



Social Studies & Language Arts Activity: Kindergarten – 2nd Grade

Creating a Texas Tall Tale

What you need:

- Class set of Pecos Bill Story, or other tall tale (hand-out 1)
- Chalk Board, Dry Erase Board or Large Piece of Paper
- Chalk, Dry Erase Markers or Pen/Pencil
- Blank paper and coloring supplies



What to do:

1. Read together, or have students read Pecos Bill, or another tale. Discuss the hero's special powers and accomplishments with the class.
2. Discuss the hero's special powers and accomplishments with the class after reading the story.
3. With the students, make a list of super heroes, heroines and groups in stories of today, (i.e., *Superman, The Incredibles, Hercules, X-Men, Batman*, etc.)
4. Next, make another list of some of their super powers, (i.e., *flying, great strength, special vision, great speed, invisibility*, etc.)
5. Make a list of the hero(es) great accomplishments, (i.e., *fighting crime, saving lives, holding back a natural disaster, protecting the environment*, etc.)
6. Divide the students into groups of 2 to 5. Each group will be responsible for creating a Texas oriented super hero/heroine/group. These must be original, although the students may borrow ideas from books, TV shows or movies.
7. The groups of students must 1) Give their superhero(es) a name, 2) Draw a picture of their character(s), 3) Identify their character's super powers, 4) Determine positive accomplishment for the superhero(es), 5) Make up a story about how the superhero(es) character accomplished what they did, and 6) Write a story about how the superhero(es) character accomplished what they did, and 6) Have the students read their stories aloud*.

* For a fun twist, have the students act out their creative stories.

Museum programs related to this activity: *Tales from the Trail* or *Granny G*

Reservations contact information: ArtReach Booking Service (214) 219-2049

TEKS

SOCIAL STUDIES Grade 1: 3A, 3C, 15A

LANGUAGE ARTS Grade 1: 1E, 3D, 5B, 10 A, 11C, 12 C, 13A, 13C, 18F, 19B

TALL TALE: PECOS BILL

Pecos Bill was born in Texas a long time ago. His family lived hundreds of miles from anyone. They liked it that way. One day some settlers built a cabin fifty miles away. Bill's family thought it was getting too crowded, so, they decided to move west.

As the family crossed the Pecos River, their wagon hit a rock. The wagon tilted over, and Bill fell out. The current was swift and carried him far away. He would have drowned, but an old coyote saw him and pulled him out of the water.

Bill stayed with the coyotes, and they raised him like one of their own pups. He learned to do coyote things like run with the pack and howl at the moon.

One day, a cowboy named Curly Joe came along and saw Bill. He knew Bill was not a real coyote because he did not have a tail. Curly Joe lent Bill some clothes and took him with him. Curly Joe called him Pecos Bill because he had found him near the Pecos River.

Bill ran along beside Curly Joe and his horse. Suddenly, a twelve-foot rattlesnake struck out from behind a rock and was almost successful at sinking its fangs into Bill's leg. Bill grabbed the rattler and wrestled with it back and forth. The snake fought hard, but Bill fought harder. He squeezed all the poison out of the snake.

"I'm beat," The rattler finally hissed.

Bill coiled the snake up and put it over his shoulder. Then he saw a Gila monster. He made a loop with the snake and threw it at the lizard. The loop caught the lizard, and that is how Pecos Bill invented the lasso.

Bill and Curly Joe traveled on and came to the Rocky Mountains. Suddenly, a mountain lion jumped from a ledge onto Bill's back. Bill and the lion rolled on the ground and clawed at one another. Bill pulled out handfuls of the lion's fur and threw it into the lion's eyes. There was so much fur flying that the sky grew dark. Finally, the lion gave up. Bill jumped onto his back and the lion bounded off. Bill rode the lion like a horse.

Bill, the snake, the lion and Curly Joe and his horse rode into the camp of the Heck's Gulch Gang. The outlaws were so scared they made Bill the boss of their gang. They showed Bill and Curly Joe how they would lay down loops of rope and wait for cattle to walk into the loops so that they could catch them. Bill had a better idea. He showed them how he could use his rattlesnake to catch cattle. Then he made long rawhide ropes to make it easier. And that is how Pecos Bill invented cattle roping.

Curly Joe told Bill that he needed a horse in order to be a proper cowboy. He told Bill of a wild mustang that no one could catch. Bill went after the mustang. Bill could run 100 miles an hour, and he tracked the mustang from Texas to Montana and back. Finally, they both stopped for a drink. Bill convinced the mustang that they should team up since he was the greatest cowboy, and the mustang was the fastest horse. Bill called his horse Lightning because he could gallop so fast.

One day a tornado tore through Oklahoma. Bill heard it coming. He climbed a pine tree and waited. The tornado sucked the tree into its funnel. There were wagons, cattle, trees, houses and even a steam engine whirling around in it. Bill crept up and out onto the tornado's back.

"Yip-ee-i--ee, what a ride!" He shouted.

They crossed New Mexico, Arizona and California. The storm blew out forests, it knocked over mountains, it flooded rivers, but it could not throw Bill. Bill slid down a flash of lightning. He landed with a thump, and the earth cracked. And that is how the Grand Canyon was created.

One day Bill saw a beautiful girl, Slue Foot Sue, riding a giant catfish down the Rio Grande. He was so impressed that he asked her to marry him. On their wedding day, Sue wanted to ride Bill's mustang, Lightning. Bill was worried, but he gave in. As soon as Sue got on Lightning, the horse bucked her off. She fell off and landed on her bustle and bounced into the air. She bounced and bounced for three days. She bounced higher and higher. Pecos Bill lassooed her down just as she was about to disappear.

Pecos Bill and Sue started ranches all over the west. They got Curly Joe to run one ranch and each member of the gang to run others. They fenced off New Mexico as a corral for newborn calves. They used Arizona as a pasture. The lion went back to the Rocky Mountains, but the rattlesnakes still traveled on Bill's shoulder wherever he went.
