the target language.

Figure 4: Active student work

In the activities sequence, the dictogloss is the turning point in the unit when the passive, teacher-controlled exercises are gradually replaced by active, student-controlled exercises. Hence, this exercise works very well as a bridge from passive to active student work. It

involves interpretation, and the 'gloss' in dictogloss is very much the students' thinking at work. It is very active, requiring creativity with meaning and with English. In the decoding and encoding processes, the language becomes *their* English, as they are now really using it, owning it, and reconstructing with it. The grammar is no longer limited or limiting here, as the students leave behind the framework of passive, teacher-controlled grammar that existed in the preceding exercises, such as the scanning questions, or, even more so, the listening and reading clozes.

It must be remembered that teaching is an art, not a science. The learning objectives for the class drive the materials and activities to teach them. What the authors have presented here are general concepts in developing an integrated content and language course, but the specific activities need to be adapted to the particular content and objectives. The point here is if something is not working, adapt it so it will work. If it still does not work, cut the losses and move on to the next exercise. Silence and confusion in the classroom: bad; active production of the target language: good.

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Appendix: Complete Teacher's Copy (with student sheets and answer keys)

Camus: *The Myth of Sisyphus*

Introduction to Philosophy

Cheyne/Rummel

Camus: *The Myth of Sisyphus*

Can one live a meaningful life in a meaningless world?

ACTIVITIES BEFORE HANDING OUT THE TEXT

1. Listening scan (page 1).

Directions (for teacher)**:** Read the first paragraph of the text to the students. Ask the class the scanning questions that correspond to paragraph #1. Tell them not to say the answer out loud, but merely to raise their hands if they think they know the answer. Keep track of the total number of hands up for each question on the board. Reread para. #1 to the class and ask the scanning questions again, again noting the number of ss who have their hands up.

This exercise can lead into a discussion about the value of questioning and repetition with regards to understanding and retaining information. Don't tell them the answers and **don't show them the text yet**.

Paragraph 1

 1. Who wrote 'The Myth of Sisyphus'?

-Albert Camus,

2. What is one of the most important questions of philosophy?

What is the meaning of life?"

3. What is Sisyphus?

        -ancient Greek myth

4. How did the gods punish Sisyphus?

        -by forcing him to roll a rock to the top of a mountain

5. What happened every time Sisyphus rolled the heavy rock to the top of the mountain?

   -->it would roll back down

6. How long was Sisyphus forced to roll the rock?

-had to do this forever

7. What did the gods think was the most terrible punishment?

- meaningless and hopeless labour

2. Listening cloze.

Directions (for students)**:** Read through the cloze and guess as many as you can. Then turn your paper over and listen to your teacher read the following story. <u>After</u> listening to the entire passage, turn your paper back over and fill in the blank spaces. <u>Guess</u> as many as you can. Let your knowledge of grammar and vocabulary guide your guesses.

Albert Camus, 'The Myth of Sisyphus'

Listening Cloze

(A)

Judging whether life is _____ is not meaningful is _____ of the most important _____ of philosophy. "What is _____ meaning of life?" is _____ serious question. Other philosophical questions _____ like games in comparison. _____ answer can change how a _____ chooses to live.

(B)

These are facts the _____ can feel; yet they _____ careful study before they _____ clear to one's understanding. _____ judge the importance of **a** question by the action _____ results. I therefore conclude that _____ meaning of life is the _____ urgent question. How can _____ question be answered?

(C)

The story of Sisyphus _____ an ancient Greek myth. _____ the myth, the _____ punished Sisyphus by forcing _____ to roll a rock _____ the top of a _____. Every time Sisyphus rolled _____ heavy rock to the _____ of the mountain, it _____ roll back down again. _____ had to do this _____. The gods thought that _____ and hopeless labour _____ the most terrible punishment _____ could give.

Listening Cloze Key

(A)

Judging whether life is **or** is not meaningful is **one** of the most important **questions** of philosophy. "What is **the** meaning of life?" is **a** serious question. Other philosophical questions **seem** like games in comparison. **The** answer can change how a **person** chooses to live.

(B)

These are facts the **heart** can feel; yet they **need** careful study before they **become** clear to one's understanding. **W**e judge the importance of **a** question by the action **that** results. I therefore conclude that **the** meaning of life is the **most** urgent question. How can **this** question be answered?

(C)

The story of Sisyphus **is** an ancient Greek myth. **In** the myth, the **gods** punished Sisyphus by forcing **him** to roll a rock **to** the top of a **mountain**. Every time Sisyphus rolled **the** heavy rock to the **top** of the mountain, it **would** roll back down again. **He** had to do this **forever**. The gods thought that **meaningless** and hopeless labour **was** the most terrible punishment **they** could give

3. Reading Cloze.

Directions (for students)**:** Choose the best response from the words in the box below and fill in the blanks in the text. Let your knowledge of grammar as well as vocabulary meaning guide your response.

Reading cloze (a)

In some stories, Sisyphus _____ the wisest and most _____ man. In other stories, _____, Sisyphus was a highwayman, or _____ who robbed people as _____ traveled along the roads. _____ storytellers give different reasons _____ Sisyphus became the laborer of _____ meaningless and tiring _____ in Hades, the ancient _____ underworld or hell. He was _____ of stealing secrets _____ the gods. He was also accused _____ helping a father rescue _____ daughter who had been _____ by Zeus, king of the _____. The myth tells us _____ Sisyphus had put Death, _____ is known as Thanatos, _____ chains. The king of _____ underworld, also called Hades, _____ the god of war _____ release Thanatos.

someone	accused	Greek	that	from	his
they	kidnapped	prudent	who	of	the
gods	sent	Different	why	in	a
task	was		however	to	

Reading cloze (b)

It is also said _____ Sisyphus became an old _____ and died. He woke _____ in the underworld and _____ Thanatos to allow him _____ return to the land _____ the living for just _____ day. Thanatos let him _____ for just one day. _____ when Sisyphus saw the _____ water, sun, warm stones _____ the sea again, he _____ longer wanted to go _____ to the darkness of _____. Sisyphus did not return to _____ underworld. So Thanatos ordered _____ to return, and became _____. Still Sisyphus did not _____. For many more years, _____ lived near the sparkling _____ and the _____ of the earth. Hermes, the messenger _____, came and seized the _____ man by the collar. _____ Sisyphus from his joys, _____ led him forcibly back to the _____. There in Hades, Sisyphus' _____ was ready for him.

one	rock	go	him	up	But
no	sea	return	that	to	and

the	god	begged	angry	back	Sisyphus
world's	man	Snatching	disobedient	of	Hermes
underworld	beauty				Hades

Reading cloze

(a) key

In some stories, Sisyphus **was** the wisest and most **prudent** man. In other stories, **however**, Sisyphus was a highwayman, or **someone** who robbed people as **they** traveled along the roads. **Different** storytellers give different reasons **why** Sisyphus became the laborer of **a** meaningless and tiring **task** in Hades, the ancient **Greek** underworld or hell. He was **accused** of stealing secrets **from** the gods. He was also accused **of** helping a father rescue **his** daughter who had been **kidnapped** by Zeus, king of the **gods**. The myth tells us **that** Sisyphus had put Death, **who** is known as Thanatos, **in** chains. The king of **the** underworld, also called Hades, **sent** the god of war **to** release Thanatos.

(b) key

It is also said **that** Sisyphus became an old **man** and died. He woke **up** in the underworld and **begged** Thanatos to allow him **to** return to the land **of** the living for just **one** day. Thanatos let him **go** for just one day. **But** when Sisyphus saw the **world's** water, sun, warm stones **and** the sea again, he **no** longer wanted to go **back** to the darkness of **Hades**. Sisyphus did not return to **the** underworld. So Thanatos ordered **him** to return, and became **angry**. Still Sisyphus did not **return**. For many more years, **Sisyphus** lived near the sparkling **sea** and the **beauty** of the earth. Hermes, the messenger **god**, came and seized the **disobedient** man by the collar. **Snatching** Sisyphus from his joys, **Hermes** led him forcibly back to the **underworld**. There in Hades, Sisyphus' **rock** was ready for him.

4a. Note-taking from lecture.

Directions (for teacher): Give students the information gap outline of the lecture to use as their notes before you start. Give them the first part of the lecture, i.e., up to **Personal Questions**. Explain that the outline they are holding contains the basic organization of the lecture but with information missing. Tell them that the lecturer uses the same outline as his/her lecture notes.

4a. Note-taking from lecture key:

Introduction to Philosophy

Cheyne

Can one live a meaningful life in a meaningless world?

Albert **Camus**, 'The Myth of **Sisyphus**'

-What is **the meaning of life**?"

        -one of the most important **questions of philosophy**

           -other questions like **games** in comparison

        -answer can change

           →how a person **chooses to live**

 -How can this question be answered?

Sisyphus

        -ancient **Greek myth**

           -the gods **punished Sisyphus**

               -by forcing him to **roll a rock to the top of a mountain**

               -but every time Sisyphus rolled the heavy rock to the top of the mountain

                  →it would **roll back down**

-Sisyphus had to do this **forever**

                 -the gods thought that **meaningless and hopeless** labour

→the most **terrible punishment**

Sisyphus is different in different stories

-character

        -sometimes the **wisest and most prudent man**

-other times, a highwayman, or **a robber, thief**

- '**crime**'

-stealing **secrets from the gods**

-helped a father rescue his daughter who was **kidnapped by Zeus, king of the gods**

-Sisyphus had put Death (**Thanatos**)in chains

→ king of the underworld (**Hades**) sent the god of war to free Thanatos

-In the myth authored by **Homer**

-Sisyphus became **an old man and died**

→woke up in **the underworld**

-begged Thanatos **to allow him to return to earth for just one day**

-Thanatos let him **go for just one day**

-Sisyphus saw the world's **beauty again**

→he didn't want **to go back to Hades**

→Sisyphus did not **return to the underworld**

→So Thanatos ordered him to return, and became angry

-Still Sisyphus **did not return**

→For many more years, **lived on earth**

-Finally, Hermes (the messenger of the gods sent by Hades) **caught him**

-**led him back to underworld**

→in Hades, Sisyphus' **rock** was ready for him

Sisyphus

          -the **hero** of the **absurd**

- 'Absurd' means

-**meaningless**

- **nonsense**

-**unreasonable**

-symbol of the **struggle against the absurdity of the world**

Humans have a sense of **justice and fairness**

- Yet good people often **suffer**, and bad people often **become rich and successful**

-looks as if the world does not care about us

-not naturally **good, fair** or **just**

Sisyphus remains a hero

←he loved **the world passionately**

← he suffered **a great punishment**

-from the gods

-for escaping **Hades**

-seeking **his pleasure on earth**

-to spend eternity in **meaningless labour**

- pushes a stone up a mountain

→**rolls back down again**

→**pushes it back up again**

→ **Forever**

The gods are powerful

→but Sisyphus is **not afraid of them**

-fights **for what he loves and for what he wants in life**

-this is the price that must be paid for the passions of this earth

 In this myth, one sees

-the whole effort of a body straining to raise the huge stone

-he rolls it and pushes it up a slope again and again

-we imagine

-his **face screwed up**

-his cheek tight **against the stone**

-his shoulder against the heavy, muddy rock

- his foot **wedging the rock**

-all of Sisyphus' **cuts, bruises, aches and pains**

-countless fresh starts with outstretched arms, two muddy hands

-all of this is done in a world without **a sky**

-because Hades is **below the earth**

The most interesting time in the myth: **his walk back down the mountain**

-every time Sisyphus reaches the mountaintop

→he watches **the stone rush down**

→he walks back down to the ground

→Sisyphus has a **brief break from the labour of pushing**

-I imagine his walk back down:

-he is going back down with a **heavy**, but **measured step**

→toward the torture that he knows **will never the end**

-in this time, he can **think**

-when he leaves the mountaintop and gradually walks back down unbroken

→ he shows that he is **stronger than his punishment**

-he is **greater than the gods**

-he is **stronger than his rock**

If this myth is tragic, it's because **the hero is conscious**

-he *knows* that he has no hope to escape

- for today's labourers, this fate is no less absurd

-they work **every day of their lives**

-at the **same tasks**

→But it only becomes tragic for them

-when they are **conscious of their fate**

-Sisyphus is the **proletarian of the gods**

-**powerless** and **rebellious**

-knows all about his **tragic condition**

→ it is what he thinks of during **his descent**

Sometimes this walk down the mountain is sad

→But it can also be **joyful**

-as long as he **can bear the walk with dignity**

Again, I imagine Sisyphus returning down toward his rock:

-When happiness from beautiful memories is in one's mind

→**sadness rises in the human heart**

-this sadness is the rock's victory

→this would mean that **the gods have won**

-Symbolically, this sadness is **the rock itself**

-the terrible sadness is too heavy **to bear**

→this symbolizes our **human nights of torture**

-BUT terrible truths can be made less terrible

→ if **we face them and bear them**

-This is the **absurd victory**

-The thing that is absurd is the torture of **a universe that does not care**

- victory over the absurd happens by **not giving up**

-We *do* care

→so we are **stronger than the absurd**

-We know we cannot **change the world**

→ but we are still **strong in our passion**

-The world is indifferent to justice,

→ but we do not give up our **passionate instinct for fairness and justice**

-Sisyphus' fate belongs to him

-the rock is his **fate**

-chooses to bear his fate with **dignity**

-although he is a prisoner

→he still has this choice

-because he chooses dignity

→he is the **master of his days**

-In contrast, the absurd man **contemplates his torment alone**

          →he is a **slave to his situation**

Camus: "I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain!"

→one always finds one's burden again

-Sisyphus teaches about a dignity

-that can **rebel against the gods**

-that can **raise heavy rocks**

-Sisyphus concludes that all is well:

-This universe has no meaning, BUT it is NOT

- **sterile**

-nor **futile**

-There is **a world** in

-each atom of that stone

-each part of that night-filled mountain

-The struggle itself toward the heights

- is enough **to fill a man's heart**

-One must imagine Sisyphus as **happy**

Comments:

The central concern of The Myth of Sisyphus

- "the **absurd**"

Camus claims that there is a contradiction or conflict between

-the order that we want from the universe

      -reason

-**meaning**

-**harmony**

-justice

-and the **chaos** that we find

→We will never find this order in the universe itself

-either **we will discover that meaning through faith**

-by placing our hopes in a **god beyond this world**

-or we will conclude that **life is meaningless**

Camus asks if life has meaning or not

-even if the answer is no

→ life is **still worth living**

Can we can accept and live happily in a world with no meaning or purpose?

→The absurd is a contradiction that cannot be resolved

-trying to resolve this contradiction

= trying to **escape from it**

-living with the absurd

= **facing this contradiction and keeping aware of it**

-Camus thought facing the absurd

→allows us to **live life to its fullest**

-Camus identifies three characteristics of the absurd life:

1. **Revolt** (we must not accept any **compromise in our struggle**)

2. **Freedom** (we are absolutely free to think and behave **as we choose**)

3. **Passion** (we must pursue a life of **rich and diverse experiences**)

Camus claims:

-Sisyphus is the ideal **absurd hero**

-his punishment represents **the human condition**

→Sisyphus is you and **me**

Sisyphus must struggle forever without **hope of success**

-as long as he accepts that there is nothing more to life than this absurd struggle

→ he can find **happiness** in it

-happiness comes from accepting the human situation with

-**dignity**

-**freedom**

-**passion**

Introduction to Philosophy

Cheyne

4. Sisyphus Note-taking Outline:

Can one live a meaningful life in a meaningless world?

Albert _____, 'The Myth of _____'

-What is _____?"

    -one of the most important _____

        -other questions like _____ in comparison

    -answer can change

        →how a person _____

 -How can this question be answered?

Sisyphus

-ancient _____

　　　-the gods _____

　　　　　-by forcing him to _____

　　　　　-but every time Sisyphus rolled the heavy rock to the top of the

mountain

　　　　　　　→it would _____

-Sisyphus had to do this _____

　　　　　-the gods thought that

_____ labour

→the most _____

Sisyphus is different in different stories

-character

　　　-sometimes the _____

-other times, a highwayman, or _____

- '_____'

-stealing _____

-helped a father rescue his daughter who was _____

-Sisyphus had put Death (_____)in chains

→ king of the underworld (_____) sent the god of war to free Thanatos

-In the myth authored by _____

-Sisyphus became _____

→woke up in _____

-begged Thanatos _____

-Thanatos let him _____

-Sisyphus saw the world's _____

→he didn't want _____

→Sisyphus did not _____

→So Thanatos ordered him to return, and became angry

-Still Sisyphus _____

→For many more years, _____

-Finally, Hermes (the messenger of the gods sent by Hades) _____

-_____

→in Hades, Sisyphus' _____ was ready for him

Sisyphus

      -the _____ of the _____

- 'Absurd' means

-_____

- _____

-_____

-symbol of the _____

Humans have a sense of _____

- Yet good people often _____, and bad people often

_____

-looks as if the world does not care about us

-not naturally _____or _____

-Sisyphus remains a hero

←he loved _____

← he suffered _____because_____

-from the gods

-for escaping _____

-seeking _____

-to spend eternity in _____

- pushes a stone up a mountain

→_____

→_____

→ _____

-The gods are powerful

→but Sisyphus is _____

-fights _____

-this is the price that must be paid for the passions of this earth

In this myth, one sees

-the whole effort of a body straining to raise the huge stone

-he rolls it and pushes it up a slope again and again

-we imagine

-his _____

-his cheek tight _____

-his shoulder against the heavy, muddy rock

- his foot _____

-all of Sisyphus' _____

-countless fresh starts with outstretched arms, two muddy hands

-all of this is done in a world without _____

-because Hades is _____

The most interesting time in the myth:

_____

-every time Sisyphus reaches the mountaintop

→he watches _____

→he walks back down to the ground

→Sisyphus has a _____

-I imagine his walk back down:

-he is going back down with a _____, but _____

→toward the torture that he knows _____

-in this time, he can _____

-when he leaves the mountaintop and gradually walks back down unbroken

→ he shows that he is _____

-he is _____

-he is _____

If this myth is tragic, it's because _____

-he *knows* that he has no hope to escape

- for today's labourers, this fate is no less absurd

-they work _____

-at the _____

→But it only becomes tragic for them

-when they are _____

-Sisyphus is the _____

-_____ and _____

-knows all about his _____

→ it is what he thinks of during _____

Sometimes this walk down the mountain is sad

→But it can also be _____

-as long as he _____

Again, I imagine Sisyphus returning down toward his rock:

-When happiness from beautiful memories is in one's mind

→_____

-this sadness is the rock's victory

→this would mean that _____

-Symbolically, this sadness is _____

-the terrible sadness is too heavy _____

→this symbolizes our _____

-BUT terrible truths can be made less terrible

→ if _____

-This is the _____

-The thing that is absurd is the torture of _____

- victory over the absurd happens by _____

-We *do* care

→so we are _____

-We know we cannot _____

→ but we are still _____

-The world is indifferent to justice,

→ but we do not give up our _____

-Sisyphus' fate belongs to him

-the rock is his _____

-chooses to bear his fate with _____

-although he is a prisoner

→he still has this choice

-because he chooses dignity

→he is the _____

-In contrast, the absurd man _____

      →he is a _____

Camus: "I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain!"

→one always finds one's burden again

-Sisyphus teaches about a dignity

-that can _____

-that can _____

-Sisyphus concludes that all is well:

-This universe has no meaning, BUT it is NOT

- _____

-nor _____

-There is _____in

-each atom of that stone

-each part of that night-filled mountain

-The struggle itself toward the heights

- is enough _____

-One must imagine Sisyphus as _____

Comments:

The central concern of The Myth of Sisyphus

- "the _____"

Camus claims that there is a contradiction or conflict between

-the order that we want from the universe

    -reason

-_____

-_____

-justice

-and the _____ that we find

→We will never find this order in the universe itself

-either _____

-by placing our hopes in a _____

-or we will conclude that _____

Camus asks if life has meaning or not

-even if the answer is no

→ life is _____

Can we can accept and live happily in a world with no meaning or purpose?

→The absurd is a contradiction that cannot be resolved

-trying to resolve this contradiction

= trying to _____

-living with the absurd

= _____

-Camus thought facing the absurd

→allows us to _____

-Camus identifies three characteristics of the absurd life:

1. _____ (we must not accept any

_____)

2. _____ (we are absolutely free to think and behave

_____)

3. _____ (we must pursue a life of

_____)

Camus claims:

-Sisyphus is the ideal _____

-his punishment represents _____

→Sisyphus is you and _____

Sisyphus must struggle forever without _____

-as long as he accepts that there is nothing more to life than this absurd struggle

→ he can find _____ in it

-happiness comes from accepting the human situation with

-_____

-_____

-_____

4b. Note- scan: Q 1-30?.

Directions (for teacher)**:** Break the class into groups of three. Give each member of the group a number 1, 2, or 3. Have the groups choose a team name. Write the team names on the board. Use the same questions as were used in the listening scan (Activity 1). For the first question, say, "This is a question that number 1 only can answer. Numbers 2 and 3 can help, but only number 1 on your team can score the point. Since this is a 'reading' activity, no talking, but you can help your team mate by pointing to the place in the outline/notes where the correct answer can be found." The second question goes to the number twos and so on back around to number 1 again.

Introduction to Philosophy

Cheyne

1. Who wrote 'The Myth of Sisyphus'?

-Albert Camus

2. What is one of the most important questions of philosophy?

What is the meaning of life?"

3. What is Sisyphus?

        -ancient Greek myth

4. How did the gods punish Sisyphus?

        -by forcing him to roll a rock to the top of a mountain

5. What happened every time Sisyphus rolled the heavy rock to the top of the mountain?

      -->it would roll back down

6. How long was Sisyphus forced to roll the rock?

-had to do this forever

7. What did the gods think was the most terrible punishment?

- meaningless and hopeless labour

Paragraph 2

8. How is Sisyphus' character different in different stories?

      -sometimes the wisest and most prudent man

-other times, a highwayman, or a robber, thief

9. How is Sisyphus' 'crime' different in different stories?

-stealing secrets from the gods

-helped a father rescue his daughter who was kidnapped by Zeus, king of the gods

-Sisyphus had put Death (Thanatos)in chains

→ king of the underworld (Hades) sent the god of war to free Thanatos

10. In the myth authored by Homer, how did Sisyphus come to the underworld?

-Sisyphus became an old man and died

→woke up in the underworld

11. What did Sisyphus ask Thanatos to let him do?

-return to earth for just one day

12. How long did Thanatos allow Sisyphus to remain on Earth?

-Thanatos let him go for just one day

13. Why didn't Sisyphus want to go back to Hades?

-Sisyphus saw the world's beauty

14. What happened first when Sisyphus did not return to the underworld?

→So Thanatos ordered him to return, and became angry

15. How long did Sisyphus stay on Earth?

-Still Sisyphus did not return

→For many more years, lived on earth

16. Who caught Sisyphus and sent him back to Hades?

-Finally, Hermes (the messenger of the gods sent by Hades) caught him

-led him back to underworld

17. What was waiting for Sisyphus in the underworld?

→in Hades, Sisyphus' rock was ready for him

18. What is Sisyphus the hero of? What is he a symbol of?

-the hero of the absurd

-symbol of the struggle against the absurdity of the world

19. What does 'Absurd' mean?

-meaningless

- nonsense

-unreasonable

20. In general, is the world just and fair?

-No, Humans have a sense of justice and fairness

- Yet good people often suffer, and bad people often become rich and successful

-looks as if the world does not care about us

-not naturally good, fair or just

21. How is Sisyphus a hero?

←he loved the world passionately

← he suffered a great punishment because he loved it

The gods are powerful

→but Sisyphus is not afraid of them

-fights for what he loves and for what he wants in life

→ Forever

22. Why is Sisyphus being punished?

-this is the price that must be paid for the passions of this earth

-from the gods

-for escaping Hades

-seeking his pleasure on earth

23. Specifically, what is the meaningless labour Sisyphus is eternally engaged in?

- pushes a stone up a mountain

→rolls back down again

→pushes it back up again

25. Describe the scene one sees in this myth.

 In this myth, one sees

-the whole effort of a body straining to raise the huge stone

-he rolls it and pushes it up a slope again and again

-we imagine

-his face screwed up

-his cheek tight against the stone

-his shoulder against the heavy, muddy rock

- his foot wedging the rock

-all of Sisyphus' cuts, bruises, aches and pains

-countless fresh starts with outstretched arms, two muddy hands

-all of this is done in a world without a sky

-because Hades is below the earth

26. For Camus, what is the most interesting time in the myth?

Every time Sisyphus reaches the mountaintop

→he watches the stone rush down

→he walks back down to the ground

→Sisyphus has a brief break from the labour of pushing

27. Why is Sisyphus' walk back down the mountain interesting to Camus?

-when he leaves the mountaintop and gradually walks back down unbroken

→ he shows that he is stronger than his punishment

-he is greater than the gods

-he is stronger than his rock

28. Why is this myth tragic?

-If this myth is tragic, it's because the hero is conscious

-he *knows* that he has no hope to escape

29. Why is fate for today's labourers no less absurd than it is for Sisyphus?

-work every day of their lives

-at the same tasks

→But it only becomes tragic for them

-when they conscious of their fate

30. Why does Camus call Sisyphus the proletarian of the gods?

-powerless and rebellious

-knows all about his tragic condition

→ it is what he thinks of during his descent

31. How can Sisyphus' walk down the mountain be joyful?

→But it can also be joyful

-as long as he can bear the walk with dignity

32. According to Camus, what happens when happiness from beautiful memories come to mind?

→sadness rises in the human heart

33. Is sadness a victory for the man or for the man?

-this sadness is the rock's victory

→this would mean that the gods have won

34. Symbolically, what does the rock itself represent?

-this sadness

35. How can terrible truths and sadness become less terrible?

→ if we face them and bear them

-This is the absurd victory

36. What is the absurd?

-The absurd is the torture of a universe that does not care

37. How do humans achieve victory over the absurd?

- victory over the absurd happens by not giving up

38. How are humans stronger than the absurd?

-We *do* care

→so we are stronger than the absurd

-We know we cannot change the world

→ but we are still strong in our passion

-The world is indifferent to justice,

→ but we do not give up our passionate instinct for fairness and justice

38. How does Sisyphus choose to bear his fate as symbolized by the rock?

-the rock is his fate

-chooses to bear his fate with dignity

39. How are Sisyphus and an absurd man in prison different?

-although S. is a prisoner

→his he still has this choice

-because he chooses dignity,

→he is the master of his days

-In contrast, the absurd man contemplates his torment alone

40. According to Camus, what does Sisyphus teach us about dignity?

-Sisyphus teaches about a dignity

-that can rebel against the gods

-that can raise heavy rocks

41. Why does Camus conclude that Sisyphus is happy?

-Sisyphus concludes that all is well:

-This universe has no meaning, BUT it is NOT

- sterile

-nor futile

-There is a world in

-each atom of that stone

-each part of that night-filled mountain

-The struggle itself toward the heights

- is enough to fill a man's heart

-One must imagine Sisyphus as happy

42. What is the central concern of The Myth of Sisyphus?

- "the absurd."

43. What does Camus claim is the contradiction in the universe?

Camus claims that there is a contradiction or conflict between

-the order that we want from the universe

        -reason

-meaning

-harmony

-justice

-and the chaos that we find

44. Instead of order in the universe, what does Camus say people will find?

→We will never find this order in the universe itself

-either we will discover that meaning through faith

-by placing our hopes in a god beyond this world

-or we will conclude that life is meaningless

45. According to Camus, even if life has no meaning, is it still worth living?

→ life is still worth living

46. Since the absurd is a contradiction that cannot be resolved, is there any point to trying to resolve it? Why or why not?

→The absurd is a contradiction that cannot be resolved

-trying to resolve this contradiction

= trying to escape from it

47. According to Camus, what must one do in order to live with the absurd?

-living with the absurd

= facing this contradiction and keeping aware of it

48. According to Camus, what allows us to live life to its fullest?

-Camus thought facing the absurd

49. What are Camus' three characteristics of the absurd life?

1. Revolt (we must not accept any compromise in our struggle).

2. Freedom (we are absolutely free to think and behave as we choose).

3. Passion (we must pursue a life of rich and diverse experiences).

50. What does Sisyphus' punishment represent?

-Sisyphus is the ideal absurd hero

-his punishment represents the human condition

51. Who does Sisyphus represent?

→Sisyphus is you and me

52. How can Sisyphus find happiness in his struggle?

-as long as he accepts that there is nothing more to life than this absurd struggle

→ he can find happiness in it

53. What does Sisyphus' happiness come from?

-happiness comes from accepting the human situation with

-dignity

-freedom

-passion

5. Answering scanning questions in complete sentences

Directions (for students)**:** On another sheet of paper, answer the following questions in complete sentences. Answer the questions by using the subjects, verbs, clauses and prepositional phrases in the questions in your responses. Do not answer in incomplete sentences. Do not give short answers. Do not use pronouns as subjects for your sentences. The first one is done for you as an example.

Example:

1. Who wrote 'The Myth of Sisyphus'?

You write: Albert Camus wrote 'The Myth of Sisyphus'.

1. Who wrote 'The Myth of Sisyphus'?

2. What is one of the most important questions of philosophy?

3. What is Sisyphus?

…etc.

6. Dictation.

Directions (for students). You will hear the following text read three times. The first time it will be read at normal speed. Try to get the main idea. The second time it will be dictated one sentence at a time. Number your paper and write the sentences as you hear them. The entire text will be read a third time for checking your work.

(Key)

1. Sisyphus is the hero of the absurd.

2. 'Absurd' means meaningless, nonsense or unreasonable.

3. Sisyphus is a symbol of the struggle against the absurdity of the world.

4. Humans have a sense of justice and fairness.

5. Yet good people often suffer, and bad people often become rich and successful.

6. It looks as if the world does not care about us.

7. It seems that the world is not naturally good, fair or just.

8. Although many many events show the world to be meaningless or unreasonable, Sisyphus remains a hero.

9. He is a hero because he loved the world passionately.

10. And he is a hero because he suffered a great punishment.

11. The punishment from the gods was for escaping Hades and seeking his pleasure on earth.

12. His punishment was to spend eternity in meaningless labour.

13. He pushes a stone up a mountain.

14. It rolls back down again.

15. He pushes it back up again.

16. This goes on and on forever and ever.

17. The gods are powerful, but Sisyphus is not afraid of them.

18. He fights for what he loves and for what he wants in life.

19. This is the price that must be paid for the passions of this earth.

7. Keyword Exercise.

Directions: A key word exercise is an exercise in which grammar inflection (except word order), pronouns and function words have been removed from the sentences. Read through the complete sentences on the back a few times out loud. Now use the key word sets below to help you narrate the story in complete grammatical sentences by supplying the missing grammar inflection, pronouns and function words. Work with a partner until you can do it <u>perfectly</u>.

Keywords only:

(A)

1. Nothing tell us Sisyphus underworld.

2. Myth make imagination come life imagination.

3. myth, one see whole effort body strain raise huge stone.

4. He roll push slope again again.

 (B)

5. We imagine face screw up, cheek tight stone.

6. imagine shoulder heavy, muddy rock.

7. imagine foot wedge rock.

8. imagine all Sisyphus cut, bruise, ache pain.

9. We imagine countless fresh starts with outstretched arms.

(C)

10. see two muddy hand.

11. All done world sky, Hades below earth.

12. Every time Sisyphus reach mountaintop, watche stone rush down.

13. walk back down, return Sisyphus interest.

Proper English Sentences:

(A)

1. Nothing is told to us about Sisyphus in the underworld.

2. Myths are made for the imagination, and they come to life in the imagination.

3. As for this myth, one sees the whole effort of a body straining to raise the huge stone.

4. He rolls it and pushes it up a slope again and again.

 (B)

5. We imagine his face screwed up, his cheek tight against the stone.

6. We imagine his shoulder against the heavy, muddy rock.

7. We imagine his foot wedging the rock.

8. We imagine all of Sisyphus' cuts, bruises, aches and pains.

9. We imagine countless fresh starts with outstretched arms.

(C)

10. We see his two muddy hands.

11. All of this is done in a world without a sky, because Hades is below the earth.

12. Every time Sisyphus reaches the mountaintop, he watches the stone rush down.

13. He walks back down, and it is during his return that Sisyphus interests me.

8. Dictagloss.

Directions (for teacher) This is a variant of dictation. A (very short - 3 or 4 sentences max) passage is read out once or twice at native speaker normal speaking speed. Ask the students to write down not the whole text, but notes on the salient facts of the passage, -i.e. a string of key information words.

Then ask the students, alone, then in pairs or groups of three to reconstruct the text as close to exactly as possible, using these notes and their own knowledge of the grammatical structure involved. Finally have the students write their answers on the board and have the class as a whole edit for errors. (Taken through TESL-L listserve from-Richard Morgan, ELTD, University of -Strathclyde,Glasgow UK, c. 2001)

(Dictagloss Key)

(A)

Every time Sisyphus reaches the mountaintop, he watches the stone rush down. He walks back down to the ground. It is during his return that Sisyphus interests me. In this time, Sisyphus has a brief break from the labour of pushing. I imagine his walk back down. A face that labours so close to stones is already stone itself! I see that man going back down with a heavy, but measured step toward the torture that he knows will never the end.

(B)

That downhill walk is the time he can think. When he leaves the mountaintop and gradually walks back down unbroken, he shows that he is stronger than his punishment. In this walk, he is greater than the gods. He is stronger than his rock.

(C)

If this myth is tragic, it's because the hero is conscious. He *knows* that he has no hope to escape. Today's labourers work every day of their lives at the same tasks, and this fate is no less absurd. But it only becomes tragic for them in the rare moments when they conscious of their fate. Sisyphus is the proletarian of the gods. He is powerless and rebellious. He knows all about his tragic condition: it is what he thinks of during his descent.

09. Paragraph Outlining.

Directions (for students) Hand out the text now. (for students): Outline the ideas presented in paragraph 9 ("Sometimes this walk down the mountain is …etc.) Be sure to clearly separate the main ideas, subtopics and details using bulleted hanging indention.

(key) Maybe it will look something like this:

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  -
  -
  -
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Now outline paragraphs 10 and 11.

10. Reading outline (Outlining the basic ideas of a text).

Directions (for T): Have the students make a basic outline of the text by making and writing a title (one to three words only) for each paragraph in the right margin of the text page. Do it one paragraph at a time at first. Time them (say 20 seconds for para. #1) to make it challenging. Answers will vary, but almost anything that hits the topic of the sentence is OK.

Next add details to the outline. Copy the paragraph titles onto another sheet of paper. Leave space below each. Have the students look at the text again and add two details for each paragraph heading.

11. Summarizing

Directions (for students): Using only your outline, write a one or two paragraph summary of the text. Be sure to include all of the information you have in your outline.

12. Essay test.

Directions: Choose **one** of the following questions and write an essay on each. Follow the essay test strategy we discussed in class. Be sure to make an <u>outline</u> of your main ideas and support facts **before** you begin writing and begin your essay with a strong <u>thesis statement</u>. <u>Budget</u> your time so you will be able to <u>edit</u> your essay before you have to hand it in. Good luck! (75 minutes)

1. TBA

2. Discuss TBA.

THE TEXT:

Introduction to Philosophy

HUM 102   prc

Cheyne/Rummel

<u>Can one live a meaningful life in a meaningless world?</u>

Albert Camus, 'The Myth of Sisyphus'

 Judging whether life is or is not meaningful is one of the most important questions of philosophy. "What is the meaning of life?" is a serious question. Other philosophical questions seem like games in comparison. The answer can change how a person chooses to live. These are facts the heart can feel; yet they need careful study before they become clear to one's understanding. We judge the importance of a question by the action that results. I therefore conclude that the meaning of life is the most urgent question. How can this question be answered?

The story of Sisyphus is an ancient Greek myth. In the myth, the gods punished Sisyphus by forcing him to roll a rock to the top of a mountain. Every time Sisyphus rolled the heavy rock to the top of the mountain, it would roll back down again. He had to do this forever. The gods

thought that meaningless and hopeless labour was the most terrible punishment they could give.

In some stories, Sisyphus was the wisest and most prudent man. In other stories, however, Sisyphus was a highwayman, or someone who robbed people as they traveled along the roads. Different storytellers give different reasons why Sisyphus became the laborer of a meaningless and tiring task in Hades, the ancient Greek underworld or hell. He was accused of stealing secrets from the gods. He was also accused of helping a father rescue his daughter who had been kidnapped by Zeus, king of the gods. The myth tells us that Sisyphus had put Death, who is known as Thanatos, in chains. The king of the underworld, also called Hades, sent the god of war to release Thanatos.

It is also said that Sisyphus became an old man and died. He woke up in the underworld and begged Thanatos to allow him to return to the land of the living for just one day. Thanatos let him go for just one day. But when Sisyphus saw the world's water, sun, warm stones and the sea again, he no longer wanted to go back to the darkness of Hades. Sisyphus did not return to the underworld. So Thanatos ordered him to return, and became angry. Still Sisyphus did not return. For many more years, Sisyphus lived near the sparkling sea and the beauty of the earth. Hermes, the messenger god, came and seized the disobedient man by the collar. Snatching Sisyphus from his joys, Hermes led him forcibly back to the underworld. There in Hades, Sisyphus' rock was ready for him.

Sisyphus is the hero of the absurd. 'Absurd' means meaningless, nonsense or unreasonable. Sisyphus is a symbol of the struggle against the absurdity of the world. Humans have a sense of justice and fairness. Yet good people often suffer, and bad people often become rich and successful. It looks as if the world does not care about us. It seems that the world is not naturally good, fair or just. Although many many events show the world to be meaningless or unreasonable, Sisyphus remains a hero. He is a hero because he loved the world passionately. And he is a hero because he suffered a great punishment. The punishment from the gods was for escaping Hades and seeking his pleasure on earth. His punishment was to spend eternity in meaningless labour. He pushes a stone up a mountain. It rolls back down again. He pushes it back up again. Forever. The gods are powerful, but Sisyphus is not afraid of them. He

fights for what he loves and for what he wants in life. This is the price that must be paid for the passions of this earth.

Nothing is told to us about Sisyphus in the underworld. Myths are made for the imagination, and they come to life in the imagination. As for this myth, one sees the whole effort of a body straining to raise the huge stone. He rolls it and pushes it up a slope again and again. We imagine his face screwed up, his cheek tight against the stone. We imagine his shoulder against the heavy, muddy rock. We imagine his foot wedging the rock. We imagine all of Sisyphus' cuts, bruises, aches and pains. We imagine countless fresh starts with outstretched arms. We see his two muddy hands. All of this is done in a world without a sky, because Hades is below the earth.

Every time Sisyphus reaches the mountaintop, he watches the stone rush down. He walks back down to the ground. It is during his return that Sisyphus interests me. In this time, Sisyphus has a brief break from the labour of pushing. I imagine his walk back down. A face that labours so close to stones is already stone itself! I see that man going back down with a heavy, but measured step toward the torture that he knows will never the end. That downhill walk is the time he can think. When he leaves the mountaintop and gradually walks back down unbroken, he shows that he is stronger than his punishment. In this walk, he is greater than the gods. He is stronger than his rock.

If this myth is tragic, it's because the hero is conscious. He *knows* that he has no hope to escape. Today's labourers work every day of their lives at the same tasks, and this fate is no less absurd. But it only becomes tragic for them in the rare moments when they conscious of their fate. Sisyphus is the proletarian of the gods. He is powerless and rebellious. He knows all about his tragic condition: it is what he thinks of during his descent.

Sometimes this walk down the mountain is sad. But it can also be joyful, as long as he can bear the walk with dignity. Again, I imagine Sisyphus returning down toward his rock. When beautiful memories are in the mind, and the call of happiness becomes too strong, sadness rises in the human heart. This sadness is the rock's victory. This would mean that the gods have won. Symbolically, this sadness is the rock itself. The terrible sadness is too heavy to bear. This symbolizes our human nights of torture. But terrible truths can be made less

terrible if we face them and bear them. This is the absurd victory. The absurd is the torture of a universe that does not care. We can have victory over the absurd by not giving up. We *do* care, so we are stronger than the absurd. We know we cannot change the world, but we are still strong in our passion. Although we know the world to be indifferent to justice, we still do not give up our passionate instinct for fairness and justice.

Sisyphus' fate belongs to him. His rock is his fate. While the absurd man contemplates his torment alone, Sisyphus chooses to bear his fate with dignity. Although he is a prisoner, his he still has this choice. Because he chooses dignity, he is the master of his days.

I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain! One always finds one's burden again. Sisyphus teaches us about a dignity that can rebel against the gods and raise heavy rocks. He concludes that all is well. This universe without meaning is neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each part of that night-filled mountain, in itself, forms a world. The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus as happy.

Comments:

The central concern of The Myth of Sisyphus is what Camus calls "the absurd." Camus claims that there is a contradiction or conflict between the order that we want from the universe and the chaos that we find. The order that we want from the universe is reason, meaning, harmony and justice. We will never find this order in the universe itself. Either we will discover that meaning through faith, by placing our hopes in a god beyond this world, or we will conclude that life is meaningless. Camus asks if life has meaning or not. Even if the answer is no, does that mean that life is therefore not worth living? Can we can accept that and live happily in a world with no meaning or purpose?

The absurd is a contradiction that cannot be resolved. Any attempt to resolve this contradiction is simply an attempt to escape from it. Camus claims that most people who confront the contradiction of the absurd try to escape from it. Living with the absurd, Camus suggests, is a matter of facing this contradiction and keeping aware of it. Facing the absurd, he thought, allows us to live life to its fullest.

Camus identifies three characteristics of the absurd life:

1. Revolt (we must not accept any compromise in our struggle).

2. Freedom (we are absolutely free to think and behave as we choose).

3. Passion (we must pursue a life of rich and diverse experiences).

Camus claims that Sisyphus is the ideal absurd hero, and that his punishment represents the human condition. This means that Sisyphus is you and me. Sisyphus must struggle forever without hope of success. As long as he accepts that there is nothing more to life than this absurd struggle, he can find happiness in it. The happiness comes from accepting the human situation with dignity, freedom and passion.

About the authors

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