



Paul Bunyan/Sky Bright Axe

Grade 5

(A week long unit to kick-off an exploration of American Tall Tales)

Content area: Language Arts—Tall Tales

Enduring Understandings:

Process: To introduce and assist students in applying new and already practiced transformation strategies before, during, and after reading e.g., Content Frames, Vocabulary Map, and Story Plan.

Content: To introduce students to both the oral and written tradition of folklore, in particular the American Tall Tale.

Assessment:

- Students will create a portfolio of their best samples of work done during guided practice throughout the full unit. At the beginning of the unit the teacher will provide a list of representative strategies to be included.
- Students will demonstrate application of transformation strategies with projects completed during a final week of self-selected, independent Tall Tale reading at the end of the full novel unit.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the Tall Tale genre by creating their own Tall Tale at the end of the complete unit using the writing process of plan, rough draft, revise, edit, and final draft.

Content (written text, video, lecture, visuals, etc.):

- Song: “**The Frozen Logger***”
 Follow this link for the tune http://www.traditionalmusic.co.uk/song-midis/Frozen_Logger.htm
 (Once you learn the tune and lyrics, speed up the tempo.)
- Story: “Paul Bunyan/Sky Bright Axe” from American Tall Tales by Adrien Stoutenburg
 (Other versions can be used to meet the needs of students with various reading levels.)

Preparing for Understanding (bringing out and building background knowledge, setting purposes for learning):

1. **Think-Pair-Share**—Qualities of a Super Hero today
2. **Discussion**—*What is exaggeration?*
3. Teacher sings: (with much bravado and humor) “The Frozen Logger”
4. Record information from song in **Two-Column Notes**: Exaggeration | Facts
5. Build class chart of unit vocabulary using a **Two-Column Note format***. Students work in partners to look up vocabulary or jigsaw the list with individuals presenting words and adding them to the class chart.
6. **Vocabulary Mapping** on index cards using selected vocabulary from the Paul Bunyan story.

Engaging Students with Content and Transforming Information:

1. Continue adding terms to **Two-Column Notes** for unit vocabulary.
2. Model and then have students practice **Read- and-Say-Something** as they read the story aloud in groups of 4.
3. Students then re-read silently or with a partner using **Sticky Notes** to mark exaggerations, main character qualities/traits, and appearance.
4. **Content Frame***—Model transferring sticky note information from the story to a content frame. When students are comfortable with expectations and the process, facilitate guided practice back in their small reading teams.
See student sample here*.
5. **Story Frame***—“Sequence Paper” (Using the completed story frame to retell the story emphasizes the oral tradition of tall tales).
6. Mini-lesson: What is a Hyperbole? Students will be able to add the term and definition to the unit vocabulary list, identify hyperboles in the story, and make up and illustrate some of their own.

Extensions:

- Social Studies: **Map*** locations of Paul Bunyan’s life and exploits across the U.S. using pictures or symbols to represent events; can be used to retell the story later.
- Music: Learn or create a Tall Tale ballad—present to class.
- Research: Logging, trees, oxen, Maine, or other factual information from the story and present to the class orally or with an information poster.
- Illustrate and write a caption for your favorite exaggeration/hyperbole in the story.

*** Included at the end of this article.**

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THE FROZEN LOGGER

As I sat down one evening; Twas in a small cafe

A forty year old waitress to me these words did say

I see you are a logger and not a common bum
For no one but a logger stirs his coffee with his thumb

I once had a logger boyfriend. There's none like him today
If you poured catsup on it, he'd eat a bale of hay

He never shaved a whisker off of his horny hide
He hammered in the bristles and bit them off inside

My logger came to see me, twas on a winter's day
He held me in a fond embrace that broke three vertebrae

He kissed me when we parted so hard it broke my jaw
I couldn't speak to tell him he forgot his mackinaw

I saw my logger lover go striding through the snow
A goin' gaily homeward at 48 below

The weather tried to freeze him; it did its level best
At a 100 degrees below zero he buttoned up his vest

It froze clear down to China; it froze the stars above
At 1,000 degrees below zero; it froze my logger love

They tried in vain to thaw him and if you believe it sir
They made him into axe blades to cut the Douglas fir

And so I lost my logger and to this cafe I've come
And it's here I wait for someone to stir coffee with his thumb

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Reading

Word	Definition
16 ballad	• a simple song that tells a story
17 biography	• an account of a person's life
18 oral tradition	• using speech to hand down stories, beliefs, and opinions
19 fact	• something known to be true
20 fiction	• something imagined or made up.
21 yarn	• a tale or a story often told out loud

Content Frame

Tall Tale or Character Paul Bunyan

Qualities	Appearance	Favorite Exaggerations	Facts

Tall Tale or Character

Paul Bunyan

A

Qualities 4

Appearance 4

Favorite Exaggerations 3

Facts 3

- strength, he could cut down 100 trees with one swing of his axe P. 14
- endurance, hike through several States P. 16
- Cleverness, Paul thought of rolling a frying pan a couple 100 miles. P. 16
- Talent, Paul was the best at cutting down trees P. 13

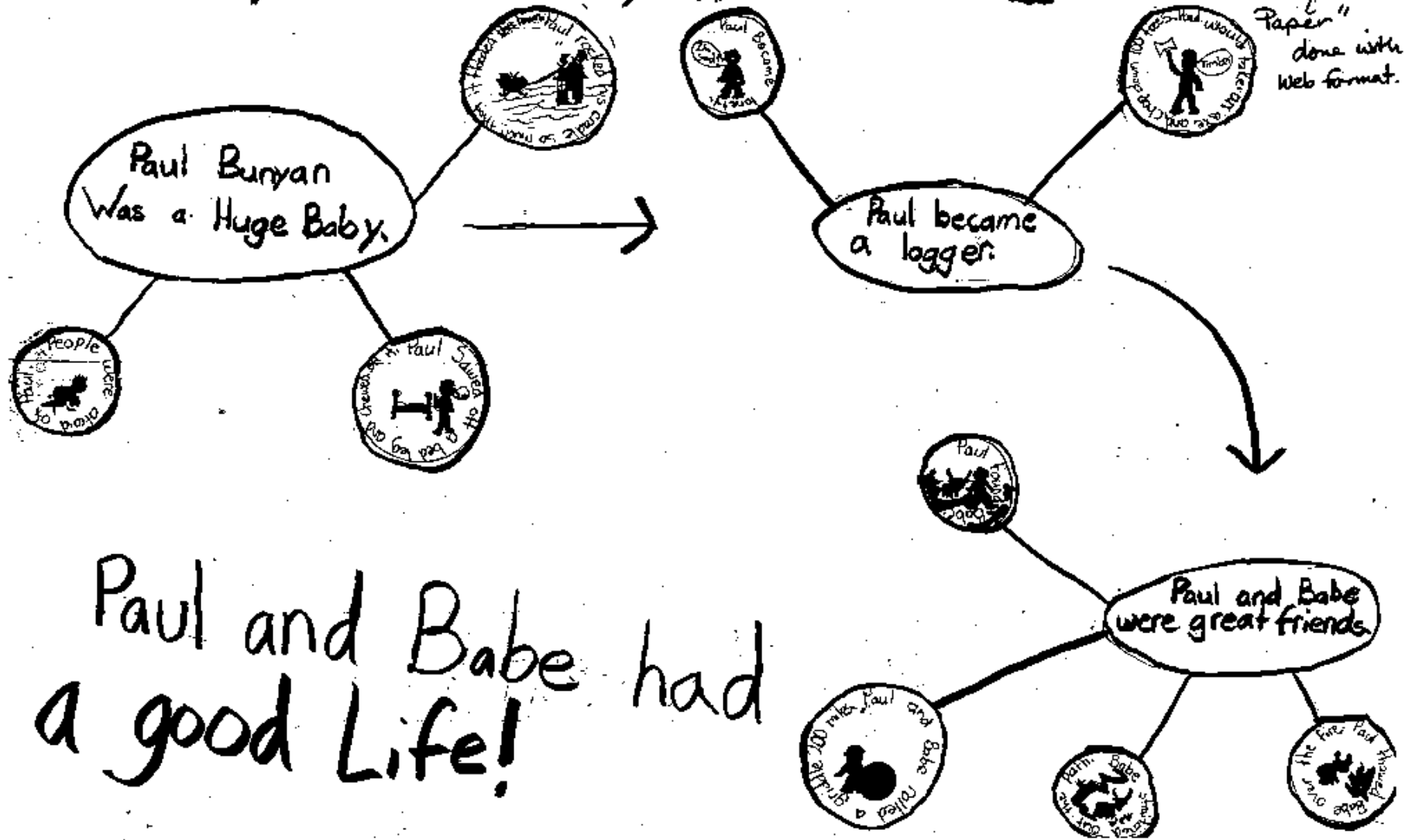
- tall as a house P. 11
- 50 feet taller than other boys P. 13
- Paul had Babe his blue ox with him most of his life. P. 15

- Paul wears suspenders, P. 18


- a suspender killed a flock of birds P. 18
- Paul chewed on a bed leg P. 12
- blue snow P. 14

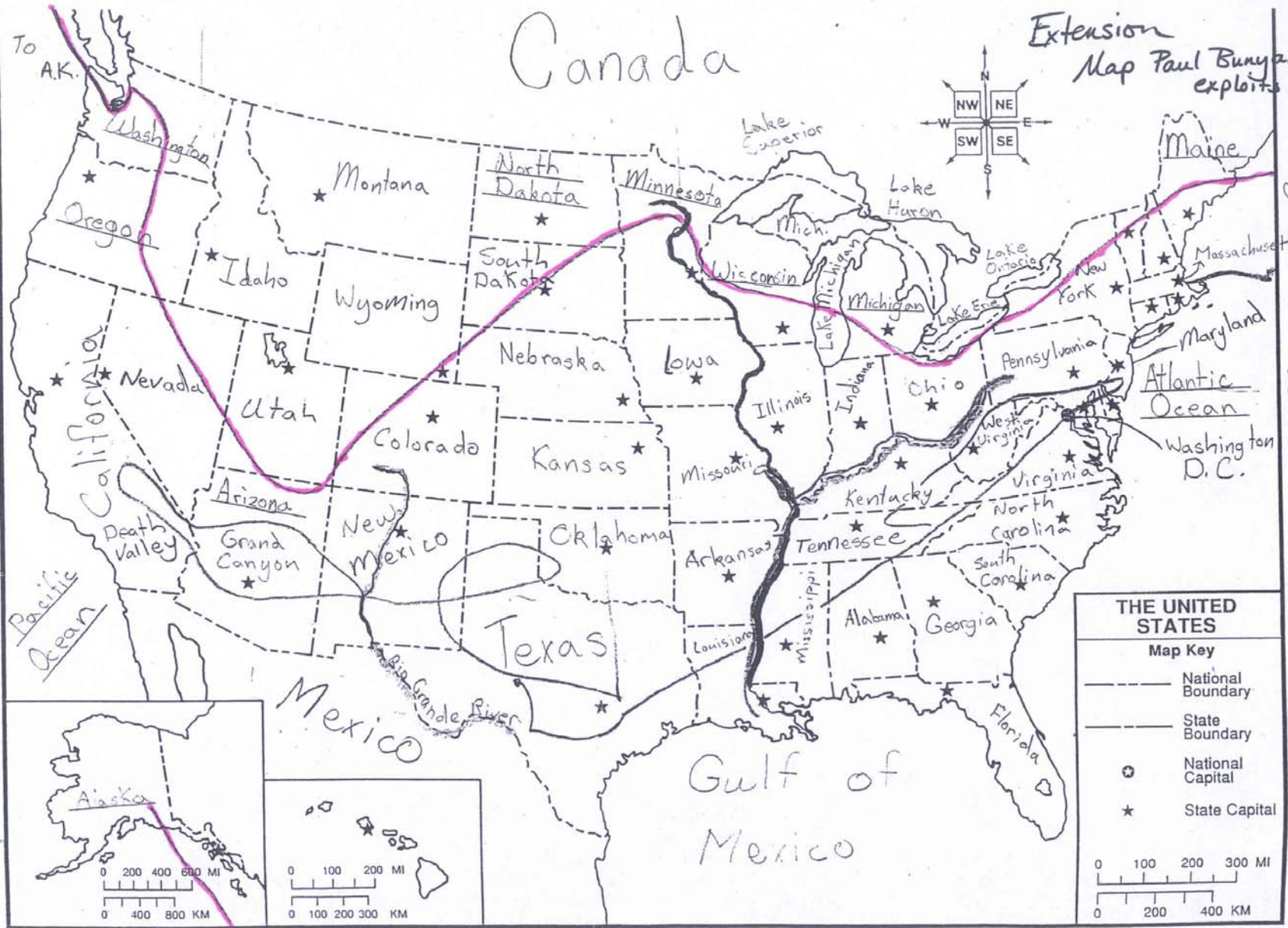
- Grand Canyon is a real place. P. 22
- The Mississippi River is a real river P. 19
- The Cascade Mountains are real P. 22

Paul Bunyan Retold By Kirsten W







Color coded on original

-  - Paul Bunyan trail
-  - Davy Crochet
-  - Pecos
-  - Bill Trail
-  - M. Ke Fink
-  - Stormlong trail



Extension
Map Paul Bunyan's exploits

THE UNITED STATES	
Map Key	
	National Boundary
	State Boundary
	National Capital
	State Capital
0 100 200 300 MI	
0 200 400 KM	

Suggestion - Add illust. of event as it occurred.
Turn map into sequence paper