



# **Pecos Bill - A Texas Legend**



**Based on the book by Steven Kellogg**

## **Study Guide**

**Magik On-the-Road 2009 - 2010**

# Summary

Pecos Bill was a baby when his parents decided to leave crowded New York city and move out west. As the family's covered wagon crossed the Pecos River little Bill fell out. A pair of coyotes adopted Bill and raised him to be a member of their pack. A man named Chuck explained to Bill that even though he was raised by animals, he was a man. Bill tamed a gigantic, poisonous rattlesnake, turning it into a lasso. He wrestled a cougar, befriended a cowboy named Sourdough, and roped the first longhorn. Bill tells how he invented cowboys, ranches, cattle roping and trail drives. He even tamed a legendary wild horse called Widowmaker and made her his own horse. One day, Bill saw a beautiful girl riding on a catfish. He asked the girl, Slewfoot Sue, to marry him. The trouble came when his new bride wanted to ride Bill's horse. Widowmaker threw her and, because of the bustle on her dress, she bounced high into the sky. Bill roped an enormous cyclone to fling himself high enough into the sky to bring Sue back down again. On the way down, Bill and Sue landed in his parent's covered wagon, right where Bill's journey first began.

## Discussion Questions



1. Can you list all of the characters in the story? Who were the main characters? Who were the supporting characters? Which character was your favorite? Why?
2. What things about this story make it a tall tale? How do you know? Pecos Bill is a well known Texas literary figure. Can you think of any other well known American figures or legends that appear in tall tales or literature?
3. What were some of the obstacles Pecos Bill faced in this story? How did he handle these problems or use them to his advantage?
4. If you were Pecos Bill, how would you have dealt with the snake, the cyclone, the cougar, the longhorn and Widowmaker?
5. Have you ever had a great adventure like Bill did? Have you ever had a dream where you could accomplish anything?

(EL 110.2, 110.3, 110.4, 110.5, 110.6, 110.7)

# Language Arts - Literary Terms & Vocabulary

- Tall tale - narrative that depicts the wild adventures of extravagantly exaggerated folk heroes
- Hyperbole – extreme exaggeration (Ex: I am so hungry, I could eat a horse!)
- Bustle - a pad or framework formerly worn under the back of a woman's skirt to support the full cut and drape of a dress



- Metaphor & Simile – methods of comparing two unlike things to each other
  - (Ex: She is as blind as a bat, or He ran fast, like a shooting star.)
- Personification – giving non-human things human qualities, like the ability to talk (Ex: The flowers begged for water.)

(EL 110.2, 110.3, 110.4, 110.5, 110.6, 110.7)



## Math Fun!

Educator – some students may need manipulatives to complete these problems

1. Pecos Bill roped 1 longhorn on Tuesday, 4 on Wednesday, 5 on Thursday and 7 on Friday. How many total longhorns did Bill rope this week?
2. Pecos Bill found 9 rattlesnakes by the watering hole. 3 slithered away and 2 went under a rock. How many rattlesnakes are left?
3. There are 12 cowboys on the ranch. If Sourdough wanted to put them into 3 groups to rope the longhorn, how many cowboys would he need to put in each of the 3 groups?
4. Slewfoot Sue has 15 dresses that she is considering for her wedding dress. If there are 5 piles of dresses on her bed. How many dresses are in each pile?

(MA 111.12, 111.13, 111.14, 111.15, 111.16, 111.17)

# Activity

- As a class, take turns sharing other tall tales you know or have heard.
- What are some common elements in a tall tale? Provide examples from the tales you just shared with your class.
- Individually, or in small groups, write and illustrate your own tall tale. Consider using a "Mad Libs" style formula to jumpstart the process.
- Share your tall tale with the class.

Word Search	<u>Word Bank</u>
L W Y R B B L C P N E Q Z L C	BUSTLE
L Q I T R R U S F U K Z M O C	CATFISH
I A G D R Y A S S I T E C D Y	COCKROACH
B Y J H O X H T T G D K D N C	COUGAR
S O M Z E W O R W L R B Q E L	COWBOY
O B Y T L O M A T O E R V G O	COYOTE
C W A Q F Z G A A S W A V E N	CYCLONE
E O N W B O C C K T H G F L E	LEGEND
P C E K N T H T Y E H U B K P	LONGHORN
P L L O N G H O R N R O N Y I	PECOS BILL
S C A T F I S H S R E C Q S V	SLEWFOOT SUE
E K A N S O C O Y O T E L Y N	SNAKE
Q W T G G S M N J A V V Q Y G	SOURDOUGH
H Z R W J O Z G Q T P X E T F	TEXAS
T X S O U R D O U G H Z K U J	WAGON
	WIDOWMAKER

## Other Tall Tales & Stories by Steven Kellogg

Mike Fink

Johnny Appleseed

Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind Crockett

Paul Bunyan

Can I Keep Him?

The Mysterious Tadpole

## Texas Fun Facts



- Texas comes from the Caddo Indian word "tejas" meaning friends
- The first rodeo in Texas was held in Pecos on July 4, 1883
- The state animal of Texas is the Armadillo
- Texas wildlife includes bobcats, mountain lions, coyotes and wolves
- Six different flags have flown over Texas since 1519 – Spanish, French, Mexican, Republic of Texas, Confederate, and United States

(SS 113.2, 113.3, 113.4, 113.5, 113.6, 113.7)

## Texas



Color this map of Texas. Label our state's major cities and rivers (don't forget about Pecos, TX!) Draw a star where you live. Remember to include a compass rose!

Several TEKS (117.4, 117.7, 117.10, 117.13, 117.16, 117.19) are covered just by watching a Magik Theatre production, including:

- Identifying appropriate audience behavior
- Responding to and evaluating dramatic activities
- Identifying the use of music, creative movement, and visual components in a play
- Observing the performance of artists and identifying theatrical vocations

(TEKS Key: EL = English Language Arts/Reading, MA = Mathematics, SC = Science, SS = Social Studies, HE = Health Education, AR = Art, MU = Music, TH = Theatre, SLA = Spanish Language Arts)