



# John Henry

# 7

## ☑ **Lesson Objectives**

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### **Core Content Objectives**

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Students will:

- ✓ Demonstrate familiarity with the tall tale “John Henry”
- ✓ Identify the characters, plot, and setting of “John Henry”
- ✓ Identify the tall tale elements in “John Henry”

### **Language Arts Objectives**

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The following language arts objectives are addressed in this lesson. Objectives aligning with the Common Core State Standards are noted with the corresponding standard in parentheses. Refer to the Alignment Chart for additional standards that are addressed in all lessons in this domain.

Students will:

- ✓ Describe how the C&O Railroad responds to the challenge of building tracks through the Appalachian Mountains, and describe how John Henry responds to the comment his captain makes about the stream drill (RL.2.3)
- ✓ Describe how parts of the “Ballad of John Henry” supply rhythm and meaning to the story (RL.2.4)
- ✓ Identify the characteristics of American tall tales, and explain the characteristics as they apply to “John Henry” (RL.2.5)
- ✓ Compare and contrast the tall tales “Paul Bunyan” and “Pecos Bill” (RL.2.9)
- ✓ Compare and contrast two versions of “John Henry” (RL.2.9)
- ✓ Plan to write their own tall tale, including the tall tale character and an exaggeration (W.2.3)
- ✓ With assistance, categorize and organize characteristics about the tall tale “John Henry” onto a chart (W.2.8)

- ✓ Create a drawing of an exaggeration to accompany their tall tale (SL.2.5)
- ✓ Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of multiple-meaning word *legend* (L.2.4a)
- ✓ Identify real-life connections between words—*compete*, *feats*, *challenge*, and *legend*—and their use (L.2.5a)

## Core Vocabulary

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**challenge, n.** A difficult task or problem

*Example:* The math problem was a challenge, but the students were happy when they accomplished it.

*Variation(s):* challenges

**compete, v.** To try to be better than someone else at something

*Example:* The athletes at the Olympics compete to be the best

*Variation(s):* competes, competed, competing

**feats, n.** Achievements or deeds that require courage or strength

*Example:* The acrobat landed gracefully on the mat after the last of her amazing feats.

*Variation(s):* feat

**solution, n.** Something that solves a problem

*Example:* Wearing an extra coat was the perfect solution to my problem of being cold.

*Variation(s):* solutions

**steam, n.** The hot air and/or water droplets created when water is boiled

*Example:* The steam from the shower got on the bathroom mirror.


*Variation(s):* none

<b>Vocabulary Chart for John Henry</b>			
Core Vocabulary words are in <b>bold</b> .			
Multiple Meaning Word Activity word is <u>underlined</u> .			
Vocabulary Instructional Activity words have an asterisk (*).			
Suggested words to pre-teach are in <i>italics</i> .			
<b>Type of Words</b>	<b>Tier 3</b> Domain-Specific Words	<b>Tier 2</b> General Academic Words	<b>Tier 1</b> Everyday-Speech Words
<b>Understanding</b>	ballad engineers <b>feats</b> locomotive rubble <b>steam</b> Virginia yonder	<b>challenge*</b> competition <b>compete</b> connect/separate contest eventually explosion immigrant machine	dig engine holes mountain passengers railroad song steel
<b>Multiple Meaning</b>	drill dynamite <u>legend</u> spike	<b>solution</b> tunnel	boss hammer swing
<b>Phrases</b>	Appalachian Mountains C&O (Chesapeake Bay & Ohio River) amazing feats John Henry railway workers steam drill steel-driving men	competes against Over time	dangerous work He had beaten the _____. to pass the time
<b>Cognates</b>	balada ingeniero(a) locomotora	competición <b>competir</b> conectar/separado concurso eventualmente explosion inmigrante máquina <b>solución</b> túnel	montaña pasajero(a)

## Image Sequence

This is the order in which Flip Book images will be shown for this read-aloud. This order is the same as the corresponding read-aloud in the *Tell It Again! Read-Aloud Anthology*.

1. 7A-1: The Appalachian mountains
2. 7A-2: A tunnel entrance in the mountain
3. 7A-3: Two-man team digging holes
4. 7A-4: Dynamite explodes to break up the rock
5. 7A-5: John Henry born with a hammer in his hand
6. 7A-6: The steam drill is invented
7. 7A-7: John Henry competes against the steam drill
8. 7A-8: John Henry wins the competition
9. 7A-9 Passengers tell the legend of John Henry

<i>At a Glance</i>	<b>Exercise</b>	<b>Materials</b>	<b>Minutes</b>
<b><i>Introducing the Read-Aloud</i></b>	<b>Tall Tale Review</b>	Tall Tales Characteristics Chart	15
	<b>Introducing “John Henry”</b>	Image Card 10 Instructional Master 7A-1; U.S. map	
	<b>Vocabulary Preview: Compete, Feats</b>		
	<b>Purpose for Listening</b>		
<b><i>Presenting the Read-Aloud</i></b>	<b>John Henry</b>	Image Card 11 U.S. map	15
<b><i>Discussing the Read-Aloud</i></b>	<b>Comprehension Questions</b>	Tall Tales Characteristics Chart; U.S. map	10
	<b>Word Work: Challenge</b>		
 <b>Complete Remainder of the Lesson Later in the Day</b>			
<b><i>Extensions</i></b>	<b>Multiple Meaning Word Activity: Legend</b>	Poster 3M (Legend)	20
	<b>Create You Own: Draw an Exaggeration</b>	drawing paper, drawing tools	
	<b>Domain-Related Trade Book</b>		

### ***Advance Preparation***

For Tall Tale Review, use the Tall Tales Characteristics Chart to review and compare and contrast the tall tales covered thus far.

Prepare a copy of Instructional Master 7A-1 for each student. Refer to it as Response Card 6 (John Henry). Students can use this response card to preview, review, and answer questions about this tall tale as well as fill in the characters and settings of the story.

Bring in another version of “John Henry” to read aloud to the class.

### ***Note to Teacher***

You may wish to have the class continue to signal that they just heard an exaggeration in the story.

Your students will listen to parts of a ballad about John Henry. When you get to the ballad, stop and help them understand that a ballad is a kind of poem or song that tells a story. You may wish to put the parts of the ballad to a melody or chant and have students repeat the lines of the ballad after you.

You may wish to fill out the Tall Tales Characteristics Chart (Instructional Master 5A-1) together with the class as they answer the comprehension questions for this story.

Your class will begin a narrative writing project: Create Your Own. With your support, students will conceptualize their own tall tale. Today they will think about an exaggeration for their tall tale and draw it. Some students may use the exaggerations in the stories heard as a basis for their drawing. You may wish to have students take their drawings home to finish and bring back to class the following day.



# John Henry

7A

## Introducing the Read-Aloud

15 minutes

### Tall Tale Review

- Present the Tall Tales Characteristics Chart (Instructional Master 5A-1). Ask students about the characteristics of tall tales. Make sure that the following characteristics are mentioned:
  - Frontier Setting
  - Amazing Childhood
  - Amazing Adventures
  - Creations/Inventions
  - Humor
  - Exaggerations/Larger-Than-Life
- Using the Tall Tales Characteristics Chart, review what students have already learned about tall tales, specifically the tall tale “Pecos Bill.”
- Invite students to make comparisons between Paul Bunyan and Pecos Bill, e.g., both characters moved west but to different areas; both characters had amazing but different childhoods; both characters did amazing but different things; both characters supposedly created the Grand Canyon; etc.



### Introducing “John Henry”

#### ◀ Show image 7A-8: John Henry wins the competition

- Tell students that the main character in today’s tall tale is named John Henry.
- Say to students: “Describe what is happening in this picture. Why are the people cheering for John Henry?” Allow fifteen seconds for students to talk. Call on two students to share.
- Remind students that tall tales, like other folktales, were first told orally, or shared by word of mouth. That means that tall tales were not written down at first and that everyone could tell the story a little bit differently.

- Share with students that today’s tall tale is interesting because for a very long time, no one knew if the character John Henry was a real person. But today some historians—or people who study the past—believe that there was really a man named John Henry who really did lay railroad tracks. No one really knows where he is from. People have said he is from Georgia, Tennessee, and Virginia. [Point to these places on a map. Ask students which state is most to the west.]
- Be sure that students are clear that even though there was a real man named John Henry, some of the things that happen in this story are not real and are exaggerations, so this story is still considered a tall tale and thus partly fiction.

### **Picture Walk**

- Tell students that you will take a picture walk through this story together.



#### **← Show image 7A-2: A tunnel entrance in the mountain**

- Ask students what they see in this picture. (train tracks and tunnel)
- Ask: “How do you think the tracks and tunnel were made?”
- Share with students that as people continued to move west, new forms of transportation were also invented. One form of transportation was railroad and trains. [Show Image Card 10 (Train and Railroad). Have students point out the train and the railway tracks.]
- Share with students that, at first, railroad tracks were laid by thousands of workers and the tunnels were dug right through mountains, mostly by hand!



#### **← Show image 7A-3: Two-man team digging holes**

- Tell students that many railroad workers worked in pairs—groups of two. These men are called steel-driving men.
- Identify the steel spikes and the big hammer.
- Ask students what the men are doing with the spike and the hammer.



#### **← Show image 7A-4: Dynamite explodes to break up the rock**

- Tell students these men are called the dynamite men.
- Define dynamite as something that explodes when it burns. When dynamite explodes it makes a loud noise—KABOOM!
- Ask students whether they think this is a safe job or a dangerous job.



← **Show image 7A-6: The steam drill is invented**

- Remind students that, at first, railway tracks and tunnels were made by hand. Then machines, like the steam drill in this picture, were invented that could do what people were doing, and the machines could do the work easier and faster.
- Give students Response Card 6 (John Henry) from Instructional Master 7A-1. Have students identify John Henry and the steam drill. Ask students which they think will be faster and better at digging through the mountain—John Henry or the machine.

### Vocabulary Preview

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#### **Compete**

1. In today's tall tale, you will hear that John Henry agrees to *compete* against a steam drill.
2. Say the word *compete* with me three times.
3. *To compete* means to try to get or win something that someone else is also trying to win.

When you compete, you try to be better than someone else at something.

4. The runners compete to see who can run the fastest.

The two students compete to see who can clean up more quickly.

5. Have you ever competed against someone for something before?

#### **Feats**

1. In today's tall tale, you will hear about one of John Henry's amazing *feats*.
2. Say the word *feats* with me three times.
3. A feat is an act that shows courage, strength, or skill. More than one feat is *feats*.
4. Taming a mountain lion is not an easy feat.

You can see many athletic feats during the Olympics.

5. Think about what you heard in the tall tales "Paul Bunyan" and "Pecos Bill." Can you think of one of their feats? [Remind students of their adventures and creations, e.g., Grand Canyon, Mississippi River, riding a cyclone.]



## Purpose for Listening

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Remind students that the title of this tall tale is “John Henry,” and the setting for this story is the American frontier. Remind students that although this story may be about a real man named John Henry, it is still a tall tale and one type of fiction. Tell students to listen carefully to see if their prediction is accurate about which will be faster and better at digging—John Henry or the stream drill.

By the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- ✓ Demonstrate familiarity with the tall tale “John Henry”
- ✓ Identify the characters, plot, and setting of “John Henry”
- ✓ Identify characteristics of tall tales in “John Henry”

## John Henry

**Note:** Examples of exaggeration are followed by an asterisk (\*).

[Show Image Card 11 (Workers Laying Tracks).]

In the 1860s, the United States was growing quickly. Immigrants—from other countries—were pouring in, and railroad companies were laying train tracks that would carry settlers west.

One of the railroad companies was called the Chesapeake & Ohio, or the C&O for short. The C&O Railroad was named for the two bodies of water it was intended to connect: the Chesapeake Bay along the east coast, and the Ohio River in the West. [Point to the Chesapeake Bay region off the coast of Virginia, and then point to the Ohio River.]



### ← Show image 7A-1: The Appalachian mountains

The engineers who planned the C&O Railroad had to overcome many challenges in order to get trains from the Chesapeake Bay to the Ohio River.

[Explain that engineers at that time were people who made engines like train engines. Engineers were also people who ran or drove the train engines. Explain that there were many problems that got in their way when they tried to build a railroad to connect the Chesapeake Bay to the Ohio River.]

But no **challenge**—or problem—was greater than this: they had to run their tracks through the Appalachian Mountains. The Appalachians were like a big wall that separated the east from the west.

[Show the Appalachian Mountain range on a map, and point out how it separates the east from the west.]

Sometimes, when the mountains were rolling, more like hills, the C&O workers were able to lay tracks over the top of them.

[Make a rolling-hill motion with your arms. Explain that hills are not too high and not too pointy, so workers were able to lay tracks on the hills.]

Other times they were able to lay tracks that zig-zagged around the mountains, like a snake.

[Make a zig-zag motion with your arms. Explain that some mountains had spaces between them where tracks could be laid.]

But some mountains were too tall to go over, and too big to go around.

[Reach your arms up high and say “too tall,” and stretch your arms out wide and say “too big.” Ask students: “What do you think the workers will do?”]



← **Show image 7A-2: A tunnel entrance in the mountain**

In those cases, the only **solution** to the problem was to dig a tunnel right through the mountain. Digging tunnels was dangerous work. The tunnels were dark and poorly ventilated—that means that there was barely enough fresh air inside the tunnels for the workers to breathe. Many workers were killed by sudden cave-ins—when pieces of rock, sometimes very big pieces of rock, fell into the tunnel. To dig the tunnels as fast as they could, railroad workers worked in teams of two.



← **Show image 7A-3: Two-man team digging holes**

[You may wish to have two students act this part out as you tell it.]

One man would crouch down and hold a steel spike. Then the other man would hit the spike with a big hammer. The first man would twist the spike as much as he could. Then his partner would hit the spike with his hammer again. The two men would work together, banging and twisting, banging and twisting, until they had driven the spike deep into the rock.

[Ask: “Is this exaggeration?” Tell students that this really happened.]

Then they would pull out the spike, move to another spot, and start digging a new hole.

[Emphasize that the holes were created by hand, without the help of machines. Ask: “Does this seem like hard work to you?”]

After a while, the rock would be full of holes, like a piece of Swiss cheese.

[Have students tell their partner what Swiss cheese looks like. Tell students that Swiss cheese usually is full of holes.]



← **Show image 7A-4: Dynamite explodes to break up the rock**

Next, the dynamite men would take over.

[Explain that dynamite is something that explodes or blows up when it burns. Point to the dynamite sticks.]

The dynamite men would pack dynamite into the holes and detonate—or set off—the explosives—*KABOOM!* The explosions would break up the solid rock into rubble. Then the workers would haul—or carry—away the rubble. And then they would start digging again.

[Ask: “Is this exaggeration?” Tell students that this really happened.]

To make the long, hard, day’s work go by faster, the railroad workers used to have contests.

[Define *contests* as events or competitions that people try to win.]

Two teams would have a contest to see which team could drive its spike farther into the mountain in a set amount of time. The winners of these contests became heroes.

People would tell stories about these “steel-driving” men and their amazing feats—or acts that take great strength and skill.

Another thing the railway workers did to pass the time while they worked was sing songs. Sometimes they would even sing songs about other steel-driving men. One of these steel-driving men was named John Henry. No one knew for certain where John Henry was from. Some said he was from Georgia. Some said he was from Tennessee. Others said he was a Virginia man.

[Point to these states on a map. Ask students which state they think John Henry is from.]

As it turns out, it seems likely that he was a former slave—he used to be a slave. He seems to have started working on the railroads sometime after the end of the Civil War.

For years people thought John Henry worked on the Big Bend Tunnel on the C&O line in what is now West Virginia; but now we think he more likely worked on the Lewis Tunnel in Virginia.

[Point to West Virginia and Virginia. Ask students which tunnel—the Big Bend or the Lewis—they think John Henry helped to make. Ask students whether making tunnels by hand is an exaggeration. Tell students that this really happened.]



← **Show image 7A-5: John Henry born with a hammer in his hand**

One thing we are sure of is that John Henry was a legend among railway workers.

[Define *legend* as someone who is well-known for doing something extremely well.]

John Henry was a very popular steel-driving man, and railway workers today still tell his story. They sing a song that tells the story about how he was born with a hammer in his hand.\*

[Ask: “Do you think he was really born with a hammer in his hand? Is this an exaggeration?” This is an example of exaggeration.]

John Henry became known as the most courageous man who ever worked on the railroad. Even as a young boy he could do the work of a man.\*

[Ask: “Do you think a young boy could do the work of a grown man? Is this an exaggeration?” This is an exaggeration.]

They said he had never been defeated in a steel-driving competition. They said he hit the spike so hard that sparks flew through the air. They said John Henry could swing a ten-pound hammer from sunup to sundown and not even get tired.\*

At first, almost all of the work on the tunnels was done by hand by workers like John Henry. Eventually, however, this began to change.

### **Mid-Story Check-In**

1. *Literal* Who is this tall tale about?

- This tall tale is about John Henry.

What was John Henry's job?

- John Henry's job was working as a steel-driving man (railway worker).

2. *Inferential* This tall tale talks about a kind of transportation that helped people travel west. What kind of transportation is it?

- It is railroads and trains.

3. *Literal* What was the biggest challenge the C&O Railroad had?

- The C&O railway's biggest challenge was to figure out how to run their tracks through the Appalachian Mountains.

What was the C&O Railroad's solution?

- The C&O Railroad's solution was to dig a tunnel through the mountains when there was no other way to go over the mountains or between the mountains.



#### ← **Show image 7A-6: The steam drill is invented**

People invented machines that could do some of the work. One of the machines they invented was a **steam** drill. This was a drill that was powered by a steam engine.

[Explain that steam is the gas that water changes into when it is boiled. Steam provides energy to power the steam drill.]

The first steam drills were pretty good, but they were not great. The steam drills could drive a spike into the mountain for sure, but not as well as two strong, experienced railway workers like John Henry and his partner.

[Have students discuss with their partner why the first steam drills were not as good as two experienced railway workers who have been doing their job for many, many years.]

Over time the machines got better and better, and they eventually began to replace the men who worked on the railroad tunnels.

One day, the captain of John Henry's work team brought a steam drill to the worksite. He bet—or said—that the steam drill could drive steel better than John Henry could. John Henry agreed

to **compete**—or race—against the steam drill to see who could work faster and better. John Henry swore he would do his best to beat it.

[Say to students: “Tell your partner how John Henry reacts when his captain says that the steam drill could drive steel better than John Henry could. Tell your partner who you think will win the competition.”]

He said to the captain:

*“Well, a man ain’t nothin’ but a man.*

*But before I let a steam drill beat me down,*

*I’ll die with a hammer in my hand.*

*Oh, oh! I’ll die with a hammer in my hand.”*

[Ask students to explain how this text sounds different from the rest of the read-aloud. (rhymes, repeating lines) Explain that this is part of a song or ballad about John Henry. A ballad is a kind of poem or song that tells a story.]



← **Show image 7A-7: John Henry competes against the steam drill**

One of the bosses blew a whistle. John Henry went to work driving steel the old-fashioned way—the way workers had always been doing—with a hammer and a spike. The captain started up the steam drill. It rattled away beside John Henry, belching steam and banging away at the mountain. The man and the machine worked side by side for several hours.

[Ask: “Is this exaggeration?” Tell students that this really happened.]

Then the boss blew his whistle again. The bosses took measurements, and then they announced the results.

[Ask: “Who do you think will win: John Henry or the steam drill?” Take a quick tally.]

John Henry had driven his spike a total of fifteen feet into the mountain. And the steam drill? It had only drilled nine feet.

[Have students tell their partner who won.]

John Henry had won! He had beaten the steam drill!

*Now the man that invented the steam drill,*

*He thought he was mighty fine.*

*But John Henry drove his fifteen feet*

*And the steam drill only made nine.*

*Oh, oh! The steam drill only made nine!*

[Ask students to explain how this text sounds different from the rest of the read-alouds. (rhymes, repeating lines) Explain that this is part of a song or ballad about John Henry. A ballad is a kind of poem or song that tells a story. Ask students which event in John Henry's life this ballad tells about. (his race against the steam drill and winning)]



← **Show image 7A-8: John Henry wins the competition!**

The other railway workers roared—and cheered excitedly. They were excited that John Henry had won. He had shown that a hard worker was better than a machine! But John Henry himself was in no condition to celebrate. He had worked so hard that he had suffered a heart attack.

*John Henry hammered in the mountains,*

*And his hammer was strikin' fire.*

*Well, he hammered so hard that it broke his poor heart,*

*And he laid down his hammer and he died.*

*Oh, oh! He laid down his hammer and he died.*

[Ask students to explain how this text sounds different from the rest of the read-alouds. (repeating lines) Explain that this is part of a song or ballad about John Henry. A ballad is a kind of poem or song that tells a story. Ask students which event in John Henry's life this ballad tells about. (hammering the mountains and dying)]



← **Show image 7A-9: Passengers tell the legend of John Henry**

The railway men carried John Henry out of the tunnel. They laid him to rest with other workers who had died building the railways. But the legend—or story—of John Henry lived on. The C&O Railroad was completed a couple of years later. And for years



to come, whenever locomotives—or trains—went down the C&O line past the tunnel they thought John Henry helped dig, those who knew the story would say, “There lies John Henry, the king of the steel-driving men!”

*They took John Henry down the tunnel,  
And they buried him in the sand.  
And every locomotive comes a-roarin’ by  
Says, “Yonder lies a steel-drivin’ man!  
Oh, oh, yonder lies a steel-drivin’ man.”*

[Ask students to explain how this text sounds different from the rest of the read-alouds. (rhymes, repeating lines) Explain that this is part of a song or ballad about John Henry. A ballad is a kind of poem or song that tells a story. Ask students which event in John Henry’s life this ballad tells about. (his burial and people’s remembrance)]

## **Discussing the Read-Aloud**

**10** minutes

### **Comprehension Questions**

If students have difficulty responding to questions, reread pertinent lines of the read-aloud and/or refer to specific images. Ask students to answer in complete sentences by having them restate the question in their responses. Model answers using complete sentences as necessary.

1. *Literal* What is the title of today’s story?
  - The title of today’s story is “John Henry.”
2. *Evaluative* What kind of special story is “John Henry”?
  - “John Henry” is a tall tale (or legend).

Is this tall tale fiction (made-up), non-fiction (true), or both?

- This tall tale is partly fiction and partly nonfiction.

**Note:** You may wish to fill out the Tall Tales Characteristics Chart as students answer the following six questions.

3. *Inferential* Where in the American frontier does this story take place?
  - This story follows the building of the C&O Railroad from the Chesapeake Bay to the Ohio River. [Show that the railway was built from east to west.]

4. *Inferential* How was John Henry’s childhood amazing?
  - John Henry’s childhood was amazing because he was born with a hammer in his hand; and when he was young, he could do the work of a grown man.
5. *Literal* What is one amazing adventure John Henry has in this tall tale.
  - Answers may vary, but should be something that is explicitly stated in the text, e.g., he competed against a steam drill.
6. *Evaluative* What are some things the tall tale says John Henry helped to create?
  - The tall tale says John Henry helped to create the tunnels for the C&O Railroad.

Do you think he really created any of these things?

- Yes, he really helped to create the tunnels.
7. *Evaluative* What is one thing you find humorous or funny about this tall tale.
    - Answers may vary, but should refer to something explicitly stated in the text. **Note:** If students cannot think of anything humorous, leave this cell blank.
  8. *Evaluative* Name one exaggeration from this tall tale and explain how it is an exaggeration.
    - Answers may vary, but should refer to something explicitly stated in the text, e.g., swinging a ten-pound hammer from sunup to sundown and not even getting tired.

Does this exaggeration make John Henry seem larger than life?

[Please continue to model the *Think Pair Share* process for students, as necessary, and scaffold students in their use of the process.]

I am going to ask you two questions. I will give you a minute to think about the questions, and then I will ask you to turn to your partner and discuss the questions. Finally, I will call on several of you to share what you discussed with your partner.

**Sentence Frames:**

Which would you like to be—a lumberjack, a cowboy/girl, or a railway worker?

I would choose to be a \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ helped to . . .

9. *Evaluative Think Pair Share:* You've heard about different jobs people had on the American frontier: lumberjack, cowboy, and railway worker. These were all important jobs during that time. If you could choose one, which one would you like to be? How did that job help to make the west livable for others?
- Lumberjack: cuts down trees to clear the land and provides wood for building things
  - Cowboy: raises cattle for milk and meat
  - Railway workers: help to lay the tracks for railroads for travel west
10. After hearing today's story and questions and answers, do you have any remaining questions? [If time permits, you may wish to allow for individual, group, or class research of the text and/or other resources to answer these remaining questions.]

↔ **Word Work: Challenge**

1. In the read-aloud you heard, "[N]o *challenge* was greater [to the C&O Railroad] than this: they had to run their tracks through the Appalachian Mountains."
2. Say the word *challenge* with me three times.
3. A challenge is a difficult task or problem that takes some thinking to figure out.
4. Putting a two-hundred piece puzzle together can be a challenge.
5. Tell your partner about something that is challenge to you. Try to use the word *challenge* when you tell about it. I will ask some students to share what their partner said.

[Ask two or three students. If necessary, guide and/or rephrase students' responses: "\_\_\_\_\_ is a challenge."]

6. What's the word we've been talking about?

Use a *Making Choices* activity for follow-up. Directions: [You may wish to preview the activities and choose a few for students to try out.] I am going to read some examples. For each example, first, we will take a moment to try it. Then, decide if you found the example to be a challenge or not. If you found it to be a challenge, say, “That was a challenge.” If you did not find it to be a challenge, say, “That was not a challenge.”

Keep in mind that we won’t all think the same things are a challenge, so your answer might be different from your neighbor’s.

1. standing on one foot
2. singing the ABCs backwards
3. writing your name
4. jumping up and down while standing on one foot
5. patting your head while rubbing your tummy
6. writing your name with your eyes closed
7. touching your finger to your nose while jumping up and down on one foot
8. writing your name upside down with your eyes closed



### **Complete Remainder of the Lesson Later in the Day**



# John Henry

7<sub>B</sub>

## Extensions

20 minutes

### ↔ Multiple Meaning Word Activity

#### *Context Clues: Legend*

**Note:** You may choose to have students hold up one, two, or three fingers to indicate which image shows the meaning being described, or have a student walk up to the poster and point to the image being described.

1. [Show Poster 3M (Legend).] In today's tall tale, you heard that John Henry was a *legend* among railroad workers. Here legend means a famous and important person that others remember, even after that person dies. Which picture shows this?
2. A legend is also a list of symbols on a map telling you what the symbols mean. Which picture shows this?
3. A legend is also a story from a long time ago that some people believe is true. Which picture shows someone telling others a legend?
4. I'm going to say some sentences with the word *legend*. Hold up one finger if my sentence tells about *legend* in picture one; hold up two fingers if my sentence tells about *legend* in picture two; and hold up three fingers if my sentences tells about *legend* in picture three.
  1. We see north, south, east, west on the legend.
  2. Native Americans have many legends about how things came to be.
  3. The capital of a state is marked with a star in the legend.
  4. Paul Bunyan is a legend among lumberjacks.
  5. Children like to listen to the legends their grandparents tell them.

### Create Your Own

#### *Draw an Exaggeration*

- Remind students of a few tall tale exaggerations from the three tall tales you have read so far, referring to images as necessary. Remind students that some exaggerations can make the character seem larger than life.

- Tell students that now they have a chance to think of their own tall tale character and an exaggeration that makes him or her larger than life.
  - Remind students that they heard about a lumberjack, a cowboy, and a railway worker; these were all important jobs in the American frontier. Ask students to think about who their tall tale character will be, and have students give their character a name.
  - Next, have students think of an exaggeration related to their character that would make their character seem larger than life.
  - Once students have decided on a tall tale character and an exaggeration, have them draw the exaggeration.
  - Then, have students write one or two sentences about the exaggeration underneath their drawing, using the letter-sound correspondences they have learned.
  - Finally, have students share their picture and writing with their partner, in small groups, or with home-language peers.

### Domain-Related Trade Book

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- Refer to the list of recommended trade books in the Introduction at the front of this *Supplemental Guide*, and choose another version of “John Henry” to read aloud to the class.
- Explain to students that the person who wrote the book is called the author. Remind students that tall tales were originally told through word of mouth, from person to person, and then were written down in a book. Tell students the name of the author of the book. Explain to students that the person who makes the pictures for the book is called an illustrator. Tell students the name of the illustrator. Show students where they can find this information on the cover of the book or the title page.
- As you read, use the same strategies that you have been using when reading the read-aloud selections—pause and ask occasional questions; rapidly clarify critical vocabulary within the context of the read-aloud; etc.
- After you finish reading the trade book aloud, lead students in a discussion to compare the two versions of the same story. You may wish to compare tall tale characteristics between the trade book and read-aloud.