

# Tall Tales

Tall tales have the characteristic of unbelievable exaggeration, usually as if it were hard fact. These stories are quite humorous, and the line between myth and tall tale is a fine one. Whereas myths often exaggerate heroic deeds of their characters, such exploits do not take over the whole of the plot. With a tall tale, however, wild exaggerations tend to become the story itself!

Tall Tales should have at least one main character, a problem and solution, and be **50 pages long!** (Just exaggerating!)

## **Pecos Bill finds a Hard Outfit**

A New Mexico Tall Tale

retold by

S. E. Schlosser

Well now, Texas jest became too tame for Pecos Bill once he killed off all the bad men, so he struck out for New Mexico, looking for a hard outfit. He asked an old trapper he met on the way where he could find a hard outfit, and the trapper directed Bill to a place where the fellers bit nails in half for fun. It sounded like a promisin' place to Bill, so he set off. But his durned fool hoss got its neck broke on the way, and Bill found himself afoot.

Bill went a walkin' with his saddle on his back. Suddenly, he come face to face with a rattlesnake 'round about fifteen feet long and lookin' fer trouble. Now Bill wanted to be fair to the rattler, so he let it get in a few jabs before he beat the stuffin' out of it. Being a kind man, when the snake was beat, he picked it up, wrapped it around his neck and carried it along with him.

They was a headin' through a narrow canyon when a cougar thought he'd have a bit of fun and jumped them. Bill never turned a hair. He jest put down his saddle and then whipped the tarnation out of the cougar. Hair flew everywhere, blocking the light sose the jackrabbits thought it was night and went to bed. Finally that cat were so beat he cried like a lost kitten and jest licked Bill's hand. So Bill saddles him up and they tear off across them hills like forked lightening. Whenever Bill wanted to calm that cougar down, he'd just give him a tap with the rattlesnake. They set such a pace that they soon rolled into the hard outfit the trapper'd told Bill about. Quick as a wink, Bill jumps off the cougar, helps himself to some beans and coffee, wipes his mouth with a prickly pear and turns to look at the toughs sittin' around the fire.

"Who's the boss around here, anyhow?" he asks.

"I was," said a big mountain of a feller about seven foot tall and wide, "but you are now, stranger!"

### **Marks are awarded as follows: (see below)**

1. Description of Setting and characters – **5 marks**
2. Interesting, creative Plot – **5 marks**
3. Writing process – planning, draft, refining, proofreads final draft – **5 marks**
4. Language – punctuation, spelling and grammar – **5 marks**

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	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Setting and characters</b>	Skillful, creative description of setting, characters	Good description of settings, characters	Adequate description of setting, characters	Setting and characters stereotypical, lacks originality	Vague description of setting, characters lack personality
<b>Plot</b>	Interesting, creative plot; original ideas, makes for sustained interest	Plot is developed adequately; some originality	Correct sequencing of action but unoriginal, predictable	Plot is weak and unclear, some gaps in sequencing of action	Plot poorly developed; significant gaps in sequencing of action
<b>Use of the writing process: Plans, drafts and refines the text, edits first draft and proofreads final draft</b>	Excellent use of the writing process has produced a refined final draft. Proof reading has eliminated mistakes	Good use of writing process; evidence of progressive improvement in writing piece, mistakes still evident	Has used the writing process but has not translated it into a well-developed piece of writing	Some use of parts of writing process (very basic planning or evidence or editing of first draft) but many errors still remain	Little or no proof reading or editing done: writing still has many uncorrected errors
<b>Language use: punctuation, grammar and spelling</b>	Excellent use of language; correct sentences, punctuation and spelling. No errors in subject-verb concord	Creative use of language; mostly correct sentences, punctuation and few spelling errors. One or two errors in subject verb concord	Most sentences are correct; some errors in language use, punctuation and spelling. Several errors in subject-verb concord	Sentence structure fair but very basic; several errors in language use, punctuation and spelling. Has not grasped subject-verb concord	Poor sentence structure; many errors in punctuation and spelling. Many errors in subject-verb concord; understanding compromised