



TALL
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TALL

Tales

(A big pile of bulloney)

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TALL, TALL, TALL TALES

UNIT OVERVIEW

In this unit, students are taken on a tantalizing trip to the humorous world of tall tales. Part I provides a structured, teacher-centered approach focussing on the general characteristics of tall tales from different cultures and lands. Creative writing activities form the bulk of assignments in this section. Part II consists of optional activities building flexibility into the unit. Part III is a series of comprehension questions relating to the story collection “**American Tall Tales**”. Part IV includes a selection of well-loved tall tales which teachers can use in conjunction with the unit to supplement their own sources of tall tales. A tall tale songbook containing the words to some well-loved children’s songs completes Part V. The net result is a big pile of “baloney”.

PART I - TEACHING LESSONS

In this section, students learn about tall tales and their characteristics. A storyteller approach with creative writing assignments helps students to initially explore tall tales in a structured setting.

- 1) **Introductory Lesson - Mr. Baloney’s Tall Tale Wordsearch**
- 2) **What Are Tall Tales? - Baloney Or Not? - Fact From Fiction Worksheet**
- 3) **Tools For Effective Writing: Adjectives and Alliteration - Gross Menu**
- 4) **Tools For Effective Writing: Exaggeration - A Wild And Crazy Tale**
- 5) **Tools For Effective Writing: Similes - Mr. Baloney’s Comparisons**
- 6) **Tools For Effective Writing: Conversation - Record Breaking Conversation**
- 7) **Original Tall Tale - Tall Tale Writing**

PART II - OPTIONAL LESSONS

- 1) **Tall Tale Crossword**
- 2) **Videos**
- 3) **Bulletin Board Display**
- 4) **Selat Llat - April Fools’ Lesson**
- 5) **Cross Grading Rebus Story**
- 6) **Computer Software**

PART III - COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS: “American Tall Tales”

A series of questions have been prepared for each of the stories in the collection of tall tales entitled “*American Tall Tales*”.

PART IV - SELECTED TALL TALES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

A number of favourite tall tales from various lands have been selected to compliment the unit.

PART V - TALL TALE SONGBOOK

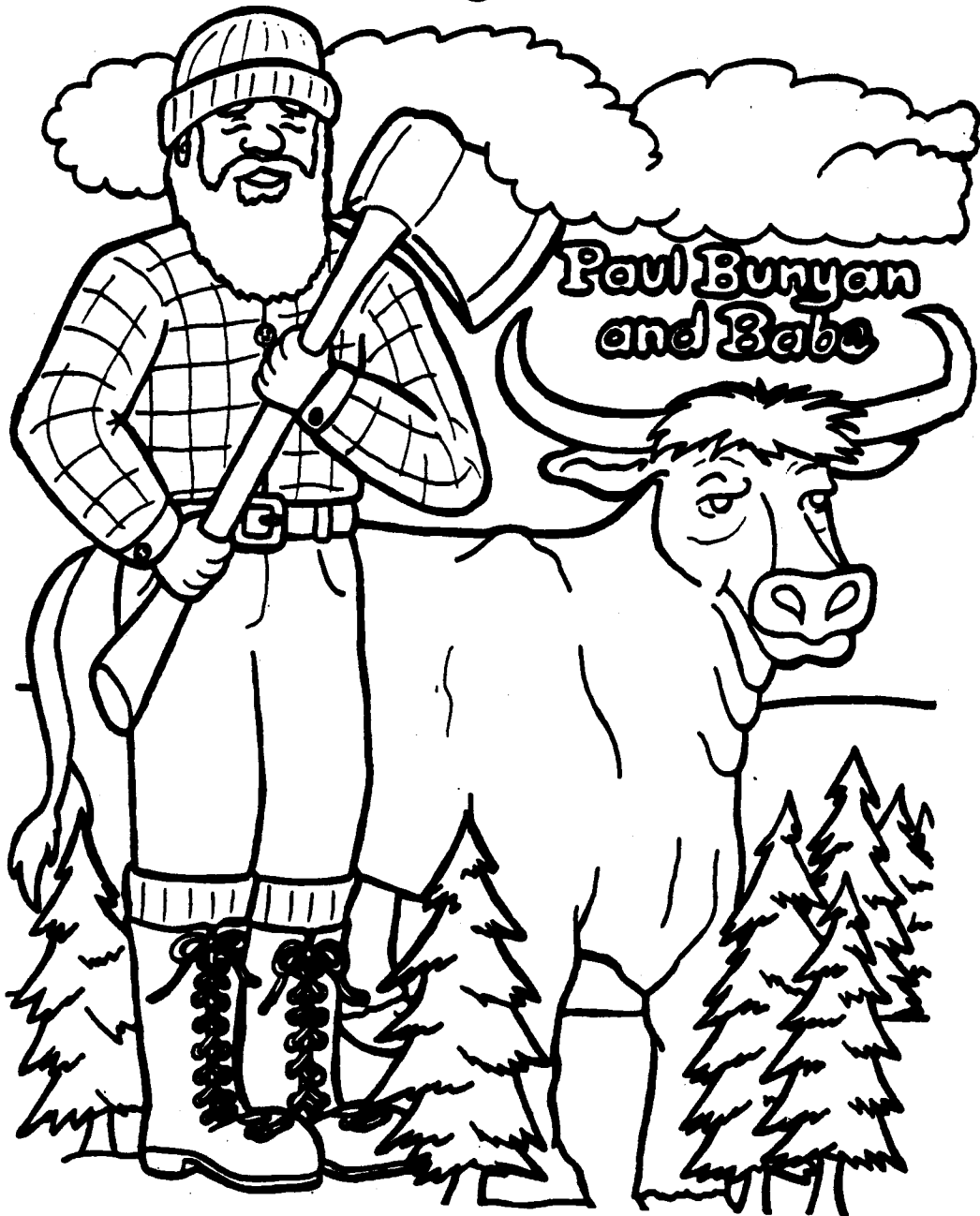
This collection of mostly humorous songs helps to integrate music into this fun unit.

PART VI - TALL TALE COLOURING BOOK

Illustrations of tall tale characters suitable for colouring.

PART I

Teaching Lessons



LESSON #1 - INTRODUCTORY LESSON

Student Objectives and Activities

- Students are read the story, “Sky Bright Axe - Paul Bunyan”, to establish interest in the tall tale genre of stories.
- Students complete a wordsearch pertaining to tall tales.

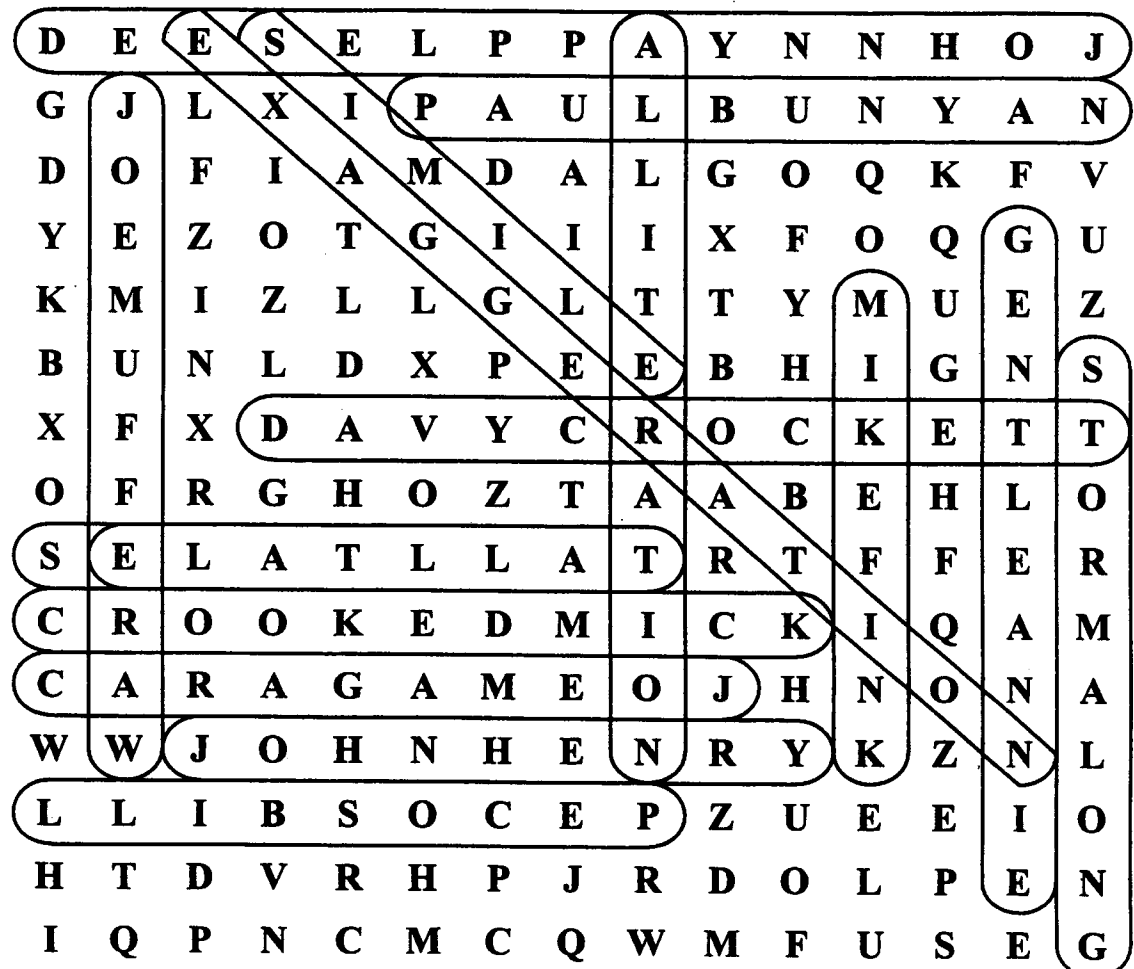
Suggested Teaching Strategies

- Begin by reading the tall tale, “Sky-bright Axe” – Paul Bunyan, from the collection, “American Tall Tales”, written by Adrien Stoutenburg (Puffin Books, ISBN 0-14-030928-4). The book is available at many libraries or for purchase online. Or, teachers may choose to begin the unit with any other all tale.
- After teachers have read the story, students are given the assignment, “Mr. Baloney’s Tall Tale Wordsearch”, familiarizing students with many of the tall tale characters they will encounter in the unit.
- Students can work on the solution to the wordsearch independently or in pairs.

*** Note ***

This fun assignment is not difficult and is designed to build student’s enthusiasm early in the unit.

Solution



MR. BALONEY'S TALL TALE WORDSEARCH

Name: _____

D E E S E L P P A Y N N H O J
G J L X I P A U L B U N Y A N
D O F I A M D A L G O Q K F V
Y E Z O T G I I I X F O Q G U
K M I Z L L G L T T Y M U E Z
B U N L D X P E E B H I G N S
X F X D A V Y C R O C K E T T
O F R G H O Z T A A B E H L O
S E L A T L L A T R T F F E R
C R O O K E D M I C K I Q A M
C A R A G A M E O J H N O N A
W W J O H N H E N R Y K Z N L
L L I B S O C E P Z U E E I O
H T D V R H P J R D O L P E N
I Q P N C M C Q W M F U S E G

Find These Words:

Tall Tale
Paul Bunyan
Gentle Annie
Exaggeration

Pecos Bill
Davy Crockett
Crooked Mick
Simile

Joe Magarac
Mike Fink
Johnny Apppleseed
Joe Mufferaw

Stormalong
John Henry
Alliteration
Selat Llat

LESSON #2 - WHAT ARE TALL TALES???

Student Objectives and Activities

- Students are read a tall tale thus developing an understanding of what a tall tale is.
- Students become aware of the five main characteristics of tall tales and complete notes illustrating these points:
 - 1) Tall tales are a type of folktale and are meant to be told aloud.
 - 2) Tall tales s-t-r-e-t-c-h the truth.
 - 3) Tall tales often combine fact with fiction.
 - 4) Tall tales often use humour, with entertainment being the main purpose.
 - 5) Tall tales make use of colourful words and language as well as effective writing strategies.
- Students complete a worksheet entitled “**Baloney Or Not? - Fact From Fiction**”, which challenges students to read eight short tales and determine which of the eight are true (fact) and which are untrue (fiction).

Suggested Teaching Strategies

- As a class, begin by challenging students to brainstorm some of the characteristics of tall tales. Teachers can use the story, “**Sky Bright Axe - Paul Bunyan**”, from the previous lesson as an example that will help guide students.
- After students have come up with a list of possible characteristics, show the overhead, “**What Are Tall Tales???**”, with students copying the five points into their notebooks. (Some teachers may choose to photocopy the notes or simply write these points on the board for students to jot down.)
- After an explanation of the points, students focus on the third characteristic which states that most tall tales combine fact and fiction. The worksheet, “**Baloney Or Not? - Fact From Fiction**” is then completed.
- Students read eight short “tales” and decide which are fact and which are fiction. Students must explain their choices, answering in full sentences. (A.I.F.S.)

Answers

1. The Parrot - Fiction
2. Spitting - Fact (see Guinness Book Of Records)
3. How Cold Was It? - Fiction
4. The Crooked Stream - Fiction
5. Hair Splitting - Fact (see Guinness Book Of Records)
6. Snakes - Fiction
7. Did You Say “Haggis”? - Fact (see Guinness Book Of Records)
8. Halfway - Fiction

WHAT ARE TALL TALES???

Many storytellers say that if you are going to tell a tale that is a lie, you may as well make it a “whopper”. Tall tales do just this.

Tall tales are a type of folktale that have been passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. Many originated around campfires and wood stoves, as told by cowboys and early homesteaders. In times when books were scarce, these far-fetched tales provided entertainment for people dealing with the isolation and harsh conditions of the Australian Outback, American Plains or Canadian North.



Tall Tales

- 1) *Tall tales are a type of folktale and are meant to be told aloud.*
- 2) *Tall tales s-t-r-e-t-c-h the truth.*
- 3) *Tall tales often combine fact with fiction.*
- 4) *Tall tales often use humour with entertainment being the main purpose.*
- 6) *Tall tales make use of colourful words and language as well as effective writing strategies.*

BALONEY OR NOT? - FACT FROM FICTION

Name: _____

Instructions: Read the following stories. Help Mr. Baloney decide whether the story is fact (true) or fiction (untrue) and underline the correct answer. Next, explain the reason for your choice. Remember to Answer In Full Sentences whenever possible. (A.I.F.S.)

1. **THE PARROT** (*England*)

A bankrupt pet shop was holding a going-out-of-business sale and selling all the pets by auction. Among them was a beautifully coloured parrot, which a man wearing a black hat seemed determined to buy. However, every time the man made an offer, someone else would bid a higher price. The bids went higher and higher until at last, the man in the black hat won out. The spectacular parrot was finally his and he walked out of the shop carrying the parrot in its shiny cage. Suddenly, he stopped dead in his tracks and thought with horror. In all the excitement to get the parrot he had forgotten to find out if the parrot was able to talk. Back he ran and holding the cage up to the auctioneer, demanded, "Does this bird talk?"
"Who do you think was bidding against you all this time?", squawked the parrot.



(Underline your choice) a) fact b) fiction Explain your answer. (A.I.F.S.)

2. **SPITTING** (*United States*)

An old timer was telling tall stories. "I remember this young guy from a town called Luling, who could spit a watermelon seed like they was going out of style. Near as I can remember, his best spit was about 65 feet or about 20 meters, if you like to use metric." A little kid who was only nine stood up and said, "That's nothing! I once spit a seed over 30 meters. I just walked onto that tall train bridge over yonder and spit it into the river."



(Underline your choice) a) fact b) fiction Explain your answer. (A.I.F.S.)

3.

HOW COLD WAS IT? (Canada)

Two men sat around a crackling wood stove, boastfully exchanging stories about the cold and cruel Canadian winter. The cozy log cabin in which they sat was being blasted by a fierce mid January-blizzard. The first man spoke. "Do you remember the winter of '88? It was so cold that year, that the flame of a candle would freeze solid and make it impossible to blow it out."

"That's not near as bad as the winter of '92," said his friend. "That winter was so cold, that whenever we talked, the words came out of our mouths in pieces of ice and we had to fry them up over the stove just to hear what we were talking about."

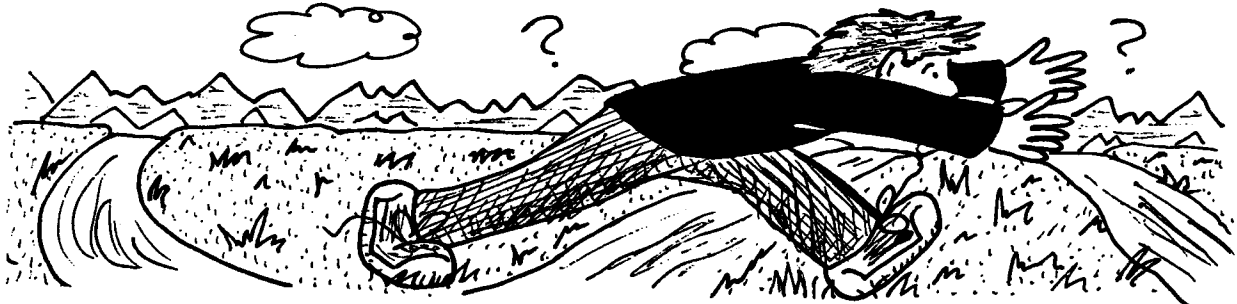


(Underline your choice) a) fact b) fiction Explain your answer. (A.I.F.S.)

4.

THE CROOKED STREAM (Scotland)

There is a tiny, crooked stream that begins in the highlands and empties into the famous Loch Ness. It is said that the crooked stream twists and turns so often, that when you jump across, you land on the same side as where you started.



(Underline your choice) a) fact b) fiction Explain your answer. (A.I.F.S.)

5.

HAIR SPLITTING (France)

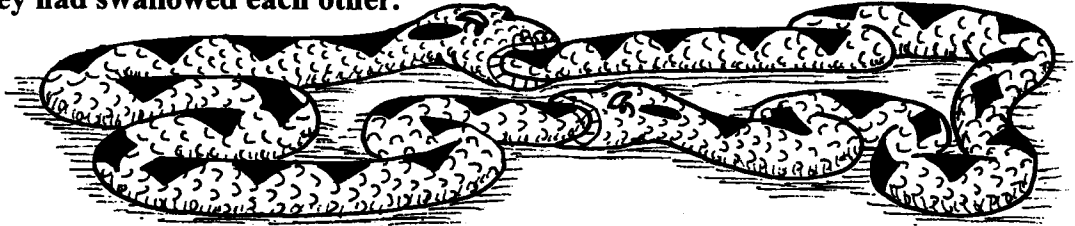
I once heard of a man who had such good eyesight that he was able to split a single hair seventeen times into eighteen parts. He would have made a good barber.

(Underline your choice) a) fact b) fiction Explain your answer. (A.I.F.S.)

6.

SNAKES (*United States*)

Two of the biggest, orneriest rattlesnakes you ever saw were found fighting. After circling for a while, one grabbed the other's tail and started swallowing it. Then, the other grabbed the first snake's tail and started swallowing it. By the time they had finished, they had swallowed each other.



(Underline your choice) a) fact b) fiction Explain your answer. (A.I.F.S.)

7.

DID YOU SAY "HAGGIS"? (*Scotland*)

Haggis is not some name for a crusty old witch. It is a tasty treat eaten on special occasions by Scots. You take a bunch of vegetables and oatmeal, place in the stomach of a sheep or cow and boil until ready to serve. By the way, the biggest Haggis was made using eight ox stomachs sewn together and weighed over 600 pounds. I wonder if they will ever have Haggis at Mcdonald's? Maybe so - I know some Mcdonalds and they all claim to be Scots.



(Underline your choice) a) fact b) fiction Explain your answer. (A.I.F.S.)

8.

HALFWAY (*Canada*)

Have you heard about the woman who swam halfway across Lake Ontario? The waves were coming up, and she decided it was too far to make it so she turned around and swam back.



(Underline your choice) a) fact b) fiction Explain your answer. (A.I.F.S.)

LESSON #3 - TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE WRITING - Adjectives and Alliteration

Student Objectives and Activities

- Students are read a Quebecois Tall Tale entitled “**The Talking Cat**”, which demonstrates effective use of adjectives.
- Students then create a “**Gross Menu**” using effective adjectives and alliteration.

Suggested Teaching Strategies

- Read the story, “**The Talking Cat**”. Students should be encouraged to pay particular attention to adjectives that are used in an effective way.
- Teachers can pause briefly at opportune places in the tale to discuss effective use of adjectives.
- Next, divide students into pairs and explain the assignment. The task is to invent their own restaurant and create a “**Gross Menu**”, using adjectives and alliteration. Evaluation will be tied to the original and creative use of adjectives and alliteration, as well as the overall appearance of the menu. The student example included with the unit can be shown at this time.
- The pairs quickly brainstorm a name for the restaurant. Alliteration should be encouraged in the restaurant name, such as “Hungry Harry’s Hamburger Haven” or Sneaky Sam’s Scunge Palace”. Newspaper headlines from the *Enquirer* or similar supermarket trash tabloids often use alliteration in their headlines. A worksheet has been provided.
- After a couple of minutes, the restaurant names are shared with the class. This will put pressure on students to choose a suitable name *quickly*. As a class, discuss possible headings that might be found in a typical menu, such as appetizers, breakfast dishes, lunch specials, main course meals, desserts, beverages and house specials.
- On the worksheet provided (or scrap paper), each group outlines the layout of their menu and meal combinations in rough. Students try to brainstorm as many creative and descriptive food names as possible - the “grosser” the better.
- The final menus can be drawn on large-sized manilla tag that has been folded in half to give that “authentic” appearance. Students should be encouraged to use large, easy-to-read printing on the cover of their menu as well for the descriptions of the foods.

*** Note ***

The most important rule related to this lesson is “*No Potty Humour!*” This essential rule necessarily outlaws all foods using the words “poop”, “pee” and the like. Instead, students can be challenged to use more “mature” and “creative” gross humour.

Optional Assignment - Restaurant Re-enactment

After the menus are complete, students quite thoroughly enjoy using them as a basis for a short role-play activity. One student plays the role of a waiter/waitress while the other student pretends to be a customer.

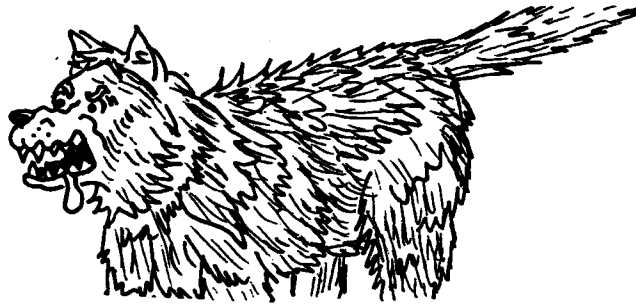
TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE WRITING

1) Effective Adjectives

Adjectives are describing words. They are used to describe nouns (people, places and things) and make them more interesting. For example:

a) The dog had big teeth.

b) The hairy, ferocious dog had yellow, razor-sharp teeth. The first example contains one adjective but the second contains more effective adjectives giving a better description of the dog.



2) Alliteration

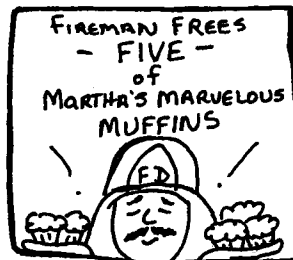
Alliteration occurs when two or more words in a row begin with the same letter. For example:

a) Martha's Marvellous Muffins

b) Fireman Frees Five!

Alliteration is often used to make newspaper headlines and story titles more exciting.

EXTRA
EXTRA



READ ALL
ABOUT IT!

3) Exaggeration

When writing a story, sometimes it is not a bad idea to s-t-r-e-t-c-h the truth a bit. For example:

a) When they towed away my beloved, old Ford pickup truck, I just about cried.

b) If I've told you once, I've told you a million times - don't exaggerate!

4) **Simile - Comparisons Using “Like” Or “As”**

A simile is a **comparison** that uses “like” or “as”. Similes are used by all good writers to add spice to a story by painting a picture in a person’s imagination.

- a) She felt as low as a snake’s belly in a wagon rut.
- b) The cold water was as black as the night.
- c) He ran like a scared rabbit.



5) **Conversation**

When writing a story, using conversation is a great way to make the story more interesting. Note that the best writers do not use “said” all the time. Instead, they use more interesting words such as: **exclaimed, uttered, whispered, gasped, shrieked, yelled, moaned, groaned, blabbered, gurgled, and so on.**

- a) “Your burnt supper is in the oven,” he screamed angrily!
- b) She slyly whispered, “If I were you, I don’t think I would put my hand in that light socket.”

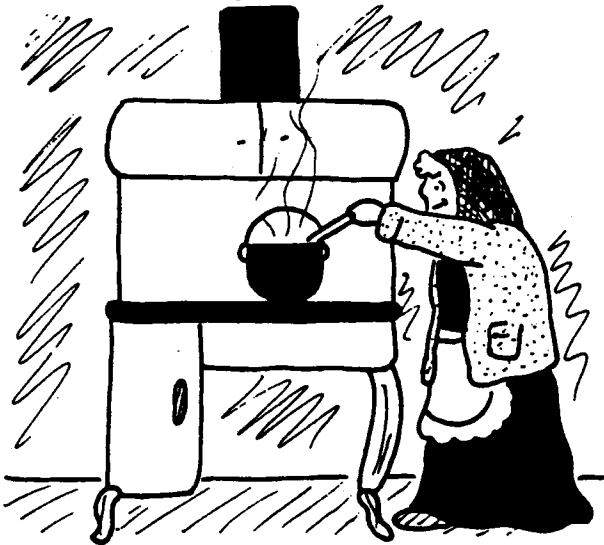


THE TALKING CAT

(Quebécois)

Once in another time, my friends, a great change came into Tante Odette's life, although she was already an old woman who thought she had finished with such nonsense as changing one's habits.

It all happened because of a great change that came over Chouchou the cat. The gray cat was a good companion because he seemed quite content to live on bread crusts and cabbage soup. Tante Odette always kept a pot of soup boiling on the back of the stove. She added a little more water and a few more cabbage leaves to it each day. In this way, she always had soup on hand and she never had to throw any of it away.



She baked her own bread in her outdoor oven once a week, on Tuesday. If the bread grew stale by Saturday, she softened it in the cabbage soup. This way, nothing was wasted which suited Tante Odette just fine.

As Tante Odette worked at her loom every evening, Chouchou would lie on the little rug by the stove and steadily stare at her with his big green eyes.

"If only you could talk," Tante Odette would say, "what fine company you would be for me."

One fall evening, Tante Odette was busy at her loom. Her fingers flew among the threads like pigeons. Thump, thump went the loom.

Suddenly there was a thump, thump that didn't come from the loom. It came from the door.

The old woman took the lamp from the table and went to the door. She opened it slowly. The light from the lamp shone on a strange old man who had the unmistakable look of the woods. He wore a bright red sash around his waist and a black crow feather in his woolen cap. He had a bushy mustache like a homemade broom and a brown crinkled face.

"Pierre Leblanc at your service," said the old man, making a deep bow.

"What do you want?" asked Tante Odette sharply. "I can't stand here all night with the door open. It wastes heat and firewood."



"I am looking for shelter and work," answered Pierre Leblanc. "I am getting too old to trap for furs or work in the lumber camps. I would like a job on just such a cozy little place as this."

"I don't need any help," snapped Tante Odette. "I am quite able to do everything by myself. And I have my cat."

She was beginning to close the door, but the man put his gnarled hand against it. He was staring at Chouchou.

"A very smart cat he looks to be," he said. "Why don't you ask him if you should take me in? After all, you don't have to pay me anything but a roof over my head and a little food."

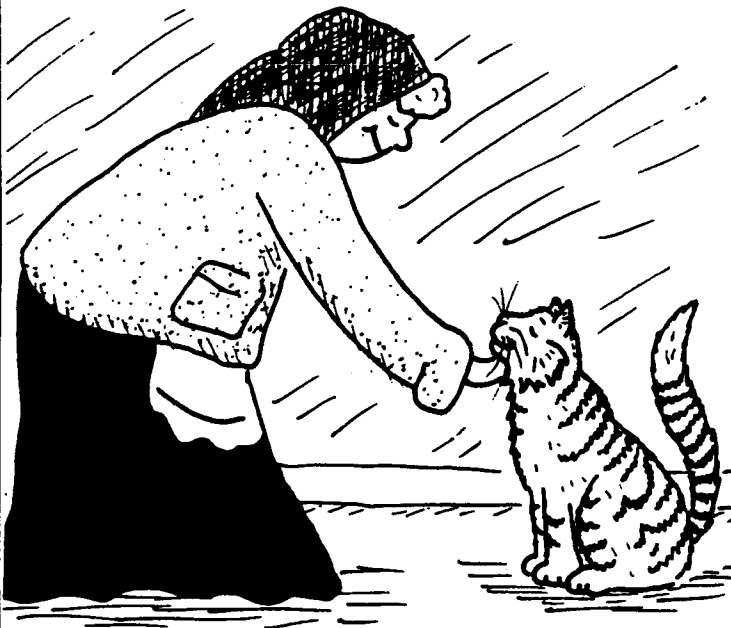
Tante Odette's eyes grew bigger.

"How ridiculous!" she said. "A cat can't talk. I only wish--"

To her surprise, Chouchou started to talk.

"Oh, indeed I can," he told her, "if the matter is important enough. This Pierre Leblanc looks to me like a very fine man and a good worker. You should take him in."

Tante Odette stood with her mouth open for two minutes before she could make any sound come out of it. At last she said, "Then come in. It is so rare for a cat to be able to talk that I'm sure one should listen to him when he does."



The old man walked close to the stove and stretched his fingers toward it. He looked at the pot of soup bubbling on the back.

Chouchou spoke again.

"Pierre looks hungry," he said, "Offer him some soup - a big, deep bowl of it."

"Oh, dear," signed Tante Odette, "at this rate, our soup won't last out the week. But if you say so, Chouchou."

Pierre sat at the wooden table and gulped down the soup like a starved wolf. When he had finished, Tante Odette pointed to the loft where he would sleep. Then she took the big gray cat on her lap.

"This is a most amazing thing that you should begin talking after all these years. Whatever came over you?"

But Chouchou had nothing more to say. He covered his nose with the tip of his tail, and there was not another word out of him all night.

Tante Odette decided that the cat's advice had been good. No longer did she have to go to the barn and feed the beasts. And no more skunks crawled into her oven because Pierre saw to it that the door was kept closed. He was indeed a good worker. He seemed quite satisfied with his bed in the loft and his bowls of cabbage soup and chunks of bread.

Only Chouchou seemed to have grown dissatisfied since his arrival.

"Why do you feed Pierre nothing but cabbage soup and bread?" he asked one day. "A workingman needs more food than that. How about one of your tasty meat pies?"

Tante Odette was startled, but Pierre went on drinking his soup.

"But meat is scarce and costs money," she told the cat.

"Pouf!" said the cat. "It is well worth it. Even I am getting a little tired of cabbage soup. A nice meat pie for dinner tomorrow would fill all the empty cracks inside me."

So when Pierre went out to the barn to water the beasts, Tante Odette stealthily lifted the lid of the chest, fished out a torn woolen sock and pulled a few coins out of it. She jumped in surprise when she raised her head and saw Pierre standing in the open doorway watching her.

"I forgot the pail," said Pierre. "I will draw some water from the well while I am outside."

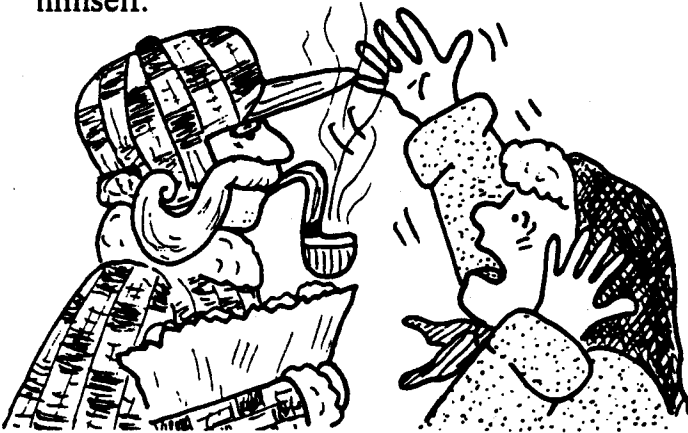
The old woman hastily dropped the lid of the chest and got the pail from behind the stove.

"After Pierre has done his chores," said Chouchou, "he will be glad to go to the store and buy the meat for you."

Tante Odette frowned at the cat. "But I am the thriftiest shopper in the parish," she said. "I can bring old Henri Dupuis down a few pennies on everything I buy."

"Pierre is a good shopper, too," said Chouchou. "In all Canada, there is not a better judge of meat. Perhaps he will even see something that you would not have thought to buy. Send him to the store."

It turned out that the old man was just as good a shopper as Chouchou had said. He returned from the village with a fine cut of meat, a bag of candy, and some tobacco for himself.



"But my money," said Tante Odette. "Did you spend it all?"

"What is money for but to spend?" asked Chouchou from his rug by the stove. "Can you eat money or smoke it in a pipe?"

"No," said Tante Odette.

"Can you put it over your shoulders to keep you warm?"

"No."

"Would it burn in the stove to cook your food?"

"Oh, no, indeed!"

Chouchou closed his eyes.

"Then what good is money?" he asked. "The sooner one gets rid of it, the better."

Tante Odette's troubled face smoothed.

"I never saw it that way before," she agreed. "Of course, you are right, Chouchou. And you are right, too, Pierre, for choosing such fine food."

But when Pierre went out to get a cabbage from the shed, Tante Odette walked to the chest and counted her precious coins.

"I have a small fortune, Chouchou," she said. "Now explain to me again why these coins are no good."

But Chouchou had nothing more to say about the matter.

One Tuesday when Pierre Leblanc was cutting trees in the woods and Tante Odette was baking her loaves of bread in the outdoor oven, a second stranger came galloping down the road on a one-eyed horse. He stopped in front of the white fence. He politely dismounted and went over to Tante Odette.

The old woman saw at a glance that he was a man of the woods. His shirt was checked and his cap red. Matching it was a red sash tied around his waist. He looked very much like Pierre Leblanc.

"Can you tell me, madame," he asked, "if a man named Pierre Leblanc works here?"

"Yes, he does," answered Tante Odette, "and a very good worker he is - he does all my chores."

The stranger did not look satisfied.

"Of course, Canada is full of Pierre Leblancs," he said. "It is a very common name. Does this Pierre Leblanc wear a red sash like mine?"

"So he does," said Tante Odette.

"On the other hand," said the man, "many Pierre Leblancs wear red sashes. Does he have a mustache like a homemade broom?"

"Yes, indeed," said the woman.

"But there must be many Pierre Leblancs

with red sashes and mustaches like brooms," continued the stranger. "This Pierre Leblanc who now works for you, can he throw his voice?"

"Throw his voice!" cried Tante Odette. "What witchcraft is that?"

"Haven't you heard of such a gift?" asked the man. "But of course only a few have it - probably only one Pierre Leblanc in a thousand. This Pierre with you, can he throw his voice behind trees and in boxes and up on the roof so it sounds as if someone else is talking?"

"My faith, no!" cried the woman in horror. "I wouldn't have such a one in my house. He would be better company for the *loup-garou*, that evil one who can change into many shapes."

The man laughed heartily.

"My Pierre Leblanc could catch the *loup-garou* in a wolf trap and lead him around by the chain. He is that clever. That is why I am trying to find him. I want him to go trapping with me in the woods this winter. Some say that never have there been so many foxes. I need Pierre, for he is smarter than any fox."

The creak of wheels caused them to turn around. Pierre Leblanc was driving the ox team in from the woods. He stared at the man standing beside Tante Odette. The man stared back at Pierre. Then both men began bouncing on their feet and whooping in their throats. They hugged each other.

"Good Old Pierre!"

"Georges, my friend, where have you kept yourself all summer? How did you find me?"

Tante Odette left them whooping and hugging. She walked into the house with a worried look on her face. She sat down at her loom. Finally she stopped weaving and turned to Chouchou.

"I am a little dizzy, Chouchou," she said. "This *loup-garou* voice has upset me. What do you make of it all?"

Chouchou said nothing.



"Please tell me what to do," pleaded Tante Odette. "Shall we let him stay here? It would be very uncomfortable to have voices coming from the roof and the trees."

Chouchou said nothing.

"Is he maybe in league with the *loup-garou*?"

Chouchou said nothing. Tante Odette angrily threw the shuttle at him.

"Where is your tongue?" she demanded. "Have you no words for me when I need them most?"

But if a cat will not speak, who has got his tongue?

Pierre Leblanc came walking in.

"Such a man!" he roared gleefully. "Only the woods are big enough for him."

"Are you going away with him?" asked the woman, not knowing whether she wanted him to say "yes" or "no." If only Chouchou hadn't been so stubborn.

"That makes a problem," said Pierre. "If I go into the woods this winter, it will be cold and I will work like an ox. But there will be much money in my pocket after the furs are sold. If I stay here, I will be warm and comfortable but - -"

He pulled his pockets inside out. Nothing fell from them.

"What is this business about your being able to throw your voice to other places?" asked Tante Odette.

"Did Georges say I could do that?"

Tante Odette nodded.

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Pierre. "What a joker Georges is!"

"But perhaps it is true," insisted the woman.

"If you really want to know," said Pierre, "ask Chouchou. He would not lie. Can I throw my voice, Chouchou?"

Chouchou sank down on his haunches and purred.

"Of course not!" he answered. "Whoever heard of such nonsense?"

Tante Odette sighed in relief. Then she remembered that this did not fix everything.

"Will you go with him?" she asked Pierre. "I have made it very comfortable for you here. And now it is only for supper that we have cabbage soup."

Chouchou spoke up.

"Tante Odette, how can you expect such a good man as Pierre Leblanc to work for only food and shelter? If you would pay him a coin from time to time, he would be quite satisfied to stay."

"But I can't afford that," said the woman.

"Of course you can," insisted Chouchou. "You have a small fortune in the old sock in your chest. Remember what I told you about money?"

"Tell me again," said Tante Odette. "It is hard to hold on to such a thought for long."

"Money is to spend," repeated the cat. "Can it carry hay and water to the beasts? Can it cut down trees for firewood? Can it dig paths through the snow when winter comes?"

"I have caught it again," said Tante Odette. "If you will stay with me, Pierre, I will pay you a coin from time to time."

Pierre smiled and bowed.

"Then I shall be very happy to stay here with you and your wise cat," he decided. "Now I will unload my wood and pile it into a neat stack by the door."

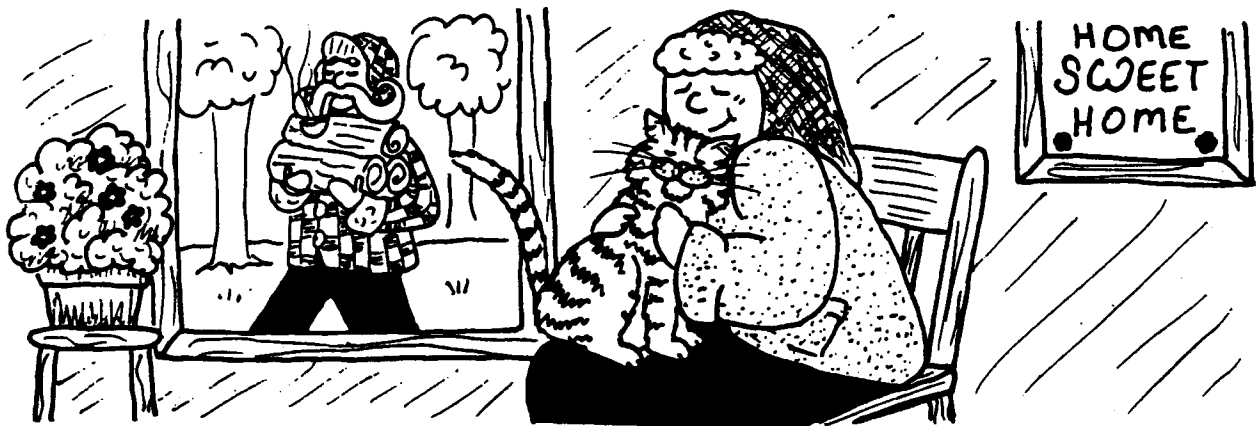
He briskly stamped out. Tante Odette sat down at her loom again.

"We have made a good bargain, haven't we, Chouchou?" She smiled contentedly.

But Chouchou tickled his nose with his tail and said nothing.



That is the way it was, my friends. It would have been a different story if Pierre had not been such a good worker. So remember this: If you must follow the advice of a talking cat, be sure you know who is doing the talking for him.



Welcome to Smelly's Diner

Main Courses

| | |
|---------------------|--------|
| Road Kill Pizza | \$5.25 |
| Pickled Pigs Feet | \$5.75 |
| Salmonella Suprise | \$6.00 |
| Carbunkled Cod | \$6.25 |
| Liver | FREE |
| Cannibal's Meat Pie | \$6.75 |
| Mouldy Baloney Loaf | \$6.75 |
| Cat Labotamy | \$6.95 |
| Horse Hooves | \$7.00 |

Beverages

| | |
|--|--------|
| Fresh Sewer Water | \$.75 |
| ~ chunks extra | \$.25 |
| Sour Milk (gelled) | \$.95 |
| Maxold Wort's Coffee | \$.75 |
| Slug Juice (squeezed from fresh slugs) | \$1.00 |
| Earl's Gag Tea | \$.75 |
| Croak-A-Cola | \$1.25 |

Non-appetizers

| | |
|----------------------|--------|
| Toe Jam Pops | \$2.00 |
| Potatoe Beetle Skins | \$2.25 |
| French Flies | \$1.95 |
| Grub Gravy | \$.75 |
| Wilty Weevil Salad | \$1.95 |
| Cream of Scab Soup | \$1.50 |

Desserts

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| Lice Pudding | \$1.50 |
| Frog Eye Jello | \$2.00 |
| Poison Berry Pie | \$3.00 |
| Cow Pie à la moat | \$3.50 |

GROSS MENU

Name: _____

You Are A Winner!

Can you believe your good luck? The accounting firm of Peat, Marvin And Thor has just announced that you have won a brand new restaurant in the Super School Lottery. As manager of the new restaurant, your job will be to choose a name for your new dining place and then prepare a menu. However, the contest rules stipulate that the restaurant can only serve "gross" food - the grosser the better!

Step 1 - Choose A Name

The name for your restaurant should be exciting and descriptive. (No "potty" humour please!)

Alliteration works best to help make the name more interesting. Be sure to think up a name quickly as the best ones will be going fast.

Restaurant Name _____

Step 2 - Layout of the Menu

Decide on the categories of food that your restaurant will serve, such as appetizers, main dishes, beverages, desserts, breakfast, sandwiches, sea food, pizza, kids, etc.

Step 3 - Brainstorm Menu Items

Try and quickly brainstorm as many "gross" foods and beverages as possible. Use of effective describing adjectives and alliteration will help to make your menu more appetizing. Be original, creative and the grosser the better. (Remember - be mature - No potty humour!)

| | | |
|-------|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

Step 4 - Final Product

When completing the good copy, be sure that it is attractive and readable. The restaurant name goes on the front of the menu in large, easy-to-read letters.

*** **BE CREATIVE!** ***

LESSON #4 - TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE WRITING - Exaggeration

Student Objectives and Activities

- Students are read the wildly outrageous tale of **“Pecos Bill”**, demonstrating exaggeration.
- In a related assignment, **“A Wild And Crazy Tale”**, students create a tall tale by inputting various parts of speech into the skeleton of a story that is given to them.
- The assignment helps students to develop an understanding of the various parts of speech including nouns, proper nouns, adjectives and adverbs.

Suggested Teaching Strategies

- Read the story **“Pecos Bill”** from the book **“American Tall Tales”**.
- While the teacher is reading the story, students jot down on scrap paper, instances of exaggeration (hyperbole) that occur in the story. These can be discussed after the story is finished.
- Next, hand out the worksheet, **“A Wild And Crazy Tale”**. Be sure to review the **“Parts of Speech”** section at the top of the page before commencing with the assignment.
- Students then continue with the assignment, inserting the proper words into the story. Some students may wish to complete more than one tale if time permits.
- Once the stories have been completed, students can read the tales to their peers.

A WILD AND CRAZY TALE

Name: _____

PART I - Parts Of Speech Review

Noun *A person, place or thing. Examples: dog, hammer, Jamie, city.*

Proper Noun *A specific person or place. Proper nouns always begin with a capital letter. Examples: Fred Flintstone, Toronto.*

Verb *An action word. Examples: ran, jumped, flew. Note: Even though these words are not action words they are still verbs - is, are, were, was.*

Adjective *A word that describes a noun. Examples: big, old, beautiful, pink.*

Adverb *A word that describes a verb. Adverbs usually end in "ly". Examples: slowly, carefully.*

Pronoun *A word that takes the place of a noun. Examples: he, she, me, I, her, him, those, they, and it.*

Simile *A comparison that uses "like" or "as". Examples: The puck flew like snot off a doorknob. The stick was as straight as an arrow.*

PART II - Instructions

Using your knowledge of parts of speech, fill in the blanks below. (Be creative!)

- | | | | |
|---------------------|-------|---------------|-------|
| 1) Adjective | _____ | 13) Adjective | _____ |
| 2) Proper Noun | _____ | 14) Noun | _____ |
| 3) Noun (Body Part) | _____ | 15) Noun | _____ |
| 4) Adjective | _____ | 16) Noun | _____ |
| 5) Proper Noun | _____ | 17) Adjective | _____ |
| 6) Verb | _____ | 18) Noun | _____ |
| 7) Adverb | _____ | 19) Verb | _____ |
| 8) Adjective | _____ | 20) Noun | _____ |
| 9) Adjective | _____ | 21) Adverb | _____ |
| 10) Adjective | _____ | 22) Adjective | _____ |
| 11) Adverb | _____ | 23) Noun | _____ |
| 12) Adverb | _____ | 24) Noun | _____ |

After you have chosen your words, write them into the story on the next page in order creating a funny tall tale.

A WILD AND CRAZY TALE

Name: _____

It was a cold and _____ day. My horse named _____ was starting to get a bit worried. It seemed he didn't like it when I climbed onto his _____. We started out on a difficult and _____ journey. We were headed for a place called _____ which was not on any of our maps. That horse and I _____ until he came to a _____ stream. The stream was filled with many _____ and _____ fish that swam _____, jumping in the sun.

When all of a sudden, one of the fish started talking very _____. It said that if I was _____ I would get three wishes. I was astonished with my good luck and instantly asked for a _____. And poof, there it was. For my second wish I asked for a _____ and for the third wish I requested a _____. I was extremely _____ and yelled as loud as a _____. I _____ and ran up and down the stream like some kind of _____. And then the fish slipped _____ back into the _____ and magical stream.

(My friends say that this tale is a big pile of _____ but I say they can just go jump into a _____.)



LESSON #5 - TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE WRITING - Similes

Student Objectives and Activities

- Students read the tall tale entitled “**Bearly Tales**”, which is notable for its use of similes.
- A related worksheet is completed in which students are required to identify three similes from the story, list some of their own similes and lastly, to illustrate a simile.

Suggested Teaching Strategies

- Begin the lesson by writing three similes on the board. Possible suggestions could be:
 - 1) The student squirmed like a worm on a hot sidewalk.
 - 2) The class stampeded into the gym like a herd of buffalo.
 - 3) The doctor was as crazy as a loon.
- Ask students to try to figure out what the three have in common. (Of course, the answer is that all three are similes - comparisons that use “like” or “as”.)

*** Note ***

My three favourite (although somewhat less tasteful) similes are:

- 1) Your eyes are like two pee holes in the snow.
 - 2) Your teeth are like stars - they come out at night.
 - 3) That administrator is as dumb as a bag of hammers.
- Hand out photocopies of the story and attached worksheet.
 - Students follow instructions and complete the worksheet. Part I requires students to identify three of the similes found in the story. Part II asks students to list some of their own similes, with Part III requiring students to illustrate a favourite. (One possible suggestion would be to review the first two parts as a class before beginning Part III.)
 - The illustrations of similes could be drawn on larger paper than indicated on the worksheet. As well, the completed drawing could be used as part of a bulletin board display.

Optional Lessons - The Bear Song, The Quartermaster’s Store

- *The Bear Song* has been included as it fits in quite nicely with this lesson. It is sung to the tune of that old standby:

The cutest boy (girl)
I ever saw
Was drinking cider (soda)
Through a straw...

*** Note***

If you don’t know the song, ask around - someone is bound to know it. And if you still don’t know, phone Tina at 1800-663-3609 and she will hum it for you. (Don’t tell her where you saw this)

- The *Quartermaster’s Store* song is also useful for illustrating similes.

There was beans, beans
As big as submarines...

BEARLY TALL TALES

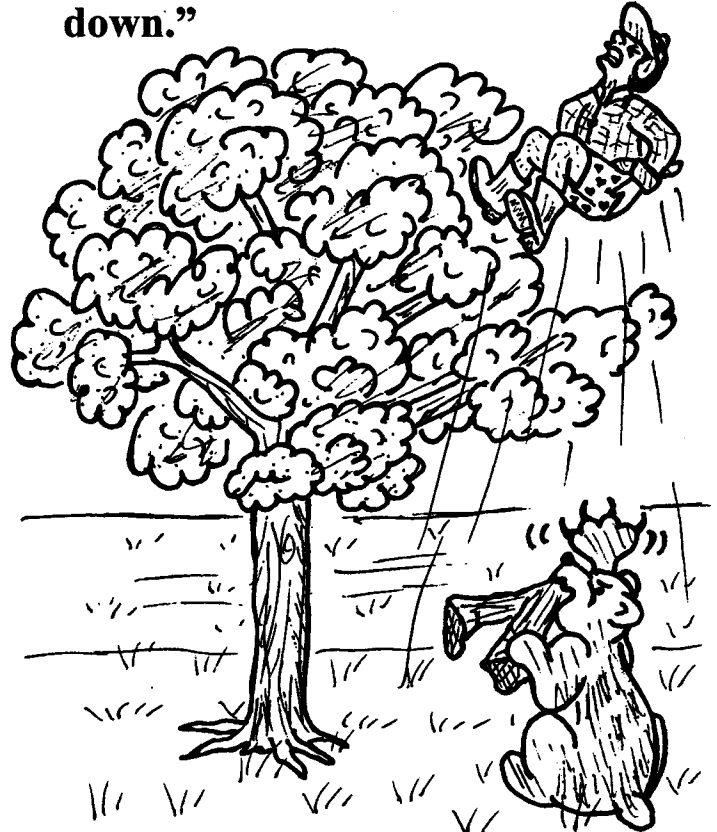
Some old trappers were telling bear stories. One old guy, who hardly had any teeth left, started them off.

“I was out prospecting when I stumbled across a couple of grizzly bear cubs playing in a meadow. A terrible worry came over me as I knew how dangerous it was to come between a female grizzly and her cubs. I instantly started to look around to find the mother bear but it seems she had found me first!

The huge, snarling grizzly rose up and came for me. Her teeth were like a row of butcher knives and her eyes were red with rage. Now, some people say you're best off to play dead when caught in the open by a grizzly, but me, I decided to run. I headed for the nearest tree about a mile away, but I didn't have much hope because the tree only had one branch and that was thirty feet above the ground. But with no other plan, I ran as fast as a three-legged jackrabbit. Well, I reached the tree just ahead of the bear and she made a grab at me just as I was getting ready to jump for the branch. Her slashing claws tore my pants off but she didn't quite get me. However, she scared me so much that I missed the branch.”

There was a dead silence. Then one of the trappers asked, “What happened?”

“I caught it on my way down.”



A second trapper continued, “Ah, you lie like a sidewalk. Let me tell you about the time Old Lefty Ferguson met up with that mean, black bear up on Flint Hill. He was out in the woods one day when a big black bear charged him, with its mouth wide open. Since he didn't have anything to defend himself with, he jammed his arm down the bear's throat, all the way to where the stump of its tail joined its body. Then he

grabbed hold of the stump and yanked as hard as he could. Finally, the bear made a tremendous roar and when the dust had settled, Lefty had pulled that bear inside out. Now, this pointed the bear in the opposite direction and he ran away - crying and whimpering like a scared kitten."

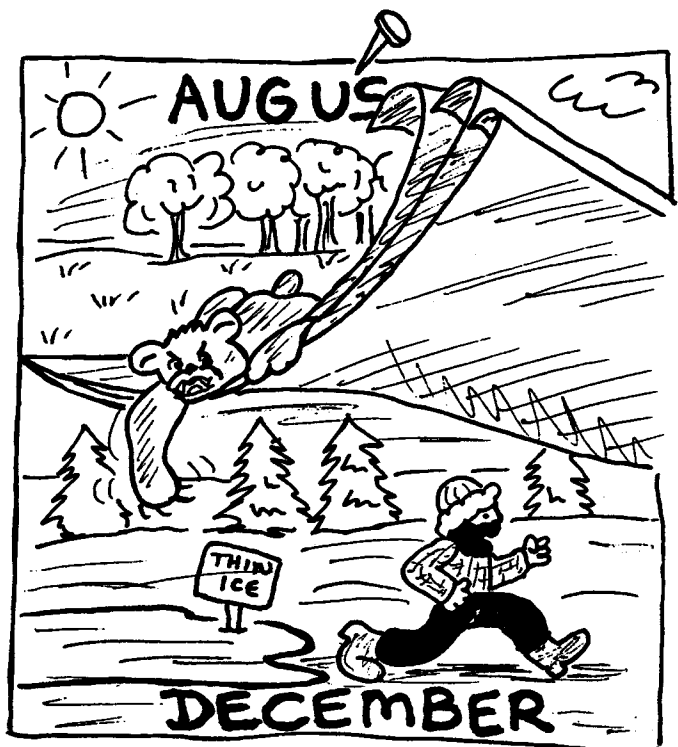


Another trapper who had been quiet until this time started to speak. "That's nothing. I remember the time I was out picking blueberries one hot, summer day in August. It was as hot as the inside of a cast iron frying pan - and I felt like an egg. Anyways, a bear had managed to find the same patch of berries as me and it didn't look like he was too interested in sharing. Of

course, I didn't have my gun so I turned and took off running. I had a pretty good head start, but that bear must have had a taste for human flesh because he was after me like a bee to honey - or should I say a bear to honey. We ran through field after field and through forest after forest, up hill and down and on and on and on. Finally we came to a river, which I quickly crossed on the ice. But the bear was too heavy and he fell through and drowned."

"How come there was ice on the river in August?" somebody asked.

"Oh," he said, "I forgot to tell you. We had done so much running, by then it was December."



BEARLY TALL TALES

Name: _____

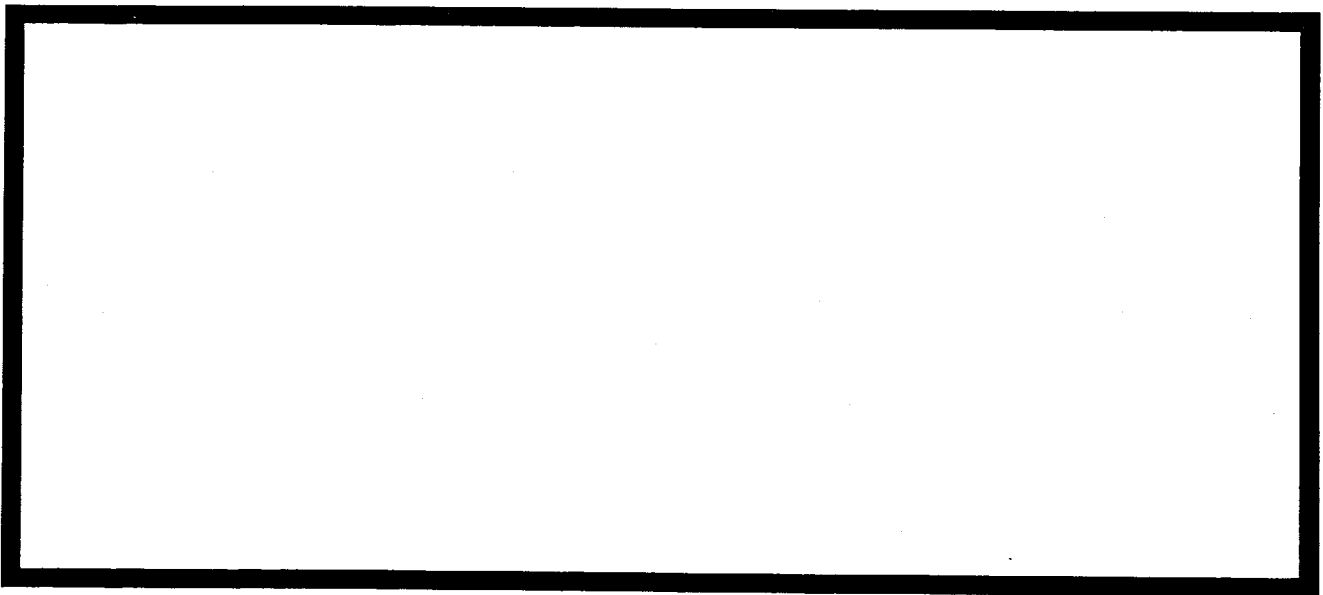
PART I - Find three similes in the story. Make up two original similes that use "like".

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____

PART II - Complete the similes.

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1) as blind as a _____ | 6) as sick as a _____ |
| 2) as sly as a _____ | 7) as dead as a _____ |
| 3) as white as a _____ | 8) as hairy as a _____ |
| 4) as flat as a _____ | 9) as proud as a _____ |
| 5) as dry as a _____ | 10) as crazy as a _____ |

PART III - Choose your favourite simile and draw a picture below showing it.



Simile: _____

LESSON #6 - TOOLS FOR EFFECTIVE WRITING - Conversation

Student Objectives and Activities

- Students are read a tale entitled “**The Tall Tales**”, demonstrating conversation as an effective writing tool.
- In the related assignment, “**Record Breaking Conversation**”, students brainstorm a list of words that could be used in place of “said”. Students write an account of an interesting event using conversation. Possible topics include accounts of a practical joke, April Fools’ story, fish story, amazing animal trick or an amazing feat performed to qualify for the Guinness Book of World Records.

Suggested Teaching Strategies

- Before reading the story, “**The Tall Tales**”, hand out the worksheet, “**Record Breaking Conversation**”. Explain that students will have to write down words that the author uses in place of “said”.
- The second part of the assignment requires students to broaden the list of words that can be used in place of “said”, that are not in the story. This list can be compiled onto a chart and posted for future reference.
- Part III involves students writing a third person account of an interesting event. (Writing using conversation seems to be easier when done in the third person.) Possible topics include:
 - 1) The Best Practical Joke Ever
 - 2) The Biggest Fish Story
 - 3) April Fools’ Day
 - 4) The Most Amazing Animal Trick
 - 5) A New World Record
- Stress that as much conversation should be included in the account as possible. As well, using words in place of “said” should be encouraged.

*** Note ***

The worksheet leaves a space for a picture. This artwork should only be drawn and coloured *after* the writing is done.

Optional Activity - Radio Reporter

After the worksheets are completed, students can interview each other using the stories as a basis for an on-the-spot interview. One student plays the part of a radio reporter while the other plays the part of a witness to the event.



RECORD BREAKING CONVERSATION

Name: _____

PART I - Write down words from the story that have been used in place of "said".

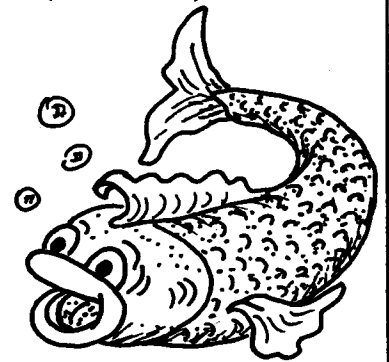
- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1) _____ | 6) _____ |
| 2) _____ | 7) _____ |
| 3) _____ | 8) _____ |
| 4) _____ | 9) _____ |
| 5) _____ | 10) _____ |

PART II - Now, try to come up with as many other words that could take the place of "said".

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1) _____ | 6) _____ |
| 2) _____ | 7) _____ |
| 3) _____ | 8) _____ |
| 4) _____ | 9) _____ |
| 5) _____ | 10) _____ |

PART III - Choose a topic for a story that will be written on the next page. (Underline)

- 1) **The Best Practical Joke Ever**
- 2) **The Biggest Fish Story**
- 3) **April Fools' Day**
- 4) **The Most Amazing Animal Trick**
- 5) **A New World Record**
- 6) **(Other Topic) _____**



As much conversation as possible should be included in the story. As well, using words in place of "said" is recommended.

*****Note *****

Draw and colour a picture for your story *after* your story is complete.

LESSON #7 - ORIGINAL TALL TALE

Student Objectives and Activities

- In this culminating activity, students write an original tall tale in the style of Pecos Bill or Paul Bunyan. Students strive to explain the presence of a real natural occurrence using fictional means. (For example, Paul Bunyan's footprints filled up with water and formed the Great Lakes.)
- Throughout this writing assignment, students will apply the "Tools For Effective Writing" stressed in this unit.

Suggested Teaching Strategies

- Review the characteristics of tall tales. Pay particular attention to the idea that many tall tales combine fact and fiction. Examples can be given such as when Paul Bunyan and Babe were fighting they created the northern lights or when Pecos Bill dug in his heels to stop the cattle and created the Grand Canyon. As well, a student example that has been included as part of the unit can be shown at this time.
- A logical starting point for writing the tall tales is to first come up with some naturally occurring feature that can be explained. Things that could possibly be explained include: a local lake or river, oceans, hills, bays, northern lights, mountain range, tornados, wind, clouds, sun, sky, moon, rain, snow, Mt Everest, an island (Hawaii), volcano, earthquake, tidal wave, eclipse, forest fire, thunder, lightning, fog, the seasons, day and night, El Nino, a flood, swamp, plains, desert or canal.
- Next, students should work on their tall tale character and decide how the character created the naturally occurring feature. The rough copies can be started.

*** Note ***

Throughout this assignment, try to integrate the "Tools For Effective Writing" that have been studied during the unit, including the use of:

- 1) Effective Adjectives
- 2) Alliteration
- 3) Exaggeration
- 4) Similes
- 5) Conversation

These techniques will help to make the stories more interesting.

- Students should be encouraged to be creative, original, humorous and above all, to have fun.
- Ample time should be allotted for this assignment as it is important that students create a worthwhile final tall tale.

PART II

Optional Lessons

