Grade 3: ELA

Tall Tale Narrative

**Sources (2 tall tale narratives, 1 article about tall tales;**

**presented in the order in which they are used)**

**Narrative 1:**

Johnny Appleseed

Long ago, Johnny Appleseed walked with a tin cooking pot on his head across the United States of America. Many people said he planted apple seeds everywhere he went. Appleseed knew the seeds he planted would grow to be an apple orchard. And, all the

pioneers would have apples to eat.

Johnny Appleseed was a gentle and kind man. He gave seeds to the pioneers and they planted them. His real name was John Chapman, but the people named him Johnny Appleseed because he always gave apple seeds. Appleseed is an American folk hero

because he loved apple seeds and apple trees.

**Narrative 2:**

Paul Bunyan and his Blue Ox Babe

Paul Bunyan was a giant and strong lumberjack. He had a huge blue ox named Babe. It was said that Bunyan was seven feet tall and able to do any lumber job in the country. He was able to cut the trees of whole forests with one sweep of his axe. Some lumberjacks told stories about how Bunyan logged all the timber from the large state of North Dakota.

Now a story would not be complete without Bunyan’s ox. One might ask why Babe was blue. The story started one fine winter. The snow was blue for seven days. Babe rested in the blue snow and then his fur was blue instead of white. Babe was also very large and strong. Other lumberjacks were so amazed because Babe weighed ten thousand pounds and had the strength of nine horses. It was no wonder that Bunyan and Babe were known to pull large houses up mountains and down to the valleys with only drops of sweat. Together they helped people haul logs or chopped trees to give a hand around the logging camps.

Both were happiest in the woods with plenty of trees. They tried to stay close to the river so they could cut the trees and drop them in the river. And, down the river the logs floated to the mill.

And so, Paul Bunyan and Babe became larger than life American folk heroes of our country.

**Article 1:**

Brief informational article (300 words or less) describing the genre of tall tales. The article will discuss tall tales as stories of ordinary people presented in extraordinary ways, that is, made “larger than life.” The article will also classify tall tales by various types and also

discuss their unique roll in diverse cultures.

***Task Overview (105 total minutes):***

Title: Tall Tale Narratives

***Part 1*** (35 minutes): Ultimately tasked with writing a narrative, students will independently

read two tall tales and an informational article about tall tales, taking notes on these sources. They will then respond to several questions about these sources, addressing the

research skills of analyzing and evaluating information.

***Part 2*** (70 minutes): Students will work individually to plan, write, and revise a narrative of

a tall tale character that has super-human abilities or an extraordinary story to tell.

***Scorable Products:*** Student responses to the selected-response and constructed-response

questions and the narrative will be scored.

**American Tall Tales**

    Tall Tales are exaggerated and imaginary stories from the 1800's.  They were made-up to tell about the courage many had while exploring and adventuring to the "WILD, WILD, WEST".  These stories entertained people around campfires, on steamboats, and many other places.

    Johnny Appleseed and Davy Crockett were actual people.  The stories of their life were soon exaggerated and re-told until they became folk heroes.

    Pecos Bill, John Henry, Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind, Paul Bunyan, Stormalong, and Febold Feboldson were not actual people.  They were made up by writers.

    We hope that you enjoy reading these stories.  These tall tales can paint a picture in your mind of America in the 19th century.  These tales describe a wide range of geographical settings and illustrate occupations that helped to develop the Early America.  They combine reality and fantasy into one exaggerated story that entertains people.

Babe the Blue Ox

Minnesota Tall Tales

retold by

S. E. Schlosser

Well now, one winter it was so cold that all the geese flew backward and all the fish moved south and even the snow turned blue. Late at night, it got so frigid that all spoken words froze solid afore they could be heard. People had to wait until sunup to find out what folks were talking about the night before.

Paul Bunyan went out walking in the woods one day during that Winter of the Blue Snow. He was knee-deep in blue snow when he heard a funny sound between a bleat and a snort. Looking down, he saw a teeny-tiny baby blue ox jest a hopping about in the snow and snorting with rage on account of he was too short to see over the drifts.

Paul Bunyan laughed when he saw the spunky little critter and took the little blue mite home with him. He warmed the little ox up by the fire and the little fellow fluffed up and dried out, but he remained as blue as the snow that had stained him in the first place. So Paul named him Babe the Blue Ox.

Well, any creature raised in Paul Bunyan's camp tended to grow to massive proportions, and Babe was no exception. Folks that stared at him for five minutes could see him growing right before their eyes. He grew so big that 42 axe handles plus a plug of tobacco could fit between his eyes and it took a murder of crows a whole day to fly from one horn to the other. The laundryman used his horns to hang up all the camp laundry, which would dry lickety-split because of all the wind blowing around at that height.

Whenever he got an itch, Babe the Blue Ox had to find a cliff to rub against, 'cause whenever he tried to rub against a tree it fell over and begged for mercy. To whet his appetite, Babe would chew up thirty bales of hay, wire and all. It took six men with picaroons to get all the wire out of Babe's teeth after his morning snack. Right after that he'd eat a ton of grain for lunch and then come pestering around the cook - Sourdough Sam - begging for another snack.

Babe the Blue Ox was a great help around Paul Bunyan's logging camp. He could pull anything that had two ends, so Paul often used him to straighten out the pesky, twisted logging roads. By the time Babe had pulled the twists and kinks out of all the roads leading to the lumber camp, there was twenty miles of extra road left flopping about with nowhere to go. So Paul rolled them up and used them to lay a new road into new timberland.

Paul also used Babe the Blue Ox to pull the heavy tank wagon which was used to coat the newly-straightened lumber roads with ice in the winter, until one day the tank sprang a leak that trickled south and became the Mississippi River. After that, Babe stuck to hauling logs. Only he hated working in the summertime, so Paul had to paint the logging roads white after the spring thaw so that Babe would keep working through the summer.

One summer, as Babe the Blue Ox was hauling a load of logs down the white-washed road and dreaming of the days when the winter would feel cold again and the logs would slide easier on the "ice", he glanced over the top of the mountain and caught a glimpse of a pretty yeller calf grazing in a field. Well, he twisted out of his harness lickety-split and stepped over the mountain to introduce himself. It was love at first sight, and Paul had to abandon his load and buy Bessie the Yeller Cow from the farmer before Babe would do any more hauling.

Bessie the Yeller Cow grew to the massive, yet dainty proportions that were suitable for the mate of Babe the Blue Ox. She had long yellow eyelashes that tickled the lumberjacks standing on the other end of camp each time she blinked. She produced all the dairy products for the lumber camp. Each day, Sourdough Sam made enough butter from her cream to grease the giant pancake griddle and sometimes there was enough left over to butter the toast!

The only bone of contention between Bessie and Babe was the weather. Babe loved the ice and snow and Bessie loved warm summer days. One winter, Bessie grew so thin and pale that Paul Bunyan asked his clerk Johnny Inkslinger to make her a pair of green goggles so she would think it was summer. After that, Bessie grew happy and fat again, and produced so much butter that Paul Bunyan used the leftovers to grease the whitewashed lumber roads in summer. With the roads so slick all year round, hauling logs became much easier for Babe the Blue Ox, and so Babe eventually came to like summer almost as much as Bessie.