

TALES OF LONG AGO

What are folk tales and why are they a part of our history?

Long before stories were written in books, they were told by word of mouth. Families in all countries told stories to explain how things happened or came to be. Many of these stories began as truth but over many years, details were added. Some details may have been true but many of them were added to make the story more interesting.

A **folk tale** is any story, song, rhyme or joke that has been told over and over for many generations. These folk tales, legends, and tall tales came to be a part of our culture. Today we learn about life long ago, we learn about justice and fair play, and we have wonderful stories to enjoy.

Here are some types of folk tales and examples you may know

A legend
so many

- **Pocahontas**
life of
John

- **David Copperfield**
Cong
hims
stori
adve

truth

ed the
arried

S
e from
of his



PREVIEW

Please [Sign In](#) or [Sign Up](#) to download the printable version of this worksheet



- **Mike Fink** was born around 1770 somewhere along the Mississippi River. He was known as "**king of the keelboat men**" and claimed he could outrun, out jump, outshoot and out brag any man on the river.

- **Annie Oakley** was born in Ohio in 1860. She was an expert with a rifle in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show.
- **Casey Jones** was a railroad engineer in the early 1900's. He died in a train crash in the early days of train travel so a ballad was written about him after he died.
- **John Henry** was a very strong black worker. Using only a hammer he had a race to see if he could tunnel through a mountain in West Virginia faster than a steam drill. He won the race but died with his hammer in his hand. This tale told of the struggle of old ways against the new ways.



PREVIEW

- **Geo**
know
chop
"I ca

Please [Sign In](#) or [Sign Up](#) to download the printable version of this worksheet

s
he
said,



- **Johnny Appleseed** was really John Chapman who was born in Massachusetts in 1775. He tended an apple orchard and gave bags of apple seeds to pioneers as they headed west. As the story goes, he left home to plant apple seeds and tend to apple trees in the West. One of his many good deeds was to heal the foot of a wolf who became his traveling companion.

A **tall tale** is a story that is exaggerated so much that it cannot be true at all.

- According to the tale of **Paul Bunyan and his blue ox, Babe**, Paul Bunyan was a very large baby. At 3 weeks old he rolled over in his sleep and knocked down four square miles of timber in the state of Maine. He grew up to be a lumberjack taller than a redwood tree, stronger than 50 grizzly bears and smarter than a library full of books. With Babe, he scooped out the holes that are now the Great Lakes, formed the Grand Canyon, and made the Mississippi River.



- In the baby a cow shoe One torn

s a to be six-ite. e .

PREVIEW

Please [Sign In](#) or [Sign Up](#) to download the printable version of this worksheet



- The **Uncle Remus** stories are based on tales told by southern Negroes whose families brought similar stories to this country from Africa. Uncle Remus may have been a slave but there is no proof. In his stories, **Brer Rabbit** is a trickster who shows that the small and weak can outwit the large and powerful.

- In almost every culture, there is a story about making soup from a stone. It has been told so many times that the soup ingredients are different but the end result is the same. A clever man is able to trick a greedy woman, and a delicious soup is shared by many.

Try this!

If you do not recognize these stories or characters, ask your teacher to read some folk tales to you. Or go to the library and check out some for yourself.

An illustration showing a row of diverse children standing on a green patch of grass. Above them are four thought bubbles containing various educational icons: a cube, a microscope, a protractor, a globe, a chemistry flask, a globe, a compass, an atom, a pie chart, a bar graph, a calculator, and a pencil. The word 'PREVIEW' is written in large, bold, blue and orange letters below the children. Below the preview text, it says 'Please Sign In or Sign Up to download the printable version of this worksheet'.