

About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Tall Tale Page Count: 16 Word Count: 877

Book Summary

In this tall tale, readers learn all about an American hero. Pecos Bill was an extremely strong boy who was accidentally separated from his parents at a young age. He was found and raised by coyotes in the wild, where he lived for fifteen years. Eventually, a cowboy found him and brought him to civilization, where Bill outsmarted outlaws from the Wild West and tamed the wildest of horses. But that was nothing compared to the adventure during which he lassoed a twisting tornado and rode it like a wild bronco! Illustrations support the text.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Visualize


Objectives

- Use the reading strategy of visualizing to understand text
- Distinguish between reality and fantasy
- Identify and discriminate the long /o/ vowel sound
- Recognize and use apostrophes
- Identify and create compound words

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Pecos Bill Rides a Tornado* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- Visualize, fantasy and reality, apostrophes, compound words worksheets
- Discussion cards

 Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

Vocabulary

- Content words:
 Story critical: *bronco* (n.), *dreaded* (v.), *embers* (n.), *lasso* (n.), *pioneer* (n.), *tyke* (n.)
 Enrichment: *bucked* (v.), *outlaws* (n.), *romped* (v.)

Before Reading

Build Background

- Supply pictures of colonial America, pioneers, settlers moving west, and any other points of interest to represent life during this time period.
- Ask students if they have heard stories about an American cowboy named Pecos Bill. If not, tell students that, according to legend, Pecos Bill was a larger-than-life character who lived during America's westward expansion into Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. Explain that the stories, which are believed to have been invented by author Edward O'Reilly in the early twentieth century, have been retold many times.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, fiction or nonfiction, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name, illustrator's name).

Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Visualize**

- Explain to students that good readers often visualize, or create pictures in their mind, while reading. Visualizing is based on what a person already knows about a topic. Explain that one way to visualize is to draw a picture.
- Read page 3 aloud. Model how to visualize.
Think-aloud: Whenever I read a book, I always pause after a few pages to create a picture in my mind of the information I've read. Doing this helps me organize the important information and understand the ideas in the book. For example, on page 3, the story begins with Bill's parents telling him the news that they were about to move out West. I imagined a four-year-old boy wildly jumping up and down, shouting "Yee-haw!" I pictured Bill as very energetic because the text says that he was "as wild as a tumbleweed in a whirlwind."
- Introduce and explain the **visualize worksheet**. Have students draw a quick sketch on their worksheet, showing what they visualized while listening to the text on page 3. Explain that their picture might or might not be different from the one in the book, but that it's important to represent what came to their own mind when the words were read. Invite students to share their drawings.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Reality and fantasy**

- Review or explain to students that books and stories can be about reality (things that are real) or fantasy (things that are imaginary). Remind them that imaginary things are not real and cannot happen in the real world.
- Tell students that it is important to understand and recognize what is real and what is fantasy when they read a book, play a game, or watch a movie or television show.
- Tell students that when an author writes a fantasy story, he or she writes a tale portraying imaginative characters, settings, or events, but that most fantasy stories also include elements of reality. Have students read the title of the book and look again at the cover illustration. Ask if there are any clues to help them predict whether this story is realistic or a fantasy.
- Model how to identify reality and fantasy.
Think-aloud: To decide whether a story has realistic or fantasy elements, I ask myself questions as I read: Can this really happen? Is the setting a real place—one that exists here on Earth? Do the characters look real and behave like real people? This strategy will help me understand what I'm reading. I know that good readers do this when they read, so I am going to ask myself questions as I read this book.
- Explain to students that this story is an example of a genre called *tall tales*. Tall tales are humorous adventures, often about the American frontier. They usually contain a hero who has superhuman strength or abilities, and the story contains amusing exaggerations.
- Ask students if they are familiar with any other tall tales, such as the stories about Paul Bunyan, Johnny Appleseed, or John Henry.

Introduce the Vocabulary


- Remind students of the strategies they can use to work out words they don't know. For example, they can use what they know about letter and sound correspondence to figure out the word. They can look for base words, prefixes, and suffixes. They can use the context to work out meanings of unfamiliar words.
- Model how to apply word-attack strategies. Have students find the bold word *romped* on page 7. Explain that they can look at the letter the word begins with and then use what they know about syllables and vowels (one vowel sound per syllable) to sound out the rest of the word. Have students look for a clue to the word's meaning in the sentence that contains the unfamiliar word. Explain that they will not always find a context clue in the same sentence, but that other information in the paragraph or illustration helps to explain it.
- Model how students can use the glossary to find the word's meaning. Have a volunteer read the definition for *romped* in the glossary. Have students follow along on page 7 as you read the sentence in which the word *romped* is found to confirm the meaning of the word.
- Preview other vocabulary, such as *dreaded*, *embers*, and *lasso*, in a similar fashion before students begin reading.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about the adventures of Pecos Bill. Remind them to stop after every few pages to visualize the most important information and to draw on their worksheet what they visualized about it. Remind them to also ask questions about which events depict elements of fantasy and reality.



During Reading

Student Reading

-  **Guide the reading:** Have students read from page 4 to the end of page 8. Ask them to put an asterisk or a star next to information where they visualized. Encourage students who finish before everyone else to go back and reread.
- Model visualizing.
Think-aloud: *When I read that a humungous fish dragged Bill away from his family, I pictured a four-year-old boy in the freezing cold river, struggling to keep himself afloat. I thought about how devastating it must have been for his parents to see their son being whisked away, and I visualized them yelling and reaching out to him.* Have students share the pictures of what they visualized while reading. Have them explain their drawings aloud.
- Introduce and explain the **fantasy-and-reality worksheet**. Reproduce the worksheet or project it on the whiteboard. Review with students what they have learned about Bill so far, for example, what he looks like, what his abilities are, and what he does. Ask students to think about which aspects of Bill seem realistic and which seem like fantasy.
- Ask students to list events from the story that can happen in real life. Write the examples on the board under the word *Reality* while students record the answers on their worksheet (Bill and his parents taking a trip out west, Bill helping his family pack the covered wagon, Bill falling into the Pecos River, and so on). Repeat the exercise, recording which elements of fantasy are depicted. Record student responses under the *Fantasy* heading on the board, allowing time for students to copy your model onto their own worksheet.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students read to the end of page 12. Have them visualize the information on those pages. Discuss what they pictured in their mind after reading the section. Ask students to use their worksheet to add to their drawings as they visualize the information in the book. Invite volunteers to explain their drawings.
- Point out that they can also use their drawings to identify examples of fantasy and reality. Invite students to add new examples to their fantasy and reality worksheet. Monitor their written responses.

Lesson Plan *(continued)*

Pecos Bill Rides a Tornado

-  Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to visualize as they read, and have them continue to put an asterisk or a star next to information where they visualized.
-  Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.


After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Ask students to explain or show how the strategy of visualizing helped them understand and remember important events in the story.
- **Think-aloud:** *When I read about Pecos Bill taming Widow-Maker, I pictured him being tossed high into the air, over and over again, as the horse wildly tried to buck him off. I pictured Bill with a very determined look on his face, always landing square on the horse's back. This helped me to understand how strong and confident Pecos Bill was and to remember that part of the book.*
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete the visualize worksheet. If time allows, have them share their pictures when finished.

Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Review with students the characteristics of reality and fantasy. Now that they have read the whole book, ask them whether they would classify the story as realistic or fantasy. Remind students that sometimes a story can be both, and review with them the characteristics of tall tales.
-  Have students work in pairs to underline the sentences in the book that represent reality. Ask them to go through the story and find all of the things that could happen in real life. Allow time for student pairs to share their findings aloud.
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete the fantasy-and-reality worksheet, recording the elements of fantasy and reality that they found in the story from pages 11 through 16. Discuss their responses after everyone has finished.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, you learned about a great American legend, Pecos Bill. Some people believe that he was a real man. Now that you have read this story, how do you think a story about a real person might get changed to include details that are not realistic? Why do you think the story gets changed?

Build Skills

Phonics: Long /o/ vowel digraph

- Tell students you are going to say words out loud as part of a listening game. Explain that you want them to listen for words that contain the long /o/ sound, as in *boat*. If they hear the long /o/ sound, they should clap their hands.
- The following groups of words may be used: *coat, pie, goat, paint, rope; dime, ghost, note, crow, kite; cake, hole, nose, bee, phone; meat, game, soap, foam, toad.*
- If students clap their hands after a word that does not contain the long /o/ sound, ask them to listen again as you say the word. Emphasize the vowel sound by extending it. For example, say *caaat*.

Lesson Plan *(continued)*

Pecos Bill Rides a Tornado


- Write the word *toad* on the board. Have students find the word on page 11 and read the sentence in which it is found. Ask what vowel sound they hear in the middle of the word (long /o/). Circle the *oa* in the word and explain that, in some words, two vowels together, called a *vowel digraph*, makes one sound. The first vowel in the digraph usually represents its long sound. Have students brainstorm additional examples of *oa* words and have them write the words on the board (*float, goat, soap, soak*).
- Write the word *rainbow* on the board and have students identify the vowel sound (long /o/). Have students find the word on page 15 and read the sentence in which it is found. On the board, circle the *ow* and explain that *ow* is another common digraph for the long /o/ sound. Ask students if they can think of other words that follow the same pattern. Have them write the words as examples under *rainbow* (*crow, grow, mow, snow, throw*).

Grammar and Mechanics: **Apostrophes**

- Direct students to page 4 and point to the word *He's*. Review or explain that this word stands for two words. Ask students to use context clues to identify which two words were joined together to make the new word (*He* and *is*). Write both the contraction and the two words that make it up on the board. Point out that the letter *i* in *is* is dropped to make the contraction.
- Review or explain that a *contraction* is a word formed by joining two words, and that an *apostrophe* shows where one or more letters have been left out.
- Ask students to turn to page 14 and identify the contraction (*wasn't*). Ask students to identify which two words were joined together to make the new word (*was* and *not*). Ask students to identify which letter was replaced by an apostrophe (*o*).
- Explain that another use for an apostrophe is when a *possessive noun* is formed. This occurs when adding an *'s* to the end of a word to show ownership, or possession.
- Direct students to page 5. Ask them to find the possessive word in the first sentence (*Bill's*). Explain the rule of possession indicated by an *'s* for the phrase *Bill's family* (the family belonging to Bill).
- Point out that a possessive noun and a contraction illustrate two different uses for an apostrophe. Explain that a contraction using *'s* is not the same as a possessive. For example, *it's* is a contraction for *it is* and does not show ownership. Have students turn to page 15 and find an example of a contraction using *'s* that does not show ownership or possession (*that's*).
- **Check for understanding:** Write a volunteer's name on the board and ask that volunteer to name something that he or she owns. Then add an *'s* to the end of the name before writing the item. (For example, write *Alex*. Then add *'s book*.) Repeat the example for other volunteers who would like to contribute. Choose a name that ends in *s* to explain that the *'s* would follow the *s*. For example, *Marcus* would be changed to *Marcus's*.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [apostrophes worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their responses.

Word Work: **Compound words**

- Write the word *tumbleweed* on the board. Ask students which two words were joined together in the word *tumbleweed* (*tumble* and *weed*). Explain that this word is called a *compound word*. A compound word contains two words that join together to create one word with one meaning. Explain that the definitions of the two separate words can help students figure out the meaning of the bigger word (a *weed* that *tumbles* through the air).
- Write the following sentence from page 3 on the board: *Pecos Bill was the greatest cowboy who ever lived*. Have students read the sentence and identify the compound word (*cowboy*). Ask them which two words are joined together in the word *cowboy* (*cow* and *boy*). Ask a volunteer to share how the definitions of the two separate words can be used to figure out the meaning of the bigger word.

 **Check for understanding:** Have students read page 6 in their book. Have them identify and underline the compound word on the page (*downriver*). Ask students to circle the two words contained in the compound word. Have them use these words to discuss with a partner the meaning of the larger word. Then discuss the meaning of the word with students as a group.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [compound words worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers aloud.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, partners can take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have them explain to their audience what is real and what is fantasy about Pecos Bill. Invite them to visualize with someone at home when they read the book.

Extend the Reading

Tall Tale Connection

Gather a collection of tall tales to share with students. After brainstorming common elements of tall tales with students, ask them to write a tall tale of their own. Make sure students plan for a main character/hero with superhuman strengths, a setting in the American West during pioneer days, and a problem that the hero overcomes. Require a clean copy that can be posted or bound into a class book titled *Our Tall Tales*.

Visit [Writing A-Z](#) for a lesson and leveled materials on narrative writing.

Social Studies Connection

Provide books and Internet sites for students to research and learn about the old American West. Ask them to find out about the pioneers' westward expansion into Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. Have them learn about the motivation for families to move, how they traveled to get there, and what they did once they reached their destination. Facilitate a class discussion in which students report their findings, and encourage opinions to be shared.

Skill Review

[Discussion cards](#) covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment**Monitor students to determine if they can:**

- consistently use the strategy of visualizing to comprehend the text during discussion and on a worksheet
- analyze the elements of reality and fantasy in the story during discussion and on a worksheet
- identify and discriminate the long /o/ vowel sound
- recognize and use apostrophes during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly identify and form compound words during discussion and on a worksheet

Comprehension Checks

- [Book Quiz](#)
- [Retelling Rubric](#)