



# #10029 PAUL BUNYAN

DISNEY EDUCATIONAL PRODUCTION, 1970

Grade Level: 2-6

18 mins.

1 Instructional Graphic Enclosed

## DESCRIPTION

Born in Maine, tall tale hero Paul Bunyan leaves home for the wide-open spaces of the central and western United States. Along the way, he and his blue ox, Babe, create lakes with oversized footprints, build Pike's Peak so they can see where they are, and make various rivers and mountain ranges. He and Babe become the most famous timber-cutting team of all time. A restored animated Disney classic.

## ACADEMIC STANDARDS

### Subject Area: Language Arts–Reading

- Standard: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts
  - ♦ Benchmark: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of literary passages and texts (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, myths, poems, fantasies, biographies, autobiographies, science fiction, tall tales, supernatural tales) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 1 and 3.)
  - ♦ Benchmark: Knows the defining characteristics of a variety of literary forms and genres (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, myths, poems, fantasies, biographies, autobiographies, science fiction, tall tales, supernatural tales) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 2.)

### Subject Area: Grades K-4 History–The History of People of Many Cultures Around the World

- Standard: Understands the folklore and other cultural contributions from various regions of the United States and how they helped to form a national heritage
  - ♦ Benchmark: Understands how stories, legends, songs, ballads, games, and tall tales describe the environment, lifestyles, beliefs, and struggles of people in various regions of the country (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 1.)

## INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To illustrate the story of Paul Bunyan.
2. To explore elements of tall tales.
3. To promote the reading of children's literature.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

American tall tales are unique in the world of literature for the way in which humor and exaggeration are used to recount the exploits of legendary heroes. This exaggerated form of storytelling began in the 1800s as a way for early American settlers to bolster the pioneer spirit that was needed to face the dangers of the wilderness.

Tall tales include the traditional story elements of folktales: characters, setting, and plot. Some tall tale characters are real people whose exploits have been embellished by storytellers. Other characters are pure fiction. Most tall tales use the American frontier as the setting and most take place during the time period of American westward expansion.

All tall tales use humor, exaggeration, and acts of bravery as elements of the plot to explain how the main characters confronted the uncertainty of exploring the North American wilderness. Tall tales invited new retellings, with each narrator freely expanding favorite parts and incorporating his unique sense of humor.

## VOCABULARY

- |                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. aurora borealis  | 10. ox           |
| 2. blizzard         | 11. rescued      |
| 3. cradle           | 12. roughhousing |
| 4. double-bladed ax | 13. sawmills     |
| 5. hollering        | 14. steam engine |
| 6. logging          | 15. steam saw    |
| 7. lumberjack       | 16. timber       |
| 8. Middle West      | 17. town square  |
| 9. northwest        | 18. tracks       |

## BEFORE SHOWING

- Discuss life during the frontier times. Consider what daily life was like and the hazards that people faced.
- Read at least one of the following book versions about Paul Bunyan. Fill out the "Elements of a Tall Tale" chart. (See INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHIC.) Discuss the elements.
  - "Babe the Blue Ox" in North American Legends* by Virginia Haviland.
  - Paul Bunyan* by Steven Kellogg.
  - American Tall Tales* by Mary Pope Osborne.
  - American Tall Tales* by Adrien Stoutenberg.
  - Big Men, Big Country: A Collection of American Tall Tales* by Robert Paul Walker.

## DURING SHOWING

- View the video more than once, with one showing uninterrupted.
- Consider pausing at the change of narrators to clarify who is telling the tale and where the tale is from.

## AFTER SHOWING

### Discussion Items and Questions

1. Who was the first storyteller of the Paul Bunyan tale? What was his occupation and where did he live?
2. Explain how Paul Bunyan first arrived at the coastal town. Describe him.
3. How did Paul attend school?
4. What gift did the town give Paul for Christmas? Did he like the gift?
5. Why did Paul leave the small coastal town? Where did he plan to go?
6. Who was the second storyteller? What was his occupation and where did he live?
7. Describe Paul's tree chopping method. What did he do with the stumps when he was done?
8. What happened when Paul left the logging camp? Who did he rescue?
9. What was the area called where Paul and Babe left tracks during the storm?
10. What feats did Paul and Babe complete when winter was over? How did they form the Grand Teton mountain range? Why did they make Yellowstone Falls?
11. Who was the third storyteller? What did he do and where did he live?
12. What was the problem at the northwest timber camp when Paul and Babe arrived?

### Applications and Activities

1. Analyze the video of the tale by adding to the "Elements of a Tall Tale" chart. (See BEFORE SHOWING 2 and INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHIC.)
2. Compare and contrast a book and the film version of the tale. Consider using a Venn diagram. Discuss why similarities and differences might exist.
3. Investigate more about Paul Bunyan. Analyze how the character was created and how he became a legend. Answer the following questions:
  - a. Who created Paul Bunyan?
  - b. What was the purpose for creating this character?
  - c. How was the tale developed?
  - d. Why did Paul Bunyan become an important tall-tale character?
4. Write an original adventure for Paul Bunyan and Babe.
  - a. Discuss how he was "responsible" for creating natural phenomena, such as the lakes of Minnesota, the Grand Tetons, and Yellowstone Falls.
  - b. Brainstorm a list of other natural phenomena, perhaps in the local area.
  - c. Choose one natural phenomena and write how Paul and Babe formed it.
5. Enlarge a U.S. map and label the various places Paul Bunyan worked and the natural phenomena he "created." Write short descriptions for each item labeled.
6. Record a personal experience. Add exaggeration. Tell the story. Discuss the effect exaggeration has on the telling of the story and the response of the audience.
7. Explain some of the unique phrases and unusual word choices in the program. Examples include:
  - a. "Hornswoggled."
  - b. "Mighty grateful."

- c. "Oxing around" (horsing around).
- d. "Reckon."
- e. "Pitched in."
- f. "On account of."
- g. "Afore long."
- h. "The live-long day."
- i. "What the Sam Hill's that thing?"
- j. "Dead even."
- k. "Newfangled."



#### CMP RELATED RESOURCES

- [\*John Henry\* #10028](#)
- [\*The Legend of Johnny Appleseed\* #10034](#)
- [\*Pecos Bill\* #10030](#)
- [\*The Saga of Windwagon Smith\* #10036](#)

#### World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

#### • ANIMATED TALES OF PAUL BUNYAN

<http://www.animatedtalltales.com/en/paulb/>



This site has 13 Paul Bunyan tales presented in either text or animated flash formats. The site also has six coloring pages, a pancake recipe, and desktop wall paper, plus an interactive online game.

#### • TALL TALES

<http://www.hasd.org/ges/talltale/talltale.htm>

This site has general information about tall tales and specific information about Paul Bunyan along with some other famous tall tale characters. It also has a tall tale template that can be copied and pasted into a word processing program to assist students in writing an original tall tale.

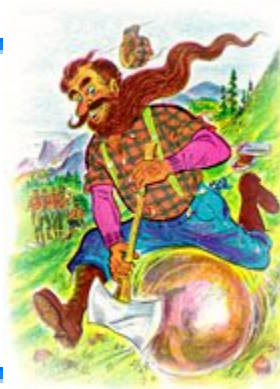
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- **THE PAUL BUNYAN TRAIL**

<http://paulbunyantrail.com/>

This is the site of an actual 100 miles long trail in Minnesota called the Paul Bunyan Trail. Most interesting on the site is a large number of very short Paul Bunyan tales, each with illustrations. Click on 'A "Tall Tale." '

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- **LOGGING HISTORY**

<http://www.allroutes.to/logging/history.htm>

This site has many old logging photos with lots of text to explain logging history. It's set up with much of the information on one long page, so it's somewhat cumbersome to use, but worth the work if you want logging history.

## INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHIC

- **ELEMENTS OF A TALL TALE**

## Elements of a Tall Tale

Directions: List the elements of book versions in Column 1 and Column 2.  
List the elements of the video version in Column 3.

|                     | Column 1     | Column 2     | Column 3      |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
|                     | Book Version | Book Version | Video Version |
| Character           |              |              |               |
| Time Period         |              |              |               |
| Setting             |              |              |               |
| Plot                |              |              |               |
| Use of Exaggeration |              |              |               |
| Hazards             |              |              |               |
| Phenomena Explained |              |              |               |

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### Captioned Media Program

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