

Paul Bunyan Meets Babe

On a cold morning in Maine, a baby was born that would amaze the world. Why, for breakfast alone he ate six dozen eggs. They had to milk all the cows in the barn just to get enough milk for his bottle. But the most curious thing about this baby was the black beard he was born with. That beard was so long and curly his mama had to comb it with a pine tree.

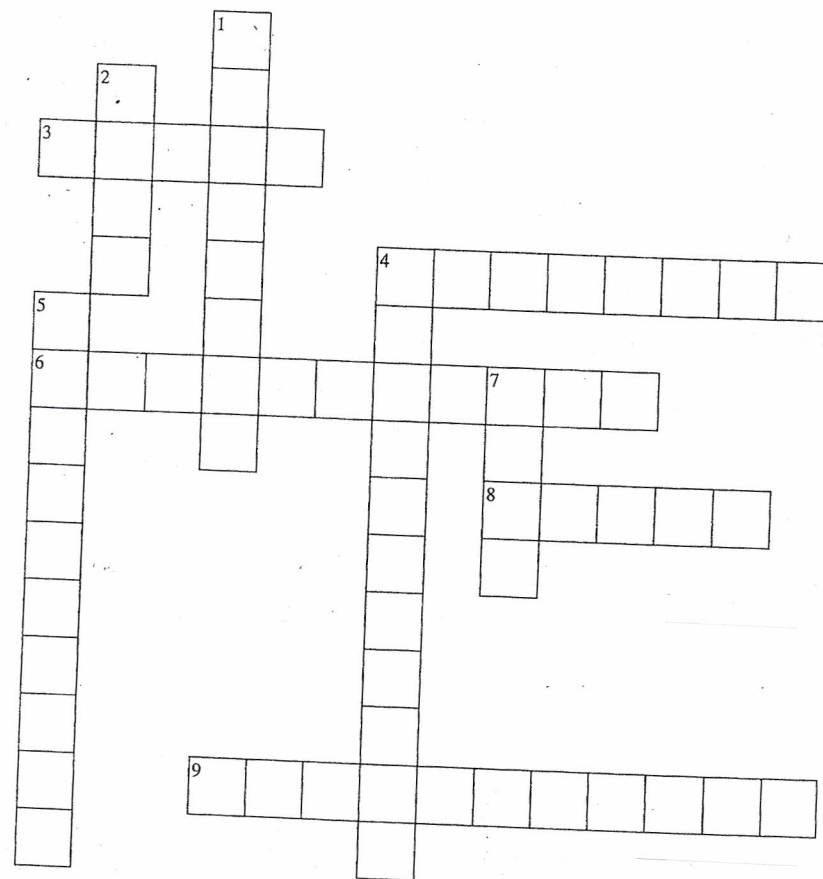
It was when he started to crawl that trouble began. Since he weighed over five hundred pounds, he caused earthquakes all over town. So his mama put him in an enormous cradle floating off the coast of Maine. Soon the citizens of the town met to protest. Villages all along the coast were hit with tidal waves every time the cradle rocked. Finally, his parents hauled him to a cave and left him. "You are too big, son," his father said and gave him an ax, knife, and fishing pole.

That's how the story of Paul Bunyan began. He lived alone for twenty years. On his twenty-first birthday it snowed and snowed—tons of blue snow. Paul set out to trek the blue hills. Over the wind came a cry: "Maa—Maa." Thinking it was a baby, Paul yelled, "It's all right, baby! You'll be all right, babe!" Whisking away blue snow, he found a blue tail attached to a frozen blue ox which he took back to his cave.

The fire in the cave warmed the biggest blue ox ever seen in those woods. The ox grew so fast that Paul liked to close his eyes, count to ten, and open them to see how much bigger Babe had grown. From then on, they were always together—inseparable.

Some folks say Paul Bunyan and his giant blue ox, Babe, went on to carve out the Grand Canyon and the Missouri River. But most say that's just a tall tale.

Comprehension Crossword



Across

3. Paul Bunyan was born here.
4. This word means *giant* (check paragraph two).
6. always together
8. the most curious thing about the baby
9. number of pounds Paul Bunyan weighed when he began to crawl (two words)

Down

1. what Paul's mama used to comb his beard (two words)
2. This word means *carry* (check paragraph two).
4. When Paul crawled, he caused these.
5. This was the effect when the cradle rocked (two words).
7. The name for the blue ox was taken from this word.

The Legend of Tintern Abbey

Everyone around knew that the old, decaying church—also called an abbey—had been the richest in all of Wales. First built in 1131 in the River Wye Valley, the abbey had been closed by order of King Henry VIII in 1536.

The young men who had come to the abbey one day not so long ago thought only of buried treasure. They imagined chests filled with silver goblets and finely woven tapestries. So, when digging revealed the remains of two human skeletons, they celebrated with a feast. They assumed they would soon find treasure as well.

They sat on the grass of the abbey grounds enjoying their food. After much eating and drinking, they began to joke about the spirits of monks rising from their graves to haunt them. Suddenly the darkening sky flashed with lightning, and the surrounding valley shook with thunder. A deathly mist shrouded the abbey walls.

The eyes of the revelers focused in horror on a distant light. As it slowly grew in size and form, it appeared to be the ghost of a knight surrounded by monks. All present recognized the specter to be that of the knight Strongbow, one of the abbey's original inhabitants.

As the storm began to ease, the knight slowly raised his sword toward the doorway of the abbey. All joy was gone from the party, and they scattered in all directions. They glanced back as they fled. It is said they saw a whirling cloud descend on their feast, gather it up, and hurl it far from the abbey walls.

1. "A deathly mist shrouded the abbey walls." The best meaning for *shrouded* is _____.
A. colored
B. covered
C. lifted
2. Number the following events in the order they happened:
___ A mist shrouded the abbey walls.
___ Digging revealed the remains of two human skeletons.
___ A whirling cloud descended.
___ Strongbow appeared.
3. We can infer that, because there was digging on the abbey grounds, _____.
A. a ghost drove the young men away
B. the young men came to watch
C. the storm began to ease
4. In paragraph four, the word *specter* is a synonym for _____.
A. horror
B. ghost
C. monks
5. The main idea of the legend is best stated as _____.
A. it is not safe to have a party on abbey grounds
B. all abbeys in Wales are haunted
C. respect ancient buildings and the grounds they are built on

A Letter to Cassady

January 3, 1985

Dear Cassady,

Thank you for your letter to Koko. You are lucky to be learning sign language at your school. I'll try to answer your questions, since Koko can only sign.

Koko is a female lowland gorilla born in 1971. I began teaching her sign language when she was a year old. Before then, not much was known about gorilla intelligence. Here, at the Gorilla Foundation, we are trying to learn more about gorilla language and behavior.

Koko has advanced further in signing than any other animal. She has a vocabulary of over 1,000 signs. She also understands close to 2,000 words of spoken English. Koko's IQ is about 85 on a human scale. "Normal" is about 100.

Yes, it's true, Koko did have a pet. Last year Koko asked for a kitten by drawing her index fingers across her chest to signify whiskers. That is her sign for the word "cat." When we gave her a toy cat, she pouted. Then, in June, someone brought three orphaned kittens to our compound. We let her play with them, and she handled them tenderly. She chose a tailless gray male as her kitten. She named him All Ball.

Koko was very gentle with All Ball. She cared for him as she would a tiny gorilla baby. Often she carried him on her back. Sometimes kittens scratch or bite, but when All Ball did, Koko never harmed him. A couple of weeks ago, All Ball was killed by a car. Koko was very sad. When gorillas are sad they make a hooting cry.

To answer your last question, Koko hasn't had a baby yet. When she does, we hope she might teach her baby to sign. We have seen her shaping her ape doll's hands into signs.

Good luck with your signing.

Sincerely,
Koko's trainer
"Penny" Paterson

1. What would be a good title for this selection?
 - A. "Learning Sign Language"
 - B. "Can a Gorilla Talk?"
 - C. "The Amazing Koko"
2. Koko asked for a kitten by _____.
 - A. making sounds like a cat
 - B. drawing her index fingers across her chest
 - C. painting a picture of a kitten
3. It is most likely that Koko named her kitten "All Ball" because _____.
 - A. she really wanted a ball to play with
 - B. a kitten can curl up into a ball
 - C. she was having a lot of fun
4. When Koko is no longer sad, she will most likely _____.
 - A. ask for a new kitten
 - B. want to get a dog
 - C. try to escape from the compound

Talking Leaves

In Tennessee around 1760, a baby boy was born to Nathaniel Gist and a Cherokee woman. The baby's Indian name was Sequoya. As a young man he was a fine hunter, warrior, and silver craftsman. Then a serious accident crippled him. But Sequoya did not let that handicap stop him.

With the arrival of the white man to his tribal lands, Sequoya became concerned about the survival of his people. The white man wrote "talk" on papers that rustled like leaves. The Indians called them "talking leaves." Sequoya knew that the Cherokee's inability to read and write was a handicap to them.

In 1809, he began an enormous task with his daughter Ah-yoka that would last the next twelve years. They created a written language for the Cherokee. It adapted letters of the English alphabet to represent sounds in the Cherokee tongue. This alphabet has eighty-six symbols. Once people learned them, they could write anything in the Cherokee language. Sequoya and his daughter became the first people to create a written language by themselves. This alphabet was called the Cherokee Syllabary. Members of the tribe could learn to read and write their language in a relatively short time. This led to the founding of the *Cherokee Phoenix*, a Cherokee language newspaper, on February 21, 1828.

Sequoya became a recognized leader of his people. In his honor, the big trees in California—the Sequoia—were named after him. Though Sequoya could never speak, read, or write English, his people could now speak to the world using "talking leaves."

1. When Sequoya saw the white man's "talking leaves," he _____.
 - A. wanted a tree named after him
 - B. decided to create a written Cherokee language
 - C. tried to read them
2. The main idea for paragraph three is _____.
 - A. this alphabet has eighty-six symbols
 - B. they created a written language for the Cherokee
 - C. the alphabet was called the Cherokee Syllabary
3. In paragraph three, the word *tongue* probably means _____.
 - A. language
 - B. letters
 - C. alphabet
4. Which of the following about Sequoya is not true?
 - A. He was a silver craftsman.
 - B. He created a written Cherokee language with his daughter.
 - C. He spoke and read English fluently.

"Movie Magic"

If you haven't read J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, wait. Peter Jackson put everything and more into the movie he made based on the books. This director is a genius. You will never feel like this movie is three hours long, and you will never be bored. Peter Jackson brings hobbits, elves, and wizards to life. He has created the most horrible monsters to crawl from the depths of Middle Earth. The special effects are out of this world. The hobbits are habit forming.

First, the super-evil sorcerer Sauron forges rings in the furnaces of Mount Doom and gives them to the rulers of Middle Earth. The rings are magical, and the rulers become ringwraiths. These ghosts of men serve Sauron because he made the One Ring to "rule them all and in the darkness bind them."

Suddenly a bloody battle between good men and evil creatures explodes on the screen. Sauron is defeated, and the ring is taken from his hacked-off hand. Then things really heat up. Soon, Frodo has the ring and is heading to dump it in Mount Doom's fires.

Frodo and his friend Sam hook up with two more hobbits, Merry and Pippin. They are all being chased by ringwraiths riding the largest, blackest, most evil-looking horses ever. They finally meet up with Gandalf the wizard, Aragorn, Boromir, Legolas the elf and Gimli the dwarf. This gang has more power than ten wrestlers like Stone Cold Steve Austin. This is not good news for the evil ones.

What happens next is so exciting you have to see it to believe it. If you are one of the few who haven't seen this movie, go now. You won't find out from me how it ends.

1. Which of these statements about Peter Jackson can be proven?
 - A. He has created the most horrible monsters to crawl from the depths of Middle Earth.
 - B. Peter Jackson brings hobbits, elves, and wizards to life.
 - C. This director is a genius.
2. Which of the following is an opinion?
 - A. The special effects are out of this world.
 - B. Sauron gives the rings to the rulers of Middle Earth.
 - C. The rings are magical, and the rulers become ringwraiths.
3. From reading paragraph two, you can tell that ringwraiths are _____.
 - A. evil sorcerers
 - B. friends of Frodo
 - C. ghosts of men
4. The author wrote this movie review mainly to _____.
 - A. entertain us with stories about hobbits
 - B. persuade us to go see the movie
 - C. explain about the history of Middle Earth