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We all know folktales that have part of the world’s storytelling tradition from a long way back. The Frog Prince, Cinderella, The Ugly Duckling -- these are all folktales that began as oral tradition, which means they were spoken around fires and passed down in families all over the world, for years before anyone wrote them down.

Many of these folktales have different versions in different countries -- but are common to many cultures. This could be because some people moved around and brought stories from their culture to others, but it is most likely that these stories tell about dreams and problems that are common to people wherever they are. We dream of being princes or princesses, we should be careful to be kind and unselfish, we should look inside a person to see the real value and beauty and not judge people by their looks.

While folktales come from all over the world, one uniquely American type of folktale is a Tall Tale. Tall tales began as bragging contests that often took place when men of the American frontier got together after a long day’s work. A tall tale is a story with unbelievable elements, but told as if it were something that really happened.

Some of these stories are exaggerations of actual events and real people; others are completely made-up characters in familiar settings, such as the American Old West or the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. The tall tales of Paul Bunyan and John Henry are not about real people, but there are tall tales about Johnny Appleseed and Daniel Boone, who were real -- but did not do all the crazy things the stories that grew up around them say they did. (Daniel Boone stories say that Boone fought hand-to-hand with a bear and escaped from Indians by swinging on vines! Although Boone’s family said these stories were ridiculous, the ideas continued since these tall tales were repeated in many magazines and books aimed at young boys.)

Tall tales are almost always stories about people who live in hard circumstances but believe there are no limits to what they can do. They are usually funny, told as if reporting a real events, but with a WINK.

Pecos Bill was probably never a real person, but in his stories, he is a larger than life hero who represents the spirit of
early settlers in the American West. No one knows who first told stories about Pecos Bill. Cowboys may have invented the stories. Others say writer Edward O’Reilly invented the character for stories that began appearing in The Century Magazine in 1917. The stories were collected in a book called “The Saga of Pecos Bill” published in 1923.

Later on, other writers either borrowed tales from O’Reilly’s articles or added further adventures of their own to Pecos Bill’s legend. Pecos Bill has not only appeared in magazines and books, but also in comic books and even two movies.

According to legend, Pecos Bill was born in the 1830s and was the youngest of 18 children. When he was a very young boy, his pioneer family came upon a rough path traveling by wagon next to the Pecos River in Texas. Pecos Bill bounced out of the wagon and into the river. The current swept him away and he was rescued by coyotes who raised him. (See what we mean about unbelievable stories?!) A few other highlights of the Pecos Bill stories include:

- Pecos uses a rattle snake for a lariat and once lassoed and rode a tornado (!)
- He has a girlfriend named Slue-Foot Sue who rides a giant catfish
- Died laughing when he saw a “city slicker” dressed up trying to look like a cowboy.

About the Boss (ex...Director)

Gay H. Hammond is Director of WonderQuest and Resident Dramatist of the Gainesville Theatre Alliance. Repeat WonderQuest patrons will recognize her as the playwright who directed and penned the script for last year’s Sleeping Beauty and as the lady who gives away a T-shirt to a lucky student at each performance.

Ms. Hammond has written nearly 40 plays, for both young and general audiences. She loves children’s literature (she is really good at making different voices for characters when reading aloud) and she loves to write plays for children. Some of her favorite plays include Sophie and the Pirates, Stone Soup and The Briar Patch. She loves to play with words and has been the Wordsmith and Emcee for the Hall County Literacy Spelling Bee for over 20 years!

Originally from Calhoun, Georgia, where she spent lots of childhood time reading books and exploring on the family farm, writing Pecos Bill had Ms. Hammond remembering her own horse-riding days and the comforting smell of the barn and saddles. She still feels a fond memory of her daddy when she walks into the aroma of a feed store.

Ms. Hammond has an MFA in Playwriting from Spaulding University, and because of her work and artistic eye, WonderQuest was named the 2009 WINNER of the Southeastern Theatre Conference’s Sara Spencer Award for Excellence in Child Drama.

Keep reading to see how WonderQuest’s designers are working to create the LARGER THAN LIFE bits of Pecos Bill’s stories!!
How’d a Texan Cowboy git on stage in Georgia?

So, once the decision is made about which play to perform, what next? How does the play go from storybook to a make-believe world on stage? How do scenery, costumes and character accents, posture and body language help you understand the story?

One aspect of taking the story from page to stage is designing scenery that helps the audience to feel like they are looking into the story. WonderQuest was fortunate that professional scenic designer Billy Don Massey was interested in the project. B. Don, as he is known to friends, has spent the past 40 years working as designer, technologist, teacher and theatrical consultant. Among his 150+ educational and professional credits are lighting designs for the recent GTA productions of *Barbary Allen* and *A Midsummer Nights Dream* and set design for *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *The Glass Menagerie*. He also has worked on permanent exhibits in Washington DC and is Professor Emiritus with The University of Georgia.

The first thing a designer does is read the script, which helps them get a sense of
what is needed to tell the story visually, whether they are working on lights, the set, costumes, props or sound. For the set and costumes, the next step is doing research to see, in this case, dramatic photographs, paintings and illustrations of the American frontier that Pecos Bill inhabits.

After reading the script and talking with the director, Mr. Massey studied images of the West, keeping key theatre elements in mind: different levels for characters to stand on, numerous places to enter/exit, and any special needs of the story. For Pecos Bill, we need a Western frontier, some tumbleweeds, a snake bullwhip and open space for a GIANT tornado!

After discussing the pictures with the director to see what she liked best, Mr. Massey created several drawings of his ideas, then a final plan for building a set that is the perfect size for our stage (using lots of math he learned when he was your age!). He had to choose colors for the set as well -- colors that would create the right atmosphere for the story, but allow the costumes to stand out against it. Our set-building team began work on the set in August and moved it to the theatre in early September.
...and What Kinda Special Dudds er They Wearin’?

Costume Designer Jeannie Crawford, who has become a REGULAR for WonderQuest audiences, began her work in the summer as well. You may have seen her work in last year’s production of Sleeping Beauty or in The Briar Patch, and James and the GIANT Peach.

Ms. Crawford began by researching the many characters in Pecos Bill, looking through pictures from pioneer history and children’s books about the Wild West. Director Gay Hammond told her that, in keeping with the nature of Tall Tales, the costumes, and hats should be BIG, exaggerated and funny!

One of Ms. Crawford’s talents is the ability to determine special textures and colors that help communicate a character’s body and personality. When she has an idea of what a character should look like, she goes to fabric stores and often at second hand shops, moving quickly through the aisles until the right color and texture
sort of “jump out” at her. She’s also wonderful at designing costumes from different periods in history, so with all of her previous experience, she easily created designs for Pecos and his gaggle of friends.

Ms. Crawford is a color expert and fiber artist, so she pays close attention to how the costumes will contrast with the colors of the set (a blue cowboy would not show up well in a blue frontier sky!). She also thinks about how the fabrics she chooses MOVE onstage -- as that movement of clothing and headpieces is an extension of an actor’s body to communicate the story.
Teachers: You can combine language arts studies AND prepare for the play by discussing and having your students write about some of these themes of the Pecos Bill story and Tall Tales in general. This would be especially valuable after reading (or listening to) some of their original stories or legends, which can be found here: http://americanfolklore.net/folklore/tall-tales/

Folktales, which are stories that are repeated by many people but not often written down, exist in every country and are usually stories of problems with unexpected outcomes. Tall Tales, a distinctly American kind of folktale, were usually about a specific time in history and focused on a regular person who becomes a hero by doing something BIG, even superhuman.

Why did cowboys and pioneers tell stories? Why do you think they invented Tall Tales about people who could do incredible (and not realistic) things?

Read a Tall Tale and keep a list of all of the things in the story that couldn’t really happen (the exaggerations).

Is there a difference between the exaggeration of a Tall Tale and a lie? Strictly speaking, if a story tells things that didn’t happen, it is NOT the truth. The reason most tall tales aren’t considered lies is that most are SO far-fetched, it is clear that the story is a fantasy. Also, the exaggerations never hurt someone, as lies often do; they only make the hero look better. How could you make sure people who read a story know it’s a Tall Tale and not a lie?

Read some stories about real people whose stories have been exaggerated -- what are some of the TALL parts of the story? Why do you think Tall Tales developed around historical figures like Paul Revere, Johnny Appleseed and Molly Brown?

Label a blank map of the United States with the location of each Tall Tale you read. Many of the characters travel, so you can trace their paths along the map to show where the characters went. For example, in his tall tale Paul Bunyan carved out the Grand Canyon, created Mt. Hood (in the state of Washington), and accomplished other amazing feats across the map.

Choose a character from one of the Tall Tales you read. Now imagine they are your parent. What is the best part about having the character for your mom or
Interestin’ Stuff ‘bout the Cowboy Life

There have been numerous Tall Tales and LOTS of movies and TV shows over the years about life in the American west because the whole world has thought of the cowboy life exciting and brave.

The time of the American “Wild West” actually began in colonial times, but the key years are considered the 1840s to 1890, from the California Gold Rush to the establishment of settlements throughout the West to the Pacific coast.

The first north American cowboys in the west were from Mexico and they were called Vaqueros.

Much of cowboy work was cattle drives, when they guided a herd of cattle from a ranch to market, several days or weeks travel away. The senior cowboys got to ride in front of the herd, the junior cowboys had to ride behind, where it was dusty and smelly.

The story of Pecos Bill says he was born with great strength and raised by coyotes. Thunder Rose is a modern Tall Tale about a young girl born during a stormy night in a log cabin. Rose vows to grow up to be more than just big and strong and has special strength, almost like SHE is a storm. Can you name some strange things a baby could do that would show his or her parents that they were a VERY unusual child (and probably a Tall Tale hero)?

Tall Tales were mostly about characters out on the unsettled American frontier. “When you call me that, smile,” the hero said to the bad man in that first of thousands of cowboy novels, published in 1902. Even before then, the cowboy had become a part of the American identity. He captured people’s imaginations and became a folk hero, a half-real, half-mythological symbol of the American West. He was tall in the saddle, working tirelessly by day and sleeping under the stars at night, alone against the frontier’s treeless plains, Indians and outlaws. Can you imagine working and living outside all the time, with no grocery store, movie theatre or even a bathroom?! What would be good about it? What would be hardest?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>1st Grade</th>
<th>2nd Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELAKR2, ELAKR6</td>
<td>ELA1W1,ELA1LSV1</td>
<td>ELA2W1, ELA2R2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Grade</td>
<td>4th Grade</td>
<td>5th Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELA3W1,ELA3LSV1</td>
<td>ELA4W2, ELA4LSV1</td>
<td>ELASSV1, ELA5W4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The assignments on this page address these core area Georgia Performance Standards.
### Tall Tale Math

1 Cowboy + a Herd of Cattle = Burgers for the whole town!

This section is for lower grades

1. If Paul Revere rode the bus instead of his horse to warn people in the countryside about a coming attack, and bus costs $1.75 each way, how much did he pay to go out to the country and come back home?

2. If Rip Van Winkle’s beard grows 3 inches a year, how long will his beard be after 8.5 years of sleep?

3. On his way through the forest, Daniel Boone notices a raccoon family of 5 climbing a tree with their “groceries”. The parents are hauling 18 marshmallows each (a raccoon favorite!), the oldest cub can carry just half that, and the other 2 cubs each carry one less than their next oldest sibling. How many marshmallows end up in the tree?

4. Johnny Appleseed makes 4 pies with his favorite fruit, and he cuts each pie into 8 pieces. If 4 farmers each buy 5 pieces of pie, and Johnny gives 2 milkmaids 4 slices each, and then one piece to a lost boy, will he have any pie left for himself? If so, how much?

5. To warm the people in her lifeboat, Molly Brown grabs some hot tea in the dining room as she scrambles for the deck. She gives one grandmother a bowl with 2 7/9 cups of tea, a young mother a pail with 21/9 cups, and a spittoon with 1 15/9 cups to a peasant girl. Who got the most tea?

6. John Henry drives 4 spikes to hold down 12 feet of railroad track. Draw a table to show how many spikes he needs to hold down 8 feet, 18 feet and 27 feet of rail.

7. If Annie Oakley can shoot a hole every 5 seconds in 2 playing cards tossed in the air, how many cards can she pierce if she shoots nonstop for 35 seconds at a deck of cards that’s thrown up in the air?

This section is for upper grades

1. If Paul Revere rode the bus instead of his horse to warn people in the countryside about a coming attack, and bus costs $1.75 each way, how much did he pay to go out to the country and come back home?

2. If Rip Van Winkle’s beard grows 3 inches a year, how long will his beard be after 8.5 years of sleep?

3. On his way through the forest, Daniel Boone notices a raccoon family of 5 climbing a tree with their “groceries”. The parents are hauling 18 marshmallows each (a raccoon favorite!), the oldest cub can carry just half that, and the other 2 cubs each carry one less than their next oldest sibling. How many marshmallows end up in the tree?

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten</th>
<th>1st Grade</th>
<th>2nd Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MKN2c, MKG1a, MKG2a</td>
<td>M1N3d, M1G1c</td>
<td>M2N2a, M2N1c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Grade</td>
<td>4th Grade</td>
<td>5th Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3N2c, M3N4d</td>
<td>M4N6b, M4M2b</td>
<td>M5N3c, M5N4c</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The assignments on this page address the core area Georgia Performance Standards listed.
Another way of knowing the difference between Tall Tales and lies is that Tall Tales utilize obvious and intentional exaggeration that is SO wild, it cannot be intended to be taken as fact. This is called HYPERBOLE. There are a lot of funny stories that use hyperbole; Tall Tales use it to describe the hero in a way that makes you root for them like superheros conquering evil, but lots of other stories have a character who speaks in hyperbole, that just make you laugh because of their silliness.

See if you can pick which statements are hyperbole and circle them:

Christmas will never come.                                      My best friend was mad at me.
There were hundreds of bees in that nest.                       My uncle has a truckload of money.
I am so hungry I could eat a horse.                             The train went so fast it crashed.

Hyperbole is the beginning of a Tall Tale!

Complete these sentences (individually or with the class):
My dad is so big, __________________________________________________.
I am such an awesome swimmer that ________________________________.
The wind was blowing so hard that ________________________________.
One day it was so cold that ________________________________.

When you complete each sentence in a bigger-than-life way you will have a great start to your tall tale. Choose one of the statements above and create a Tall Tale character to go with it (“my dad” could be one, or someone experiencing that COLD day).

Now think of at least three unbelievable things your character can do in your everyday story and add those in. Next, use lots of adjectives to describe the action. Since impossible exaggerations are what make up a Tall Tale, use LOTS of them! End your tall tale with one final unbelievable event -- your biggest exaggeration of all!
So Paul Revere jumped on a white horse and rode around the country delivering biscuits at tea time ...

(Tall Tale Code Breaking!)

What fact is not widely known about Paul Rever’s ride because of the Tall Tale lore that has grown about him?

Why did Pecos Bill want to ride a bull in the rodeo?

---

Do each exercise below. Find your answer in the appropriate answer box and notice the letter next to it. Each time the exercise number appears in the code, write this letter above it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answers 1-9</th>
<th>Answers 10-18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R 22.18</td>
<td>J 13.7457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G 1.6493</td>
<td>L 14.3</td>
</tr>
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<td>T 115.378</td>
<td>P 111.211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W 25.83</td>
<td>F 21.33</td>
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<td>E 2.25</td>
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<td>O 257.32</td>
<td>T 14.4457</td>
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<tr>
<td>U 26.28</td>
<td>Y 22.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 6.6</td>
<td>U 62.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>D 111.278</td>
<td>M 13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C 28.38</td>
<td>K 13.8657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H 11.6</td>
<td>B 473.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B 249.32</td>
<td>S 1.8125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1) 16.75  2) 24.2  3) 3.666  4) 80.28  5) 386.5
+ 9.08 - 17.6 + 7.934 - 51.90 - 129.18

6) 0.276  7) 2.918  8) 37.000  9) 13
0.4333  34.36 - 9.641  6.4
+ 0.94  + 74.            + 2.78

10) $50 - $28.67  13) 0.436 + 0.9097 + 5 + 8.1
11) $377.49 + $96.30  14) 101.1 + 0.101 + 10.01
12) 3 - 1.1875  15) 20.3057 - 6.44

17) Tex weighs 50 kg. His body contains 30.8 kg of oxygen and 4.9 kg of hydrogen. The rest is made up of other elements. How many kilograms of other elements are in Tex’s body?

18) Daisy’s body contains 38.6 kg of oxygen, 6.1 kg of hydrogen, and the rest other elements. The weight of the other elements is 20.4 kg less than the weight of oxygen. How much does Daisy weigh?
As we’ve discussed elsewhere in this Study Guide, one characteristic of folklore is that it morphs and changes with each teller and each audience, and in the case of Tall Tales, usually growing bigger and more exaggerated with each telling. The essential element of Tall Tales, hyperbole, is obvious and intentional exaggeration that is SO wild, it cannot be intended to be taken as fact, though in the case of a few real people who are the subject of tales and legend, some of their actual accomplishments just SEEM superhuman.

Whether stories spun by cowboys and pioneers by the campfire or created by magazine writers romanticizing the quickly vanishing frontier, Tall Tales have similar basic elements: a “regular guy” kind of hero who has superhuman abilities > linked to a real historical period > a problem that gets solved in a humorous way > exaggerated details about the hero’s accomplishments and events. Some are based on real people, though the classic Tall Tales are completely made up.

Read the tales listed below and identify the main elements in the table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hero</th>
<th>Superhuman Gifts</th>
<th>Historical Period</th>
<th>Problem to be Solved</th>
<th>Humor (hero’s accomplishments)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pecos Bill</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davy Crocket</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Henry</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Molly Brown</td>
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<tr>
<td>Johnny Appleseed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul Bunyan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annie Oakley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rip Van Winkle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Stormalong</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casey Jones</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Now that you’ve analyzed the elements of a Tall Tale, gather a “campfire group” of your own to spin your own oral tale. Take turns introducing a character, the time period and a problem to be solved using AS MUCH hyperbole as you can! Bet you can’t do it without laughing!
Dear Teachers~

We know some of your students have NEVER been to a live performance, so discovering the difference between this and a movie is part of the learning experience. Please discuss the items on this page with your students so they will know what to expect and what is expected of THEM. Thank you!

Theatre Etiquette...

Theatre is a partnership between the actors on stage and the members of the audience. It is a two-sided communication process. An actor’s goal is to give pleasure to his or her audience. A responsive audience reciprocates the cast’s energy, which in turn encourages the actors to give even more back to that audience. The better the audience, the better that performance will be! Each performance is unique — like snowflakes, no two are ever the same. Each performance’s life lasts only in the memories of its participants. Many young people have never attended a live theatre performance and may have questions as to how they should conduct themselves. Listed below are answers to the most common questions asked by new audience members.

How is a live performance different from a movie?
The work is LIVE. The action that you see is happening right now, with people just like you. You should treat the performers the way that you would want to be treated if you were on the stage with a lot of people watching you. Wouldn’t you want them to listen and to pay attention? To laugh when you were funny, and applaud when they like what you were doing? Also, in our beautiful theatre space, no gum, drinks or food are allowed!

Do I have to stay in my seat and be as quiet as possible?
Not necessarily. You shouldn’t have personal conversations during the play, but you do not have to be completely quiet. If something funny is happening on stage, then you should laugh. If the characters ask you a question, then you should answer!

When should I clap my hands?
In a live play, you should ALWAYS applaud whenever the show is especially spectacular or entertaining, even in the middle of the play — remember that applause is the way that you show the actors you like what they are doing! Also, you should applaud when the play is over, and when the actors take their bow. Most of all, HAVE FUN!