



# Paul Bunyan

5

## ☑ Lesson Objectives

### Core Content Objectives

Students will:

- ✓ Identify tall tales as a type of fiction
- ✓ Demonstrate familiarity with the tall tale “Paul Bunyan”
- ✓ Identify the characters, plot, and setting of “Paul Bunyan”
- ✓ Identify exaggeration and larger-than-life characters as characteristics of tall tales
- ✓ Identify the exaggerations in “Paul Bunyan”

### Language Arts Objectives

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 addressed in all lessons in this domain.

Students will:

- ✓ With assistance, categorize and organize characteristics about the tall tale “Paul Bunyan” into a chart (W.2.8)
- ✓ Clarify information about “Paul Bunyan” by asking questions that begin with *what* (SL.2.1c)
- ✓ Retell content and/or oral information presented by others by using the main events in “Paul Bunyan” (SL.2.2)
- ✓ Distinguish this fantasy from realistic text by explaining that some of the things in the story could not happen in real life

## Core Vocabulary

**admiration, n.** A feeling of deep respect and liking

*Example:* Liz had a great deal of admiration for her younger sister, who always tried her best.

*Variation(s):* none

**colossal, adj.** Unbelievably large or great

*Example:* On Jim's family trip across the United States, they stopped to drive up Pike's Peak, a colossal mountain in Colorado.

*Variation(s):* none

**frontier, n.** The unsettled part of the American West


*Example:* Lewis and Clark explored the frontier with a skilled group of woodsmen.

*Variation(s):* frontiers

**inseparable, adj.** Seemingly always together; not able to be separated

*Example:* The two brothers were inseparable during the summer.

*Variation(s):* none

<i><b>At a Glance</b></i>	<b>Exercise</b>	<b>Materials</b>	<b>Minutes</b>
<i><b>Introducing the Read-Aloud</b></i>	<b>Essential Background Information or Terms</b>	U.S. map; Image Cards 1–6	10
	<b>Purpose for Listening</b>		
<i><b>Presenting the Read-Aloud</b></i>	<b>Paul Bunyan</b>	U.S. map	15
<i><b>Discussing the Read-Aloud</b></i>	<b>Comprehension Questions</b>		10
	<b>Word Work: Admiration</b>		5
 <b>Complete Remainder of the Lesson Later in the Day</b>			
<i><b>Extensions</b></i>	<b>Tall Tales Characteristics Chart</b>	Instructional Master 5B-1 (optional); chart paper, chalkboard, or whiteboard	20
	<b>Syntactic Awareness Activity: Regular and Irregular Plurals</b>		
<i><b>Take-Home Material</b></i>	<b>Family Letter</b>	Instructional Master 5B-2	



# Paul Bunyan

5<sub>A</sub>

## Introducing the Read-Aloud

10 minutes

### Background Information and Essential Terms

Tell students that the next several read-alouds they will hear are tall tales. Explain to students that tall tales are a type of folktale. Share that tall tales, like other folktales, were first told orally many, many years ago and were later written down. Tell students that tall tales are humorous stories often about real-life heroes of the American frontier during the 1800s. Students should remember the American frontier and the unexplored area of the American West from the *Frontier Explorers* domain. Explain that the word *frontier* has two different meanings. Tell students that a frontier can be a boundary, or the edge, of a country or land. Tell students that the word *frontier* can also describe the unexplored areas of a country or place. Share with students that the first European settlers lived on the East Coast of the United States. Help students locate the East Coast of the United States on a U.S. map.

Share with students that the tall tales they are about to hear are often about the men and women who moved from the East Coast to the American West and helped to tame the land or make it more livable for others. Tell students that logging was one way men and women thought they could make the land in the American frontier more livable. Explain that logging is the process of cutting down trees and turning them into building materials. Lumberjacks, or loggers, cut down trees as lumber or logs that are made into boards used for building.



← **Show image 5A-3: The world's biggest lumberjack**

Tell students that the main character in today's tall tale, "Paul Bunyan," was a famous lumberjack, or logger. Ask students what they see in the illustration. Tell students that Paul Bunyan is a fictional character and that much of what they hear about him in today's read-aloud will be exaggeration. Share with students

that an important characteristic of all tall tales is exaggeration of details. Ask students to say the word *exaggeration* with you. Explain that an exaggeration is an overstatement of the truth. Share that exaggeration in a tall tale makes the main character seem larger than life; he or she is always bigger, stronger, smarter, and faster than real people. Share with students some examples of exaggeration, e.g., someone catching a small fish and each time they tell about it, the fish gets bigger and bigger in the story; etc.

Have a student find Maine on the U.S. map. Have another student find Minnesota on the U.S. map. Show Image Cards 2 (Great Lakes), 3 (Rocky Mountains), 4 (Appalachian Mountains), 5 (Mississippi River), and 6 (Grand Canyon), and have a student locate each of these on the U.S. map.

**Note:** You may want to wait until after the read-aloud to locate these places on the map; or do it during the read-aloud as each place is mentioned.

### **Purpose for Listening**

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Tell students to listen carefully for examples of exaggeration in this tall tale about Paul Bunyan, a natural-born logger who moved to the American frontier from Maine.



## Paul Bunyan

### ← Show image 5A-1: Baby Paul in a wagon cradle

- 1 [Point to the wagon.] Did Paul really sleep in a covered wagon as a baby, or is that an exaggeration?
- 2 Do you think he really ate five barrels of porridge a day or that his parents milked four dozen cows to fill his baby bottle? Are those more examples of exaggerations?
- 3 Did Paul really blow the birds from Maine to California? Do you think a child can actually do these things? These are exaggerations that make Paul Bunyan seem larger than life.

Even as a baby, Paul Bunyan was mighty big. How big? Well, he was so big that his parents had to use a covered wagon for his cradle.<sup>1</sup>

As you might imagine, young Paul Bunyan had a big appetite. He gobbled up five barrels of porridge a day, and his parents had to milk four dozen cows every morning and evening just to keep his baby bottle filled.<sup>2</sup>

Paul was so big it caused some problems in the little town in Maine where he grew up. When he sneezed, he blew the birds from Maine to California. When he snored, the neighbors ran out of their houses hollering, “Earthquake! Earthquake!”<sup>3</sup>



### ← Show image 5A-2: Toddler Paul on a raft cot

- 4 [Point to the raft.] Would parents really put their baby on a floating raft to sleep in the harbor? Is that another exaggeration?
- 5 If Paul was too big for the East Coast, why do you think his father thought it would be better out west? Why were people moving west?
- 6 A lumberjack is someone who cuts down trees. The sawmill is where the trees are turned into boards. People use the wood from trees to build houses and to make many other things.

After that, Paul’s father thought it might be better if Paul didn’t sleep in town. He built a cot on a large raft for Paul and floated it off the coast. Paul slept on the raft for a few nights, but the floating cot didn’t work out. When Paul turned over in his sleep, he created gigantic waves that knocked down houses along the coast.<sup>4</sup>

Eventually, Paul’s father decided that the East Coast was just too small for Paul Bunyan. The only sensible thing to do was to move out West. So the Bunyan family moved to Minnesota.<sup>5</sup>

In those days Minnesota was full of logging camps, sawmills, and lumberjacks.<sup>6</sup> Americans were moving west and “building the country.” They had to cut down a lot of trees to make their homes, not to mention their schools, churches, boats, and furniture.



### ← Show image 5A-3: The world’s biggest lumberjack

When he grew up, Paul Bunyan went to work as a lumberjack, and what a lumberjack he proved to be! He made himself a giant ax, with a handle carved out of a full-grown hickory tree. He could

7 Could a man really make an ax with the top of a tree or chop down a giant tree with one swing of his ax? Are these exaggerations?

8 *Admiration* means they thought very highly of him.

9 Do you think the snow really turned blue? Or is this an exaggeration?

10 If the whimper was muffled, could he hear it very well?

11 What do you think was in the snow?



← **Show image 5A-4: Paul meets the baby blue ox**

bring down a giant tree with a single swing of his ax.<sup>7</sup> As the tree tipped over, he would yell, “Timber!” so the other lumberjacks had time to get out of the way.

Everyone looked up to Paul Bunyan—way up! The other lumberjacks were full of **admiration** for him.<sup>8</sup> The bosses were grateful for the amazing amount of work he could do in a day. Paul had a big heart, too, but one thing he always wished for was a true friend. There simply wasn’t anybody else his size who could be his friend.

That all changed during the winter of the Big Blue Snow. It was called the winter of the Big Blue Snow because it was so cold that everyone shivered and turned blue. Even the snow shivered and turned blue.<sup>9</sup> One day, as Paul made his way through the blue snowdrifts, he heard a muffled whimper.<sup>10</sup> He followed the noise until he saw two big, blue, furry things sticking up out of the snow. He reached down and gave a pull.<sup>11</sup>

It turned out that the two big, blue, furry things were two big, blue ears. And connected to the big, blue ears was a giant, blue, baby ox!

Paul exclaimed, “The poor little fellow is half frozen.”

Paul carried the blue ox home, wrapped him in blankets, and fed him. The baby ox was so content that he took a long nap in Paul’s big, strong arms. When he woke up, he looked up at Paul and do you know what he said? “Mama! Mama!” Then he gave Paul a big, slobbery lick on the face. Paul laughed and said, “Babe, we’re gonna be great friends!”

And they were. In fact, Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox were soon **inseparable**.<sup>12</sup> Everywhere Paul went, Babe went, too. The two of them worked together in the lumber camps. Paul chopped down the trees. Then Babe hauled them to the river and dropped them in so they could float downstream to a sawmill.<sup>13</sup> Together, Paul and Babe did the work of a hundred men.<sup>14</sup>

12 *Inseparable* means they couldn’t be separated.

13 Remember that in order for settlers to farm new land, they sometimes had to prepare it for growing crops and building homes. They often did this by clearing the trees away from the land.

14 Do you think they could really do the work of a hundred men? Is this another exaggeration?



← Show image 5A-5: The world's largest frying pan

15 Why would the lumber company want to keep Paul Bunyan happy?

16 Sourdough is a kind of bread.

17 Flapjacks are pancakes.

18 *Colossal* means unbelievably large.

19 [Point to the kitchen helpers and the slabs of bacon on their feet.] Greasing a giant griddle with bacon on their feet and cooking over a forest fire sound like more \_\_\_\_\_. [Give students the opportunity to fill in the word *exaggeration*.]

20 Babe making lakes with his footprints sounds like an example of an \_\_\_\_\_.



21 Paul and Babe straightening a river is another example of what?

The lumber company figured the best way to keep Paul Bunyan happy was through his stomach, so they hired a special cook to feed Paul and Babe.<sup>15</sup> The cook's name was Sourdough Sam.<sup>16</sup> Sourdough Sam was known for the giant flapjacks he cooked in the world's biggest frying pan.<sup>17</sup> The **colossal** pan sat on an enormous cast iron frame.<sup>18</sup> Every morning Sourdough Sam would build a raging forest fire underneath the pan. Then he would call for his two helpers, Lars Larson and Pete Peterson. Lars and Pete would grease up the pan by tying slabs of bacon to their feet and skating back and forth across the sizzling pan.<sup>19</sup> Then Sourdough Sam would make a giant stack of pancakes for Paul and an even larger stack for Babe.

Thanks to Sourdough Sam and his overgrown flapjacks, Babe eventually grew to be even bigger than Paul. He was so big that, if you were standing at his front legs, you had to use a telescope to see all the way to his back legs. In fact, he was so heavy that his footprints filled up with water and turned into lakes.<sup>20</sup> In fact, there are more than ten thousand lakes in Minnesota today, and most of them were created by Babe the Blue Ox back in the **frontier** days.

← Show image 5A-6: Paul and Babe straightening the river

Babe and Paul helped the lumberjacks solve all sorts of problems. Once there was a river that was full of twists and turns. Sometimes the trees would get stuck in the turns and never make it downstream to the sawmill. But Paul Bunyan thought of a way to fix that! He went to one end of the river and sent Babe to the other end. Paul grabbed the river and pulled in one direction. Babe pulled the other end in the opposite direction. Then—*snap!* Just like that, all of the kinks were pulled out, and the river was as straight as an ax handle.<sup>21</sup>

Of course, this tightening operation left the river a good deal longer than it had been before, and there was a lot of extra water lying around. Paul and Babe worked together to dig five big holes

22 Did Paul Bunyan actually create the Great Lakes? This is definitely another \_\_\_\_\_.

23 What river do you think they are talking about?



24 [Help students locate Maine and the Appalachian Mountains on a map to show how Paul is moving westward.]

25 The Mississippi River was a very important means of transportation in frontier days and still is today.

26 Did Paul really make the Grand Canyon? This is another \_\_\_\_\_. [Locate California and the Pacific Ocean on a U.S. map, and talk about Paul traveling from the East Coast to the West Coast of the country.]

27 Do you think you can smell those pancakes, or is this an exaggeration?

to hold all the extra water. Nowadays these are called the Great Lakes.<sup>22</sup>

One day, the logging bosses got to talking. One of them said that the United States was a fine country, to be sure, but it could still stand a little improvement. For one thing, it could use a few more rivers. And what it really needed was a big river running right down the middle of the country, all the way from Minnesota down to New Orleans. “If we had a river like that,” the man said, “we could ship timber down to New Orleans and all around the world!”<sup>23</sup>

← **Show image 5A-7: Paul and Babe heading west**

Paul Bunyan happened to overhear this conversation. He told the bosses he would see what he could do. He hitched up Babe and they started plowing south. As they plowed, they threw a great mound of dirt and rocks to the right and a smaller mound to the left. On the right side they made the Rocky Mountains, and on the left side they made the Appalachian Mountains.<sup>24</sup> Paul Bunyan and Babe didn’t stop until they had plowed a channel all the way south to the Gulf of Mexico. And the river that flows in that channel nowadays, that’s what we call the Mississippi River.<sup>25</sup>

From that day on, Paul and Babe went around the country, using their size and strength to help anyone who needed it. Later, they dug the Grand Canyon as they made their way to the West Coast of California.<sup>26</sup> And when the wind blows just right from the west, you can still smell those infamous, colossal pancakes cooking on the frontier.<sup>27</sup>



### Comprehension Questions

10 minutes

If students have difficulty responding to questions, reread pertinent lines of the read-aloud and/or refer to specific images. If students give one-word answers and/or fail to use read-aloud or domain vocabulary in their responses, acknowledge correct responses by expanding students' responses using richer and more complex language. Ask students to answer in complete sentences by having them restate the question in their responses.

1. *Literal* Who is the legendary character of this tall tale? (Paul Bunyan)
2. *Inferential* What are some astonishing characteristics or things Paul Bunyan does that make him a larger-than-life character? (He slept in a covered wagon and then on a floating raft as a baby; when he rolled over he created gigantic waves; when he sneezed, he blew the birds from California to Maine; etc.)
3. *Evaluative* What are some things in nature that Paul Bunyan supposedly created? (the Grand Canyon; the Great Plains; the Rocky Mountains; the Great Lakes) Did Paul actually create any of these things? (no)
4. *Evaluative* What things happen in this tall tale that can be called exaggerations? (Paul Bunyan clearing the heavily forested Midwest; Paul and Babe doing the work of a hundred men; Paul and Babe straightening the river; etc.)
5. *Evaluative* What are some things in this story that probably could happen in real life? (A boy can take care of an ox calf; a person can cross the country; people can build new homes; etc.)
6. *Evaluative* What are things in this story that probably could not happen in real life? (An ox cannot be blue; a man cannot make an ax from a tree trunk; men cannot skate on a giant frying pan; etc.)
7. *Evaluative* Is this tall tale fiction or nonfiction? (fiction)
8. *Evaluative* Why do you think people took an interest in the Paul Bunyan tall tale or liked to tell stories about Paul Bunyan? (Answers may vary.)

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

9. *Evaluative What? Pair Share:* Asking questions after a read-aloud is one way to see how much everyone has learned. Think of a question you can ask your neighbor about the read-aloud that starts with the word *what*. For example, you could ask, “What does Paul find in the snow one winter?” Turn to your neighbor and ask your *what* question. Listen to your neighbor’s response. Then your neighbor will ask a new *what* question, and you will get a chance to respond. I will call on several of you to share your questions with the class.
10. After hearing today’s read-aloud 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 questions.]

### Word Work: **Admiration**

5 minutes

1. In the read-aloud you heard, “The other lumberjacks were full of *admiration* for him.”
2. Say the word *admiration* with me.
3. If you have admiration for someone or something, that means you have a feeling of deep respect and liking or wonder for someone or something.
4. The American people have a great deal of admiration for the first astronauts who walked on the moon.
5. Do you have admiration for anyone? Use the word *admiration* when you tell about it and answer in complete sentences. [Ask two or three students. If necessary, guide and/or rephrase students’ responses: “One person I have admiration for is . . .”]
6. What’s the word we’ve been talking about?

Use a *Sharing* activity for follow-up. Directions: Talk about someone that you have admiration for and why you have admiration for that person. Use the word *admiration* when you talk about it and answer in complete sentences.



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



# Paul Bunyan

5<sub>B</sub>

## Extensions

20 minutes

### Tall Tales Characteristics Chart (Instructional Master 5B-1, optional)

Tell students that over the next several days they will hear three more tall tales. Tell students that you are going to make a chart with the characteristics of a tall tale; for each tale they hear they will add examples to the chart. Share with students the following chart on chart paper, a chalkboard, or a whiteboard.

	Paul Bunyan	Pecos Bill	John Henry	Casey Jones
Amazing Childhood				
Creations/Inventions				
Amazing Adventures				
Humor				
Exaggerations				

Read the first column of the chart out loud to students. Then solicit examples from students to fill in each row in the Paul Bunyan column. For example, in the “Amazing Childhood” row, you might suggest the statement at the very beginning of the story that Paul was so big his parents used a covered wagon for his cradle. In the “Creations/Inventions” row, you might suggest Paul creating the Rocky Mountains and Appalachian Mountains; in the “Amazing Adventures” row, you might suggest Paul straightening a river with Babe the Blue Ox. In the “Humor” row, you might suggest the giant flapjacks; and in the “Exaggerations” row, you might point to any illustration and show how much bigger and stronger Paul is than the other lumberjacks or people. Save this chart to use in later lessons. You may also wish to have students use Instructional Master 5B-1 to fill in the chart individually.

## Syntactic Awareness Activity: Regular and Irregular Plurals

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1. We know that nouns can be people, places, or things. When we are only talking about one of something, we say it is singular. *Singular* means only one. When we are talking about more than one of something, we say it is plural. *Plural* means two or more.
2. Most nouns become plural when you add the /s/ sound, like one *cat* and two *cats*. Sometimes, we add the /es/ sound, if the word ends in a /s/, /z/, /ch/, or /sh/ sound, like one *kiss* and two *kisses*.
3. Let's play a quick review game.

**Note:** You may also show one familiar classroom object to students as you provide the singular form and then show them two of that object as you ask them to produce the plural form. For this exercise, the object should have the regular plural /s/ or /es/. I'll say one of something, and you tell me how to say two of that thing.

- One kid > Two kids
  - One dog > Two dogs
  - One school > Two schools
  - One dish > Two dishes
  - One prince > Two princes
  - One box > Two boxes
  - One house > Two houses
4. There are some nouns that are different, or tricky, when there is more than one. We call these nouns "irregular plural nouns." They are irregular because you do not add /s/ or /es/ to make them plural.
  5. Let's play our game again, but this time with irregular plural nouns. I'll say one of something, and you tell me how to say two of that thing.

**Note:** If students have difficulty saying the irregular plural form of each word, provide them with the incorrect form for contrast. For example, you might ask students, “Should we say, ‘two childs’ or ‘two children?’” Guide students in recognizing that the plural form of *child* is *children*, not *childs*.

- One child > Two children
  - One foot > Two feet
  - One tooth > Two teeth
  - One mouse > Two mice
  - One man > Two men
  - One ox (like Babe!) > Two oxen
6. Tell students that the more they listen to stories and hear these irregular plural nouns, the more they will remember them and use them when they talk.
  7. Have students work in partners to make up sentences about how two children are the same, and how they are different. Encourage students to use the correct singular and plural forms, *child* and *children*, when making up their sentences. Partners can also choose to make up sentences about any of the irregular plural nouns they learned about and share their sentences with the rest of the class.

## ***Take-Home Material***

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### **Family Letter**

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Send home Instructional Master 5B-2.