

# Tall Tales

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**Overview**

Students will write tall tales about the Dogwood Trail. They will learn about hyperboles, hike part of the trail making observations as they go, and then write "chain" tall tales in the classroom. Over the next weeks, they will develop complete tall tales of their own.

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**Lesson  
Planner**

Time Required	1 hour
Key Concepts/Terms	Hyperbole, Tall tale
Prerequisites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Knowledge of expectations for outdoor classroom conduct</li></ul>
Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 20-minute field study outside</li><li>• Remainder of lesson inside</li></ul>

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**Standards****MD VSC 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading/Language Arts**

4.2.b. Describe in prose and poetry by using purposeful imagery and sensory details with active verbs and colorful adjectives

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**Objectives**

The students will compose a chain tall tale in order to practice using hyperboles by making observations on the Dogwood Trail.

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**Materials  
Required**

- Pencils
  - Clipboards
  - Paper
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**Background  
Information**

Students will be starting a writing unit to write tall tales. This lesson will introduce them to hyperboles, and they will begin drawing on their creativity to collectively compose chain tall tales. Students will also be reading tall tales during reading.

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**Procedure**

Follow the steps in the table below to conduct the activity. **Sentences in bold are suggestions for what teachers might say to students.** *Items in italics are possible teacher answers to questions.*

Phase	Step	Action
Engage	1	<p>Ten Minute Exercise: Introduction to concept maps/outdoor learning.</p> <p>If students are unfamiliar with concept maps and/or using the schoolyard as a classroom, begin by creating a concept map together as a class to go over rules and expectations for learning outside.</p> <p>As you go through the concept map, think aloud for how you are choosing where to draw your bubbles to connect different concepts on the map. For instance,</p> <p><b>“I am going to write the idea first and then put a bubble around it to make sure my bubble isn’t too big or too small for my information.”</b></p> <p>Or</p> <p><b>“I am going to connect this idea to that one instead of the main topic since they are related.”</b></p> <p>Or</p> <p><b>“That’s a good idea! Where would you connect that idea on our concept map?”</b></p> <p>Have in mind some expectations for outdoor learning specific to your schoolyard that you want to be sure students include. For instance,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Regular school rules still apply (respect each other, listen to the speaker, follow directions, etc.)</i></li> <li>• <i>No yelling, screaming, tapping on/waving into windows that will disrupt class learning inside the school building.</i></li> <li>• <i>“Look, learn, and let go” when you see insects.</i></li> </ul>

	2	<p><u>Introduction to the hyperbole (5 Minutes)</u></p> <p><b>“A hyperbole is an extreme exaggeration.”</b></p> <p>Give examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These books in your bag weigh a ton.</li> <li>• I’m so hungry, I could eat a horse right now.</li> <li>• I will die if he asks me to dance.</li> <li>• I’m really busy; I am like doing ten million things at the same time.</li> </ul> <p>Elicit examples from the students. If they’ve already read a tall tale, have them identify examples from the story.</p>
<b>Explore</b>	3	<p><u>Directions (5 minutes)</u></p> <p><b>“We will go outside for about 20 minutes. On your paper, you should take notes about the trail. Try to come up with some hyperboles you could use in a tall tale about the trail (or set on the trail).”</b></p>
	4	<p><u>20-Minute Field Study</u></p> <p>Bring students outside. Go to second opening to trek the trail. Compare it now to what it was like in the fall.</p>

		<p><u>Beginning the tall tale</u> (10 minutes)</p> <p>Once back in the classroom, read the following tall tale to students. Have them identify why this is a tall tale.</p> <p><i>I want to tell you a story about some cold weather we had up there one time--about two years ago it got real cold. A fellow had a pond right close to his house there and late that evening--it was a real cold day--a flock of geese come over and stopped in his pond to spend the night, and it got real cold that night and everything froze over, and this fellow decided he would go down there the next morning and shoot a few of them geese. He got down there and their feet was froze in that pond and they couldn't fly. They got to flopping their wings, and he got to shooting them, and they finally go to flapping their wings together and they flew off with his pond.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">--Lonny Gray, Union Parish</p>
<b>Explain</b>	<b>5</b>	<p>Now students should write the first sentence to a new tall tale. Should sound like it is or could be true. But eventually gets very exaggerated.</p> <p><b>“Once upon a time...”</b>  <b>“I want to tell you a story...”</b></p> <p>They will not complete the story. They should only write one sentence. Explain that their paper will get passed around to classmates, and everyone will add a new sentence to create a crazy tall tale.</p>
<b>Evaluate</b>	<b>6</b>	<p><u>Writing</u> (20 minutes)</p> <p>Students begin passing around their tall tales. This can be done around the whole class or in small groups. Each time students can be given 2-3 minutes to read what has been written and then add one sentence. Remind students to try to think of hyperboles they can add to these tall tales. Not every sentence needs to have one, but this should be their challenge.</p>

<b>Elaborate</b>	7	<u>Sharing</u> (10 minutes)
		The students should receive back their story starter and have time to read their tall tales. Volunteers can raise their hands to share their tall tales with the class. Have students identify features of a tall tale present in these chain tall tales.

**Vocabulary**

Understanding of the following terms is required in this activity.

Term	Definition
Tall Tale	A fictional story, presented as a true account and usually told in the first person, that begins by describing a common situation, but gradually adds more and more unusual features until it pushes up to and beyond the limits of belief.
Hyperbole	Extreme exaggeration

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