

Lesson # 1 - Paul Bunyan - *An American Tall Tale*

Suggested Teaching Strategies

Tall Tales: A tall tale features a larger-than-life or superhuman main character, with a specific task in life. Often, it involves the solving of a problem in a humorous way. Details of the story tend to be exaggerated, describing things as greater than they really are. North American settlers who made their homes in the wilderness popularized the tall tale on this continent. In those days, long before TV and movies, people depended on storytelling for entertainment. After a long day's work, people gathered to tell each other funny tales. Each group of workers, loggers, cowboys, railroad and steel workers had their own tall tale hero.

Readers Theatre has been implemented in many classrooms as a fun and exciting way of reinforcing the instruction of reading, imparting information, and even teaching ideas or concepts. There are a multitude of ways that Readers Theatre can be implemented, ranging from *Circle Reading*, *Instant Reading*, *Co-operative Reading*, or *Staged Reading*. Performance approaches include *Chamber Theatre* and *Story Theatre*. Many of these approaches are outlined in future lessons.

Listed below are a number of suggestions to get started:

- scripts should be read rather than recited
- actors are encouraged to stay in the same spot, instead of moving around the stage
- movements, actions, gestures and expressive voices are encouraged
- simple costumes and props can be used. Even an interesting hat can be an effective addition.

Theme: "Paul Bunyan" - necessity is the mother of invention.

Background: Paul Bunyan is perhaps the most famous character of the American tall tale. He was the greatest logger of all time. A giant of a man, Paul was born in Maine and logged in Canada and various parts of America. He headed a camp of mighty men and could cut down so much timber in one day that 300 mule drivers would have to work day and night to haul his logs to the river. His truest companion was Babe, the Blue ox.

Answers

Comprehension Questions

1. The flapjacks that Sourdough Sam was making fell in the dirt and were ruined, therefore, Paul's men had nothing to eat.
2. Ole made a grill and an eggbeater.
3. He put corn kernels on the grill under the flapjack, so when they popped, the flapjack flipped over.
4. *Answers will vary* (i.e. strawberries)