



Lesson Extensions and Activities for *Paul Bunyan*

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Reading Is Fundamental

Google Voyager Folktales Unit

Book Description

Paul is beloved by his home state of Maine until his large size and strength cause quite a disturbance. Moving to the wilderness works out well for a time, but when other settlers crowd into the woods, Paul and his blue ox Babe set out on a great adventure across the U.S. Along the way, they meet (and feed) legendary lumbermen, get into a wild rumpus with underground ogres called Gumberoos and weather blizzards, scorchers and all that the country has to offer them.

Folktale Background

Paul Bunyan is a typical frontier tall tale. Stories about Paul that were recorded from oral folklore suggest that he was known in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and the Northwest before the first Bunyan stories were published by James MacGillivray in "The Round River Drive" in 1910.

Vocabulary

- Anchor – To keep something from moving around by dropping a heavy object attached to a rope or chain into the water.
- Lumber – Trees that are sawn into rough planks.
- Sturdy – Strongly and solidly built.
- Shivering – Shaking slightly because of cold.
- Urge – A strong impulse.
- Ambush – To make a surprise attack on someone.
- Dismay – Distress.
- Rumpus – A noisy disturbance.
- Parachute – A cloth canopy that fills with air and allows a person to drop slowly.
- Muddle – An untidy and disorganized state.
- Colossal – Very big.
- Blizzard – A severe snow storm.
- Varmint – A troublesome wild animal.
- Longing – A strong desire.
- Evaporated – Turned from liquid into a vapor.
- Gouge – To make a groove, hole or indentation.
- Westerly – In a westward position or direction.
- Longevity – Long life.
- Gusto – Enjoyment or vigor in doing something.

Prior to Reading

- Ask students where they've traveled in the U.S. Mark where they mention on a map, and ask each student to share something that was different and something that was similar about the place they visited and where they currently live.
- Walk students through the United States [Google Voyager Experience](#), placing emphasis on what makes each region unique.
- Share with students that the folktale *Paul Bunyan* is set in the U.S. Ask if they've heard any other stories folktales that are based in the U.S. and call on volunteers to share the title of the story and where in the U.S. it is set.

While Reading

- Stop reading on the page that says, "After his parents had paid for the damage, they decided to move to the backwoods where life would be more peaceful." Ask students to predict if things will be more peaceful with this change of scenery.
- Stop reading on the page that says, "Paul grabbed the camp dinner horn and blew a thunderous note into the Gumberoos' cave, determined to blast the meanness right out of them." Ask students if they think that the horn will do the trick.
- Stop reading on the page that says, "A wild, rough-and-tumble rumpus began inside the den." Ask students who they think will come out on top after the rumpus is over.
- Stop reading on the page that says, "Deprived of their flapjacks, the lumbermen became weak and discouraged." Ask students what they think Paul will do to raise the crew's spirits.

Post Reading Activities

- Lead a discussion about the tale. Ask students such questions as:
 - Why is Babe blue?
 - Why does Paul head off across the country?
 - What does Paul and his crew run into on the far slopes of the Appalachian Mountains?
 - What happens when Paul and his crew reach the Midwest?
 - What happens when Paul and his crew reach the Rocky Mountains?
 - How does Paul and his crew escape the blizzard?
 - According to the tall tale, how was the Grand Canyon created?
 - Where do you think Paul and Babe are today and what do you think they're doing?
- Have students complete the Criss Cross, Memory Matching, and Word Search puzzles about *Paul Bunyan* on RIF's Literacy Central (<https://www.rif.org/literacy-central>).

Lesson Extensions and Activities

Here are some ways to further explore the story:

Primary Standard for all activities: RL.K.10 (Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.)

- **Math** – Paul Bunyan and his crew travel far and wide across the U.S.! Have students determine how far their journey takes them by using a map to measure distances between places in the U.S.

Objective: Students will use a map and a ruler to measure represented distances.

Standards: CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.2.MD.A.1 (Measure the length of an object by selecting and using appropriate tools such as rulers, yardsticks, meter sticks, and measuring tapes.)

Materials:

- A computer with an internet connection so you can connect to Google Maps
- Rulers
- Pencils
- Paper

- **Arts** – Paul’s adventures make it clear that each region in the U.S. has something unique about it that sets it apart. Have students illustrate a map of the country with icons that represent the different regions that Paul and his crew visit.

Objective: Students will design and create artistic works based on a description.

Standards: National Core Arts Standards, Anchor Standard #3 (Refine and complete artistic work.)

Materials:

- Printed versions of U.S. maps like [this one](#)
- Glue
- Markers
- Colored pencils
- Ribbons and other pieces of other materials (e.g., cloth)
- Construction paper
- Pencils
- Magazines that can be cut
- Scissors

- **Science** – Paul’s trusty pal Babe is blue because he spent so much time out in the cold when he was young! Have students learn more about the cold with a snow and ice science experiment from [wehavekids.com](#).

Objective: Students will explore how temperature affects matter.

Standards: NSES Physical Science Standards Levels 5-8 (Properties and changes of properties in matter.)

Materials*:

- Empty cans
- Water

- Permanent marker
- Plastic bottle
- Tray or aluminum foil
- Freezer
- Crushed ice
- Salt
- Dry ice
- Construction paper
- Magnifying glass
- Blender
- Ice trays

*This website features ideas for multiple experiments. Not all of these materials will be needed for each experiment. Choose one that works with your supplies.

- **Writing** – Paul’s adventures may be fun, but he must miss his parents and his friends in Maine while he’s away! Have students write a letter from Paul’s perspective recounting stories from his journey for all of the loved ones he left at home.

Objective: Students will recall details from a book to write from a character’s perspective.

Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.3 (Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.)

Materials:

- Journals
- Pens