

Read Like Us

Fluency Intervention Texts

Compiled by Jake Downs and Chase Young

These texts are designed to support repeated reading routines that build fluency, confidence, and comprehension. They are organized by genre: funny poetry, classic poetry, classic stories, and more.

Use them for echo reading, choral reading, paired reading, and Reader's Theatre. Adapt freely and share with colleagues.

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Contents

Funny Poetry.....	3
Get out of Bed!	3
The Aliens Have Landed.....	4
The Principal is Missing.....	5
Three Mary Had a Little Something Poems	6
Food Fight	7
Clear as Mud	8
Another Note From Mom	9
Short Stories with a Twist	10
Evil Lurks	10
The Vinder Viper	11
Stone Soup.....	12
The Bad News	13
The Pig and the Sheep	14
Puppies for Sale	15
Informational Stories	16
The Author Who Spun Charlotte’s Web: E.B. White	16
The Real Dracula	17
What is a Yankee Doodle?	18
The Sun	19
Daylight Savings Time	20
Fun Facts.....	21
Science Facts.....	21
Animal Facts.....	22
History Facts	23
Random Facts.....	24
Classic Poems.....	25
How the Leaves Came Down	25

The Nightingale and the Glow-Worm.....	26
The Land of Nod.....	27
The Boy Who Never Told a Lie.....	28
Classic Stories.....	29
The Princess and the Pea.....	29
The Bundle of Sticks.....	30
My teeth are freezing!.....	31
Strange State Laws.....	32
Strange State Laws Part 1.....	32
Strange State Laws Part 2.....	33
Strange State Laws Part 3.....	34
Strange State Laws Part 4.....	35
Strange State Laws Part 5.....	36
Some Types of Engineers.....	37
Aerospace Engineer.....	37
Civil Engineers.....	38
Computer Engineer.....	39
Electrical Engineer.....	40
Houghton Mifflin Texts.....	41
Why Spiders Have Long, Thin Legs.....	41
Meet the Beatles.....	42
Chinese New Year.....	43
At the Border.....	44
The Ant and the Grasshopper.....	45
Hurricane!.....	46
Is the Monster Real?.....	47
Mitzi Mouse.....	48
Mount Rushmore.....	48
The Adventures of Paul Bunyan.....	50
Why Is That Lake Pink?.....	51
Sinbad and Whale Island.....	52
The Pony Express.....	53

Funny Poetry

Get out of Bed!

"Get out of bed, you silly fool!
Get up right now, it's time for school.
If you don't dress without a fuss,
I'll throw you naked on the bus!"
"Oh, Mom, don't make me go today.
I'm feeling worse than yesterday.
You don't know what I'm going through.
I've got a strange, rare case of flu.
"My body aches, my throat is sore.
I'm sure I'm knocking on death's door.
You can't send me to school—achoo!—
'Cause everyone could get it, too.
"Besides, the kids despise me there.
They always tease and always stare.
And all the teachers know my name.
When something's wrong, it's me they blame."
"You faked a headache yesterday.
Don't pull that stuff on me today.
Stop acting like a silly fool—
The principal cannot skip school!"

The Aliens Have Landed

The aliens have landed!
It's distressing, but they're here.
They piloted their flying saucer
through our atmosphere.
They landed like a meteor
engulfed in smoke and flame.
Then out they climbed immersed in slime
and burbled as they came.
Their hands are greasy tentacles.
Their heads are weird machines.
Their bodies look like cauliflower
and smell like dead sardines.
Their blood is liquid helium.
Their eyes are made of granite.
Their breath exudes the stench of foods
from some unearthly planet.
And if you want to see these
sickly, unattractive creatures,
you'll find them working in your school;
they all got jobs as teachers.

The Principal is Missing

The principal is missing.
He's nowhere to be found.
The teachers tried to page him,
and they've hunted all around.
He isn't in the staff room.
He isn't in the gym,
and all the kids are wondering
just what's become of him.
We've looked in every classroom.
We've peeked in every hall.
We even checked the bathrooms
and inspected every stall.
He isn't in his closet.
He's not behind his door.
He isn't underneath his desk
or hiding in a drawer.
If you should see our principal,
please send him back to school,
and tell him we apologize.
We know that we were cruel.
Please tell him that we miss him.
We're sorry we were mean.
But tell him next Saint Patrick's Day
he needs to wear some green.

Three Mary Had a Little Something Poems

Mary had a little dog.
Its fur was black as night.
And everyone that Mary met
The dog was sure to bite.
It followed her to school one day,
Which was against the rule.
The dog bit Mary's teacher's leg,
So they threw her out of school.

Mary had a little mouse.
Its fur was white as snow.
And everywhere that Mary went
The mouse was sure to go.
It followed her to school one day,
Which wasn't Mary's plan,
For when the mouse jumped on her desk,
The teacher screamed and ran!

Mary had a little pet.
Its fur was black as night.
It followed her to school one day,
Which gave the kids a fright.
It made the teachers shout and scream.
It gave them such a scare.
For Mary didn't have a lamb—
She had a grizzly bear.

Food Fight

We'd never seen the teachers
in a state of such distress.
The principal was yelling
that the lunchroom was a mess.

It started off so innocent
when someone threw a bun,
but all the other kids decided
they should join the fun.

It instantly turned into
an enormous lunchroom feud,
as students started hurling
all their halfway-eaten food.

A glob went whizzing through the air,
impacting on the wall.
Another chunk went sailing out
the doorway to the hall.

The food was splattered everywhere—
the ceilings, walls, and doors.
A sloppy, gloppy mess was on
the tables and the floors.

And so our good custodian
ran out to grab his mop.
It took him half the afternoon
to clean up all the slop.

The teachers even used some words
we're not supposed to mention.
And that's how all the kids and teachers
wound up in detention.

Clear as Mud

I go to bed each morning.
I wake up every night.
I spill my milk at breakfast,
and then turn on the light.

Each day I miss the school bus.
I never have been late.
I don't turn in my homework.
My teacher thinks I'm great.

My favorite game is basketball.
I cannot sink a shot.
We haven't won a single game.
Our team is getting hot!

Last year I was in high school.
Now I'm in second grade.
Next year I'll be in daycare.
I'll really have it made!

When I grow up, I'm hoping
a baby I can be:
a pacifier in my mouth,
my cradle in a tree.

This poem's so confusing.
It's all so crystal clear.
Perhaps I'll understand it
when I am born next year.

Another Note From Mom

I sprang from bed and bumped my head and stubbed my little toe,
then jammed my fingers turning down the blaring radio.

I rubbed my bumps and bruises as the weather lady said,
"Today's the first of April, look for showers overhead."

I trudged downstairs to breakfast, where my bad luck tagged along.
There taped up to the microwave...another note from Mom:

Good morning! Exclamation point—she always starts out nice.
Now comes the part where I get fed her motherly advice.

*For breakfast, dear, just help yourself. There's pizza in the fridge.
And as for soda, choose the Sprite—the Coke has lost its fizz.*

"Is this a dream?" I said out loud. "There must be some mistake.
I'd better read that through again. I'm only half awake."

I scanned the lines, not once, but twice. Yes, *pizza's* what it said!
And I could swallow that advice, so I read on ahead:

*Please wear your faded jeans to school, those low-cut ones that flare.
And use my mousse to do that sticky-up thing with your hair.*

"Is she for real?" I asked myself. What's gotten into Mom?
Whatever it was, I liked it lots, so I continued on:

*About your science quiz today—the one on natural gas—
Just tell your teacher that's one subject you don't want to pass!*

I know I didn't read that right. I couldn't have, no way!
But there it was in black and white, as plain as night and day.

And then it hit me, why the change: Mom hadn't lost a screw;
My worry-free philosophy had finally gotten through.

Her rules had changed from lame to lax—my mom was cool at last!
These last few months of middle school were gonna be a blast!

I quickly read the last few lines: *Enjoy your day at school!*
(*And don't believe what you've just read...or you're an April Fool!*)

Short Stories with a Twist

Evil Lurks

At the end of a long, dark road is a long, dark path.

At the end of the long, dark path is a lone, dark house.

And the lone, dark house has a single, dark door.

Behind the single, dark door is a long, dark hall.

At the end of the long, dark hall are some tall, dark stairs. At the top of the tall, dark stairs is a long dark balcony.

At the end of the long, dark balcony is a big dark room.

In the big, dark room is a big, dark closet. In the big, dark closet is a big, dark door.

Behind the big, dark door are some steep, dark stairs.

At the top of the steep, dark stairs is a dark, dusty attic.

In the dark, dusty attic is a big, dark chest.

In the big, dark chest is a small, dark box.

And in the small, dark box is a pink jellybean.

The Vinder Viper

Years ago, a man inherited a house. Rumors were told that it was haunted, but he moved in anyway.

A couple weeks after he moved in, late at night, the phone rang. When he answered it, a voice said, "I am the Vinder Viper. I will be there in 2 weeks!" and then it hung up. This really shook the man. The next day, he searched the Internet under 'snakes' for 'vinder viper' but found nothing.

A week later the phone rang. "I am the Vinder Viper. I will be there in 1 week!" and hung up. This made the man quite nervous. He asked around the town, and no one had ever heard of any such viper.

Four days later, late at night, the phone rang. "I am the Vinder Viper. I will be there in 2 days!" The man is getting much more concerned now.

The next night, the phone rang. "I am the Vinder Viper. I will be there tomorrow!" The man is terrified.

The next evening, the phone rang. "I am the Vinder Viper. I will be there in 1 hour!" The man tries to leave, but his car battery is dead.

Nearly an hour later, the phone rang. "I am the Vinder Viper. I will be there in 2 minutes!" The man runs around locking all the windows and doors and calls 911. The police are on their way.

Soon, there was a knock at the door. The man opened the door a crack and asked, "Is that the police?"

"No, I am the vinder viper. I come every month to vash and vipe your vindows."

Stone Soup

A weary, poor traveller arrived in a small village. He had no food or money and had not eaten in days. The one thing he did have was a cooking pot that he used on those rare occasions when he had something to cook.

He built a small cooking fire, placed his pot on it, and poured in some water. When a few villagers asked what he was doing, he replied that he was making Stone Soup which was an ancient tasty recipe passed down to him from his ancestors. He then dropped in a smooth, round stone he had in his pocket into the pot.

As the soup warmed, the traveller told the villagers stories of his travels and the exciting things he'd seen. He tasted his soup and said it was coming along nicely, but a bit of salt would bring out the flavor. One curious villager went into her home and returned with some salt for the soup.

A few more villagers walking by stopped to see what was going on when they heard the traveller speaking. The traveller told more stories and said that a couple carrots or onion would be a nice addition to the already delicious soup. So, another villager figured he could give a few carrots and retrieved them from his cellar.

This continued on with the traveller casually asking for onions, seasoning, a bit of meat, celery, potatoes to bring out the full potential of the soup.

Finally, the soup was ready and everyone enjoyed the tasty meal prepared for them from just a stone, and a few other items.

The Bad News

Leon and Todd loved baseball. When they were young, they had played on the town's baseball team. Leon had been the pitcher and Todd had played second base. Now that they were a lot older, they spent their free time watching baseball games on TV and talking about baseball.

"You think they play baseball in heaven?" Leon asked Todd one day. "That's a good question" said Todd. "The one who gets there first should let the other one know somehow". As it turned out, Todd got to heaven first and Leon waited patiently to hear from him. One day, Leon found Todd sitting in the living room waiting for him. Leon was very excited to see him. "Well, what is it like up there?" he asked. "And what about baseball?"

"When it comes to baseball" said Todd, "I have some good news and I have some bad news. The good news is that we do play baseball in heaven. We have some fine teams. I play second base on my team just like I used to in the old days. That's the good news". "What's the bad news?" asked Leon. "The bad news" said Todd "is that you are scheduled to pitch tomorrow".

The Pig and the Sheep

One day a shepherd discovered a fat Pig in the meadow where his Sheep were pastured. He very quickly captured the porker, which squealed at the top of its voice the moment the Shepherd laid his hands on it. You would have thought, to hear the loud squealing, that the Pig was being cruelly hurt. But in spite of its squeals and struggles to escape, the Shepherd tucked his prize under his arm and started off to the butcher's in the marketplace.

The Sheep in the pasture were much astonished and amused at the Pig's behavior and followed the Shepherd and his charge to the pasture gate.

“What makes you squeal like that?” asked one of the Sheep. “The Shepherd often catches and carries off one of us. But we should feel very much ashamed to make such a terrible fuss about it like you do.”

“That is all very well,” replied the Pig, with a squeal and a frantic kick. “When he catches you he is only after your wool. But he wants my bacon! gree-ee-ee!”

Puppies for Sale

A sign above a shop read- “Puppies for Sale.”

Signs like these have a way of grabbing the attention of the children. A small boy, upon seeing the sign, entered into the shop asking; “How much are you selling the puppies for?”

The store owner said- “Anywhere from \$30 to \$50.”

The little boy removed all the money he had from his pocket-“I have \$2.37,” he said. “Can I please look at them?”

The shop owner smiled and whistled. From the kennel, five cute puppies ran out. One puppy was lagging considerably behind. Pointing at the dog the little boy asked- “what is wrong with that one?”

The shopkeeper explained- “the hip socket of the puppy is missing. At least that is what the veterinarian said. It will never walk properly again.”

The little boy cheered with excitement- “That is the puppy that I want to buy.”

“You don’t have to buy that dog. You can have it for free.”

The little boy was upset. He looked up at the shop owner and said;

“I don’t want you to give him to me. That dog is of equal worth as the rest of the dogs. I’ll give you \$2.37 now, and 50 cents a month until I have him fully paid for.”

The shopkeeper replied- “Are you sure you want this dog. It is never going to walk, run or play with you.”

The little boy lifted one side of his pants up exposing his crippled legs supported on a big metal brace. He looked up at the shop owner and softly replied, “Well, I don’t run so well myself, and the little puppy will need someone who understands!”

Informational Stories

The Author Who Spun Charlotte's Web: E.B. White

One day, on a small farm in Maine, a man sat in a barn watching a large gray spider spin a web. The man was E.B. White. E.B.—or Andy, as he was called—thought spiders were spectacular creatures. He thought that one day he might like to write a children's book about a spider.

But writing was hard work for Andy. He had written many articles and essays and poems. He had also written one children's book, *Stuart Little*. But Andy could never just rush to turn an idea into an article or book. He told his editor that he needed to let his ideas “ripen.”

So for years, Andy continued to think about writing a children's book about a spider. He did some of his best thinking while he meandered around his farm.

Once while he was cleaning his barn, he found a spider's egg sac. Andy wanted to see the eggs hatch. But he was scheduled to leave for a trip to New York City. So he found a small box and carefully placed the egg sac inside. When he got to his hotel, he put the box on the dresser. One morning he woke up, and there were hundreds of baby spiders scurrying across the dresser!

Years later, Andy finally began writing *Charlotte's Web*, the story of a spider named Charlotte and a pig named Wilbur. Andy created most of the book sitting by himself in the tiny boathouse of his farm.

Sometimes he stopped writing and doodled pictures of spiders. Andy always said *Charlotte's Web* was more than just a children's story about animals. It was a timeless story about true friendship.

The Real Dracula

Five hundred years ago, in a place called Transylvania, there was a man everyone knew as Dracula. He lived in a huge stone castle in the mountains. There, in the dark rooms, Dracula killed thousands of people. Even after he died, stories of his bloodthirsty ways terrified people in Europe.

But this Dracula wasn't a vampire in a story or movie. He was a real man. He was a prince who ruled part of the area we now know as Romania.

Despite his nasty ways, we probably would have forgotten all about Prince Dracula if it hadn't been for Bram Stoker, an Irish writer. During the late 1800s, Stoker was a newspaper editor, a theater critic, and a fiction writer.

One day, someone told him about the legend of the evil Prince Dracula. Stoker was fascinated. He went to the library and read all he could about the real-life Dracula. He learned about Transylvania. He decided to turn Dracula into a true monster: a vampire.

In 1897 he published his masterpiece, *Dracula*. The book is about a British man named Jonathan who goes to Transylvania. There, in a dark stone castle, he meets the strange Count Dracula. As Jonathan soon learns, the count is a vampire who survives by sucking the blood from human victims. The book was a huge hit. Thanks to Stoker, vampires became the world's most popular monster.

What is a Yankee Doodle?

You probably know this famous song. Americans have been singing it for more than 250 years. But where does this song come from? What exactly is a Yankee Doodle? And what's this business about macaroni?

The song was written around 1750 by a British composer—nobody knows his name. But one thing is certain: The composer didn't like Americans very much. Like most British people, he thought that people living across the ocean in the American colonies were a bunch of unsophisticated slobs. The word Yankee was a nickname for the colonists. The word doodle was another word for "fool." Get the picture?

Now for the macaroni part. Back in colonial days, fashionable men in London wore their hair long and tied up in a bun on top of their heads. They called this style the macaroni. (Aren't you dying to try it yourself?) The song jokes that Yankees were so uncool that they thought that wearing a feather in a cap was the same as having a fancy macaroni hairdo. How insulting!

During the Revolutionary War, British soldiers tried to infuriate American colonists by singing "Yankee Doodle." But their joke backfired like a broken cannon. The American soldiers thought the song was so funny they made it their song. They sang it when they marched. They sang it after they won battles. They sang it any time they felt like it.

After the Americans won the war, "Yankee Doodle" remained a big hit. It's still popular today. And nobody seems to mind that it started out as a big joke!

The Sun

The sun is the real star of the show—literally! The closest star to Earth, it's the source of all the heat and light that makes flowers bloom, songbirds croon, and sunbathers swoon. Life wouldn't exist without it. It's also the center of our solar system and by far its largest object. More than a million Earths would fit inside the sun! Our star's enormous gravity grips the planets, dwarf planets, asteroids, comets, keeping them from spinning into deep space. Put simply, we wouldn't have a solar system without the sun.

Despite its importance in the grand scheme of things, the sun isn't unique or particularly complex. It's average in size and middle-aged compared to the billions of other stars in our galaxy. And although the sun accounts for 99.8 percent of the total mass of the solar system, it's really just a big ball of gas. A process called nuclear fusion converts hydrogen to helium deep in the sun's core, where temperatures hit a balmy 18 million degrees Fahrenheit (15.7 million degrees Celsius). Fusion creates energy that travels to the sun's surface in a journey that lasts a million years. The core will run out of hydrogen gas eventually, which will put an end to our fun in the sun. But fear not: That day won't come for at least another five billion years.

Daylight Savings Time

The law says that people must set their clocks back to standard time at 2 a.m. on the first Sunday in November. That means changing the clock back one hour at 2 a.m. During the winter months, there will be a bit more light in the morning, but the sun will set earlier in the evening.

Some places, like American Samoa, Hawaii, and most of Arizona, don't mess with Father Time. But why do we move our clocks one hour forward in the spring anyway? There was no standardized time until train travel became common. The U.S. railroad industry established time zones with standard times in 1883, and Congress made the railroad's system a law in 1918. The next year, the decision of whether or not to observe daylight saving time was left up to individual jurisdictions.

When updating legislation in the 1980s, Congress noted that daylight saving time has many benefits, including "more daylight outdoor playtime for the children and youth of our Nation."

Not everyone agrees that this is beneficial, however. Till Roenneberg, a chronobiologist at Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich, Germany, says that our bodies never really adjust to the different light schedule during daylight saving time.

Fun Facts

Science Facts

It would only take one hour to drive to space if you could go straight up in the air.

The Solar System formed about 4.6 billion years ago.

Our average body temperature declines as we age.

Mars has lower gravity than Earth. That means a person that weighs 200 pounds on Earth would only weigh 76 pounds on Mars.

While most of us think the Earth is shaped like a large sphere, it actually looks more like a “squished ball” that bulges out at the equator. We can thank gravity for that!

About 75% of your brain is made of water.

Your heart beats about 115,000 times a day.

Jupiter is the fastest spinning planet in the solar system.

The nearest star to Earth is 4.2 light-years away. It’s called the Proxima Centauri.

The sun is about 10,000 degrees Fahrenheit.

Over one million Earths could fit inside the sun.

The average star is between 1 and 10 billion years old.

Experts predict that there will be 9.7 billion people on Earth by 2050.

Venus is the hottest planet in the solar system, with temperatures of over 450 degrees Celcius.

Animal Facts

Some fish cough. In order to clear the particles and bacteria out of their gills, the fish's ventilation cycle is interrupted with a cough.

Horses and cows actually sleep standing up.

A shark doesn't contain any bones in its body.

Sea sponges are considered the "least evolutionarily advanced" animal on the planet.

Scientists believe there are around 6 to 10 million different species of insects.

Deer will sometimes flash the white underside of their tail to warn others about nearby danger.

Dolphins only shut half their brain off when sleeping. The other half stays at a low level of alertness to protect against predators, obstacles, or other animals.

Elephants are the only animal that can't jump.

Most groups of penguins actually live in warm climates.

Panthers are not actually a separate species of cats. They're just leopards or jaguars with a black color mutation.

History Facts

A lot of Viking men actually dyed their hair blonde. Some even dyed their beards a well!

Cleopatra Queen of Egypt during 50 to 30 B.C. She came into power at 12 years old and married two of her brothers during her reign. It sounds crazy today, but this was fairly common practice back then!

In 1992, after a record amount of snow, the government of Syracuse, NY, declared any additional snowfall before Christmas Eve illegal. Unfortunately, Mother Nature didn't take the threat too seriously. It snowed two days after the move was announced.

Ketchup used to be sold as medicine. That's right; the popular condiment was once thought to be a cure for indigestion.

Abraham Lincoln was once declared a wrestling champion. He was also a licensed bartender.

Thomas Edison didn't actually invent the lightbulb. While it's true he got a patent for the invention back in 1880, the real credit goes to Warren de la Rue, a British astronomer, and chemist who created the first bulb forty years earlier.

Random Facts

Your nose gets warmer when you lie.

Before there was Beats by Dre, there was something else altogether. In the 60s and 70s, the Beatles teamed up with inventor John C. Koss to create their own brand of headphones. They were known as “Beatlephones.”

It’s impossible to sneeze with your eyes open.

The most expensive book ever purchased was sold for \$30.8 million. It was written by Leonardo Da Vinci and was bought by Bill Gates.

Speaking of books, there are lots of them to get through. In 2010, Google confirmed that there are over 129,000,000 books in the world.

Insects have been around for about 350 million years. To put that in perspective, we’ll note that humans have only been here for 13,000 years.

North Korea and Cuba are the only places in the world you can’t buy Coca Cola.

Most people start viewing websites from the top left corner. It’s how we’ve been trained to search for data and information.

Iron makes up around 5% of the Earth’s crust.

We watch over 1 billion hours of YouTube videos every day. That’s more than the amount of Netflix and Facebook videos we watch combined!

Do you know animals are frequent passengers on rocket ships? The first living creature in space was a dog named Laika.

Classic Poems

How the Leaves Came Down

“I’ll tell you how the leaves came down,”
The great Tree to his children said:
“You’re getting sleepy, Yellow and Brown,
Yes, very sleepy, little Red.
It is quite time to go to bed.”

“Ah!” begged each silly, pouting leaf,
“Let us a little longer stay;
Dear Father Tree, behold our grief!
'Tis such a very pleasant day,
We do not want to go away.”

So, for just one more merry day
To the great Tree the leaflets clung,
Frolicked and danced, and had their way,
Upon the autumn breezes swung,
Whispering all their sports among—

“Perhaps the great Tree will forget,
And let us stay until the spring,
If we all beg, and coax, and fret.”
But the great Tree did no such thing;
He smiled to hear their whispering.

“Come, children, all to bed,” he cried;
And ere the leaves could urge their prayer,
He shook his head, and far and wide,
Fluttering and rustling everywhere,
Down sped the leaflets through the air.

I saw them; on the ground they lay,
Golden and red, a huddled swarm,
Waiting till one from far away,
White bedclothes heaped upon her arm,
Should come to wrap them safe and warm.

The great bare Tree looked down and smiled.
“Good-night, dear little leaves,” he said.
And from below each sleepy child Replied,
“Good-night,” and murmured,
“It is so nice to go to bed!”

The Nightingale and the Glow-Worm

A nightingale, that all day long
Had cheered the village with his song,
Nor yet at eve his note suspended,
Nor yet when eventide was ended,
Began to feel, as well he might,
The keen demands of appetite;
When, looking eagerly around,
He spied far off, upon the ground,
A something shining in the dark,
And knew the glow-worm by his spark;
So, stooping down from hawthorn top,
He thought to put him in his crop.
The worm, aware of his intent,
Harangued him thus, right eloquent:
“Did you admire my lamp,” quoth he,
“As much as I your minstrelsy,
You would abhor to do me wrong,
As much as I to spoil your song;
For ’twas the self-same power divine,
Taught you to sing and me to shine;
That you with music, I with light,
Might beautify and cheer the night.”
The songster heard his short oration,
And warbling out his approbation,
Released him, as my story tells,
And found a supper somewhere else.

The Land of Nod

From breakfast on through all the day
At home among my friends I stay,
But every night I go abroad
Afar into the land of Nod.

All by myself I have to go,
With none to tell me what to do —
All alone beside the streams
And up the mountain-sides of dreams.

The strangest things are there for me,
Both things to eat and things to see,
And many frightening sights abroad
Till morning in the land of Nod.

Try as I like to find the way,
I never can get back by day,
Nor can remember plain and clear
The curious music that I hear.

The Boy Who Never Told a Lie

Once there was a little boy,
With curly hair and pleasant eye—
A boy who always told the truth,
And never, never told a lie.
And when he trotted off to school,
The children all about would cry,
“There goes the curly-headed boy—
The boy that never tells a lie.”
And everybody loved him so,
Because he always told the truth,
That every day, as he grew up,
'Twas said, “There goes the honest youth.”
And when the people that stood near
Would turn to ask the reason why,
The answer would be always this:
“Because he never tells a lie.”

Classic Stories

The Princess and the Pea

ONCE upon a time there was a prince who wanted to marry a princess; but she would have to be a real princess. He travelled all over the world to find one, but nowhere could he get what he wanted. There were princesses enough, but it was difficult to find out whether they were real ones. There was always something about them that was not as it should be. So, he came home again and was sad, for he would have liked very much to have a real princess.

One evening a terrible storm came on; there was thunder and lightning, and the rain poured down in torrents. Suddenly a knocking was heard at the city gate, and the old king went to open it.

It was a princess standing out there in front of the gate. But, good gracious! what a sight the rain and the wind had made her look. The water ran down from her hair and clothes; it ran down into the toes of her shoes and out again at the heels. And yet she said that she was a real princess.

Well, we'll soon find that out, thought the old queen. But she said nothing, went into the bedroom, took all the bedding off the bedstead, and laid a pea on the bottom; then she took twenty mattresses and laid them on the pea, and then twenty eider-down beds on top of the mattresses.

On this the princess had to lie all night. In the morning she was asked how she had slept.

Oh, very badly! said she. I have scarcely closed my eyes all night. Heaven only knows what was in the bed, but I was lying on something hard, so that I am black and blue all over my body. It's horrible!

Now they knew that she was a real princess because she had felt the pea right through the twenty mattresses and the twenty eider-down beds.

Nobody but a real princess could be as sensitive as that.

So, the prince took her for his wife, for now he knew that he had a real princess; and the pea was put in the museum, where it may still be seen, if no one has stolen it.

The Bundle of Sticks

A certain Father had a family of Sons, who were forever quarreling among themselves. No words he could say did the least good, so he cast about in his mind for some very striking example that should make them see that discord would lead them to misfortune.

One day when the quarreling had been much more violent than usual and each of the Sons was moping in a surly manner, he asked one of them to bring him a bundle of sticks. Then handing the bundle to each of his Sons in turn he told them to try to break it. But although each one tried his best, none was able to do so.

The Father then untied the bundle and gave the sticks to his Sons to break one by one. This they did very easily.

"My Sons," said the Father, "do you not see how certain it is that if you agree with each other and help each other, it will be impossible for your enemies to injure you? But if you are divided among yourselves, you will be no stronger than a single stick in that bundle."

My teeth are freezing!

Oscar never tidied up his room. The mess got BIGGER and BIGGER until there was hardly any room left to play. “Please tidy up your cars,” said his mother.

“I can’t! It’s raining!”

“Please tidy up your books,” said his father.

“I can’t! I’ll get sweaty!”

“Please tidy up your building blocks,” said his grandmother.

“I can’t! My fingers are too short!”

Then one day the mess in Oscar’s room got so BIG he ran out of space to play. He rushed downstairs. “Can we go to the playground?” Oscar asked his mother. She shook her head.

“I’m sorry, no. My earrings are too heavy!”

“Can we play cards?” Oscar asked his father. He shook his head. “I’m sorry, no. I’m an alien and aliens don’t play cards!”

“Can you come and play in the garden with me?” Oscar asked his grandmother. She shook her head. “I’m sorry, no. My socks hurt!” Oscar had nothing to do, no one to play with. He slowly made his way back to his room where he picked up his cars and put them in the red box under his bed. He stacked his books neatly on the windowsill. He gathered up his building blocks and put them in the trays by the door. Oscar’s mother couldn’t believe her eyes! “Wonderful job, Oscar,” she praised him.

“I’m sorry for not tidying up sooner,” Oscar said. “I promise I will keep my room clean from now!”

“And your bed?” asked his mother. “Could you make that too?”

Oscar shook his head. “I can’t! My teeth are freezing!”

Strange State Laws

Strange State Laws Part 1

Alabama: No stink bombs or confetti

If you're a stodgy school principal from a 1980s film, consider moving to Mobile, Alabama: Stink bombs, "funk balls," and any object "the purpose of which is to create disagreeable odors" are strictly illegal there. Also illegal: "spray string," confetti, and bathing in public fountains.

Arizona: No spitting in public

In the town of Goodyear, Arizona, it is unlawful to spit "in or on" any public building, park, sidewalk, or road. Offenders may be charged a fine of up to \$2,500 and six months in prison. And in case you need a reminder, it's also just lousy etiquette.

Colorado: No catapulting

Sure, you may be allowed to own a catapult in Aspen—but you better not try discharging it, buddy. Flaming arrows, alas, are also off limits.

Connecticut: Pickles must bounce

A pickle cannot be sold unless it bounces. According to a 1948 article, this law became a necessity after two scheming pickle packers tried to sell pickles "unfit for human consumption" on the sly. Connecticut's Food and Drug Commissioner at the time proclaimed that a real pickle "should bounce" when dropped from the height of one foot, leading to a new state regulation.

Strange State Laws Part 2

Delaware: Strict trick-or-treating times enforced

To prevent “mischief of any sort,” children in the City of Rehoboth Beach may only go trick-or-treating between the hours of 6pm and 8pm on Halloween—UNLESS Halloween falls on a Sunday; in that case, “such going door to door and house to house for treats shall take place on the evening of October 30” instead.

Georgia: Can't eat fried chicken with utensils

For chicken chompers in Gainesville, Georgia, “finger-lickin’” is not a suggestion—it is mandatory. Thanks to a 1961 law added to the city code as a publicity stunt, it is illegal to eat fried chicken in “the poultry capital of the world” with anything other than your fingers. A tourist was “arrested” for such a chicken-forking violation in 2009.

Illinois: No "fancy" bike riding

Listen here, city slicker: Galesburg city law strictly prohibits “fancy riding” of any bicycle on city streets, particularly riding with both hands removed from the handlebars, both feet removed from the pedals, or “any acrobatic” shenanigans on your fancy velocipede. According to a Galesburg police officer, “I suspect the trick riding ordinance came during a time or concern about bicyclist safety and perhaps crashes involving bicyclists.” It is seldom enforced.

Strange State Laws Part 3

Indiana: Proper black cat etiquette on Friday the 13th

In the municipality of French Lick Springs, all black cats must wear bells around their necks on Friday the 13th. The rule was introduced on October 13, 1939, “as a war measure to alleviate mental strain on the populace,” and has technically been in effect since.

Iowa: No faking your butter

I Can’t Believe It’s Not A Misdemeanor! Any person who attempts to pass off margarine, oleo, or oleomargarine as real butter is guilty of a simple misdemeanor in the stat of Iowa, punishable by up to 30 days in jail and a \$625 fine.

Kansas: No snowballs

It may still be illegal to throw snowballs in Topeka, Kansas. Thanks to a weirdly-worded law in the city Criminal Code, it is unlawful to “throw any stones, snowballs, or any other missiles” at any person or property in Topeka.

Kentucky: No dueling

All public officials and attorneys in Kentucky must swear an oath that they "have not fought a duel with deadly weapons" nor acted as a second in another person's duel.

Louisiana: No crawfish stealing

In Louisiana it is illegal to steal someone else’s crawfish—like, really illegal. Meriting its own state law, crawfish theft in excess of \$1,500 can land the offender with up to ten years prison time or a \$3,000 fine. But mostly, they will have to endure the humiliation of being called shellfish for the rest of their life.

Strange State Laws Part 4

Massachusetts: No dancing to the national anthem

It is prohibited to dance to the “Star Spangled Banner” in Massachusetts, thanks to an excessively patriotic 1917 law. While you try to ponder what such a dance would even look like, find solace in the fact that this law could never actually be enforced, thanks to a slightly weightier document called the First Amendment.

Minnesota: No pig greasing

Long winters can be boring, but that’s no good reason to hold a greased pig contest in your parlor. Since 1971, it has been considered a misdemeanor to operate, run, or participate in any activity where a pig is oiled up and released with the object of being recaptured—and the same goes for “turkey scrambles.”

Mississippi: No limits on Big Gulp size

Mississippi believes in a person’s inalienable right to consume Big Gulps. Following former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s contentious attempt to restrict the size of soft drinks sold throughout the city, Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant signed a law preventing his state’s lawmakers from enacting rules that limit portion sizes.

Missouri: Tarzans not welcome

Prankish Tarzans, be warned: In University City, Missouri, it is illegal to “swing upon” another person’s motor vehicle and honk their horn for them.

Strange State Laws Part 5

Nevada: Be selective with X-rays

Say what you will about the vice and commercialism of Las Vegas—at least they're looking out for your feet. In Nevada, it is illegal to use an x-ray device to determine someone's shoe size.

New Hampshire: No seaweed collecting

In New Hampshire it is forbidden to collect seaweed from the beach at night. Yes, it's unfair, but you should've thought about that before becoming a nocturnal sushi chef.

Ohio: Toilet paper in coal mines, please!

Operators of underground coal mines must provide “an adequate supply of toilet paper” with each toilet. It's too bad the letter of the law here stops at coal mines.

Oklahoma: No bear wrestling

In Oklahoma it is illegal to promote, engage in, or be employed by a “horse tripping” event. Also, it is unlawful to wrestle a bear... but at that point, the law is the least of your worries.

Utah: No missiles in bus terminals

Hurling a missile into a bus terminal is a felony—unless you are an appointed officer of the peace or commercial security personnel.

Virginia: No skunks as pets

In Prince William County, it is illegal to keep a skunk as a pet. Man, the law stinks.

Some Types of Engineers

Aerospace Engineer

Aerospace engineering is a field of engineering that specializes in designing vehicles that move through air and/or space, namely aircraft or spacecraft.

Aerospace engineering is a culmination of design, development and testing to produce top-notch civilian and military aircrafts and space crafts.

As with other fields of engineering, aerospace engineers (who design and oversee the repair of vehicles) must study for several years at a university or college and earn a degree that specializes in aerospace engineering. The course curriculum is designed to ensure critical thinking and inculcate problem-solving thinking for designing and testing aircrafts, missiles and space crafts. Aerospace engineer is responsible for devising project proposals to ensure financial and technical feasibility, ensuring effective progress of various phases in hardware development, integration and evaluation, testing and analyzing new applications for implementation in aerospace systems. Vet projects to ensure they meet the quality benchmark. Assess ongoing projects in terms of safety and feasibility to match desired objectives. Apart from the technical aspects, the job also has some managerial elements that are: Preparing risk assessment plans and elaborate strategic solutions and working on insightful and attractive presentations for prospective business contacts, clients and various stakeholders. Aerospace technicians (those who repair and construct vehicles) will complete a shorter technical course with 'on the job' training that equips them with the skills required to construct and repair said vehicles. Aerospace jobs include astronauts, pilots, and other professionals.

Civil Engineers

Civil engineering is the term for the work of designing and building infrastructure. It usually means large structures, like bridges, dams, buildings, and tunnels. It also covers complicated networks such as water, irrigation and sewerage networks. It also covers the construction of houses and homes. Civil engineers can be involved in all stages in the life of infrastructure, from planning and construction to maintenance and demolition. Civil engineering often overlaps with architecture.

Civil engineering has many different areas or disciplines. Some important areas are geotechnical, structures, environmental, construction management, hydrology, transportation, and materials. It is important for civil engineers to have an understanding of all these disciplines as projects often involve many of them at the same time.

Civil engineers are responsible for lots of the things that are required for a society to function properly. Safe water supplies, sewage treatment, roads, railways and buildings are all part of civil engineering.

To work in civil engineering requires training. Construction workers will train at a center and 'on the job' (training while doing the job), sometimes with apprenticeship.

To be a professional in civil engineering requires study at a university or college. Civil engineers often study subjects like structures, materials, physics and calculus.

The profession of civil engineering is represented by professional bodies in various countries. In the UK the Institution of Civil Engineers promotes civil engineering as a discipline and supports engineers throughout their careers. The American Society of Civil Engineers performs a similar task in the USA.

Professional engineers often choose to become Chartered Engineers. Chartership shows employers and clients that they are both qualified and experienced in their jobs. Civil engineers usually have to write a big essay and take an interview with a panel of experienced engineers to gain chartership.

Computer Engineer

Computer engineering is the practice of making computers and their parts.

Computer engineers are always trying to make new parts smaller and better. They can also work on software, especially software for embedded systems (specialized electronics like cell-phones and satellite receivers, not a general-purpose computer).

Computers are electrical machines that run programs. So, Computer engineering has parts of both electrical engineering and computer science/software engineering. In Computer engineering classes, students learn about the hardware and software of computers. This starts with learning how transistors and computer chips are made and how they work (which uses quantum mechanics). Then the student learns how the chips talk to each other and how to make a complete printed circuit board (PCB). This is the electrical part. They also learn how to program the ROM or Flash memory so the computer can do something useful.

Because Computer engineering is closely related to electrical engineering and computer science, the fields are found in the same department at many universities.[1] Students also need to learn fundamental science subjects and mathematics, such as calculus and differential equations.

Computer engineering is difficult to learn, but computer engineers are needed.[2] Software engineering companies, telecommunications firms, designers of digital hardware, and many other companies hire computer engineering majors upon graduation and pay them well.

Electrical Engineer

Electrical engineering is a subject of engineering. Its goal is to develop (think and make) different things that use electricity in a helpful way. Electrical engineers fix or design new and better ways of using devices that use electricity.

Big subjects in electrical engineering include power generation, automation and control of robots, digital systems, and information technology (using radio and computers to move and use data). To meet new needs, electrical engineering produced new specialties, such as electronic engineering and software engineering.

Early universities taught philosophy and later science. As the industrial revolution began they had to start teaching new parts of these sciences to keep up with the demand for new items.

When the industrial era began, we needed to study mathematics, physics and chemistry to help support it. These subjects are "applied" (or, used in the real world) using engineering. In the late 19th century when electricity was used to make electric motors and to send messages to far away places, a new branch called electrical engineering was invented. When radio became important, many engineers worked at it, and their branch was later expanded to cover electronic engineering.

Houghton Mifflin Texts

Why Spiders Have Long, Thin Legs

Once there was a spider named Anansi who lived a good life in Africa. His only complaint was that he was always hungry. His mother made tasty meals, but they never gave him relief from his hunger. One evening he decided to travel the plains with the hope of finding more food. He promised his worried mother that he would not get lost and that he would be polite to the other animals.

Soon Anansi smelled something delicious. Rabbit was making stew and invited Anansi in to wait for it to cook. Anansi wanted stew, but in the event that Rabbit would put him to work, the spider didn't want to wait.

Anansi spotted a piece of string.

“How about we tie one end of this string around the pot of stew and the other end around one of my legs?” he suggested. “Then, when the stew is ready, you can tug on the string and I'll return to eat!”

Rabbit agreed and Anansi quickly left. Again, the spider sniffed something delicious and found some monkeys cooking beans. They, too, invited him to wait for the beans to cook, but, again, Anansi did not want to wait. He suggested the same agreement that he had made with Rabbit.

Anansi went on to make the same agreement with six more animals making dinner that night. Each one of his eight legs was tied to a string.

Then, all at once, when the food was ready, his legs were being tugged on and pulled in eight different directions!

“Oh my!” he cried. He had not expected this. Anansi's legs were pulled thinner and thinner.

And this is why spiders today have eight long, thin legs.

Meet the Beatles

The Beatles were a rock-and-roll band from Liverpool, England. The band included John Lennon, Sir Paul McCartney, Sir Ringo Starr, and George Harrison. They became one of the most successful bands in the history of modern music.

Lennon and McCartney started a band in 1957. At first, they called themselves The Quarrymen. They eventually changed their name to the Beatles. John played guitar and Paul played the bass guitar, and both sang and wrote songs. Later, the band added Harrison on guitar and Starr on drums.

The Beatles had their first number-one hit in England in 1963. It was called "Please Please Me." The following year, they came to America. When they burst on the scene here in 1964, many American teenagers thought the Beatles were the best band they had ever seen. Many from their fan base met them at the airport and screamed when they saw them come off the plane. Parents, and other adults, were not so sure about the Beatles. They were not plain looking, and they wore their hair long. Parents did not think the Beatles' music or hairstyles were proper. Some wanted their music banned. However, over time, this uproar began to settle. The Beatles were here to stay.

The Beatles had several hit songs and influenced many singers, songwriters, and other bands. However, the band broke up in 1970, much to their fans' disappointment. People still listen to their music to this day.

Chinese New Year

You may have heard about the Year of the Dog. But do you know what it means? If you don't, you are not alone. It has to do with the celebration of the Chinese New Year. This celebration is different from the New Year's celebrations you may enjoy.

Chinese New Year is also called Lunar New Year. The word *lunar* means "moon." The festivities surrounding this holiday center around the new moon that occurs between January and February of the calendar we follow within the Western part of the world.

The citizens of China and Chinese communities around the world celebrate the Lunar New Year with very old traditions. There are many tales about how these traditions started. One tells of a monster, long ago, named *Nian* (which means "year"), who would attack villagers at the beginning of each New Year, when the weather was cool and food was scarce. The villagers, who didn't appreciate the monster's annual visits, decided to scare the beast away. The villagers used loud noises, the color red, and bright lights to chase it away. This is why Chinese New Year is celebrated with loud, bright fireworks, lanterns, and red decorations today. The celebration concludes with a Lantern Festival. People parade through the streets with bright lanterns. Often a large paper dragon is held high over the crowd as part of the parade, representing the monster the villagers chased away all those years ago.

What about those animals? Each year has an animal sign. There are twelve animals in all: rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and pig.

Now that you know about Chinese New Year, next year you can express, "Happy New Year!"

At the Border

Once long ago, a resourceful smuggler arrived at the border with a donkey. The donkey carried a heavy burden of straw on its back. The customs official at the border was suspicious. He pulled apart the man's bundles until straw was scattered everywhere, but he didn't uncover one valuable thing after his extensive search. The official was certain that the man was smuggling something, but he had no proof. He was powerless to stop the man and his donkey from crossing the border.

So it happened each day for ten years that the man went to the border with a donkey. And each time, the customs official was careful to search through the straw bundles on the donkey's back. Yet he was unable to find anything of value.

"This is hopeless!" the official would squawk. "I distrust you when you say you are not smuggling, yet I can find nothing! Go, cross the border now!"

And the man would drive his donkey across the border yet one more day.

Many years passed, and the customs official retired. One day, he happened to notice that same smuggler in a marketplace. The official immediately approached the man, grasping his arm.

The official explained, "You know that you caused me endless frustration at the border. Please, I beg you, tell me what you were smuggling. I cannot present you with a bill after all these years, but I would like to know for my own information."

The man agreed to be truthful. He said, "Donkeys."

The Ant and the Grasshopper

One day Grasshopper was doing what grasshoppers do. As he hopped around the field, he spotted Ant. He stopped and thought it would be funny to surprise her. He set his legs firmly on the ground, and with all his might he hopped the biggest hop he had ever hopped. *HOP!* He landed right behind Ant and shouted, “Hiya, Ant!”

Ant screamed and dropped all the food from her little arms.

Grasshopper laughed, quite pleased with himself.

“That was not funny, Grasshopper!” Ant snapped. “You caused me to drop the thirty pieces of grain I worked all day to collect!” She quickly bent over and started to pick up the grain.

“You work too hard, Ant,” Grasshopper smiled. “You should relax and have some fun.”

“Winter is coming, Grasshopper, and we need to prepare for the cold days ahead,” Ant replied. “If you don’t prepare, you are in danger of starving!”

“I will collect food tomorrow, for today is a perfect day to remain carefree,” said Grasshopper.

That evening a terrible wind blew across the field. Winter had arrived earlier than expected, and it remained cold for days.

Soon Grasshopper was terribly hungry, and he didn’t think he would survive. With much effort he made his way to Ant’s house. When Ant opened her door, Grasshopper saw her piles of food.

“Oh Ant, I’m so hungry,” he begged. “May I please borrow some food?” As Ant prepared a plateful of grain, she said, “I warned you, Grasshopper. You cannot survive the winter if you do not prepare.”

Grasshopper had learned his lesson and promised that from then on he would prepare for winter.

Hurricane!

A hurricane, also called a typhoon, is a strong storm that forms over the ocean. Throughout history, famous hurricanes, with names like Andrew, Katrina, and Harvey, have done a lot of damage. Many communities, especially those in the South, are very familiar with the devastation these storms can cause.

Hurricanes grow stronger in warm water. The warm wet air above the ocean's surface rises, which causes air in the surrounding area to get sucked in. This air becomes warm and wet too, and it also rises. This happens over and over again, until eventually clouds form overhead. The clouds start to spin. When enough warm, wet water gathers together, a hurricane can form.

Hurricanes bring lots of rain and strong winds. The wind can blow at speeds of 75 miles an hour and build up to 150 miles an hour! Most hurricanes stay far out at sea, but some do make their way to land. Once that happens, the powerful winds can topple stone buildings and crush iron structures.

Along with the strong winds comes a downpour of rain and a storm surge. A storm surge happens when wind pushes water toward land. This causes a couple of problems: above-normal water levels and towering waves. Wind and water can cause tremendous damage. Forecasters do their best to know where a hurricane may hit, but through no fault of their own, they aren't always right. If a hurricane does hit land, it can cause loss of power, knock down buildings, and cause flooding. At times like that, a strong, supportive community, full of people who help each other, is as valuable as gold.

Is the Monster Real?

Loch Ness is a lake in Scotland. It lies in a valley called Great Glen. The lake was formed by ice about 10,000 years ago. It is long and deep, but not very wide. Many people visit Loch Ness. Scientists also study it. That is because Loch Ness has a mystery.

People have always told stories about Loch Ness. In 1933, a man and a woman were going for a ride by the lake. They said they saw a huge creature. A reporter wrote their story in a newspaper. He called the creature a “monster.” People kept sharing the story. Soon the creature became known as the Loch Ness Monster.

But there is still a question. Is the monster real, or is it a prank? Many people claim to have seen it. They say it is black or brown and about the size of a whale. Others say it is like a sea monster with scales and a long tail. No one seems to know for sure. They say the monster slips away before they can prove it is real.

Scientists have looked for the Loch Ness Monster. As of today, no one has been able to find it. Some think it could be a kind of big eel or fish. But it is more likely that people are seeing a log or trash, which they mistake for a monster.

Will the Loch Ness Monster remain a mystery forever? Perhaps we shall never know.

Mitzi Mouse

Although Mitzi Mouse was tiny, she was also mighty. When she was born, her parents knew she was special. Born with nine other siblings, Mitzi was the first to open her eyes, scramble out of bed, and scurry. Soon she was traveling upstairs with Mother to forage for food.

On her first trip upstairs, Mitzi collected crumbs until the kitchen was spotless. She filled a backpack twice her size with crumbs and carried it back all by herself. Mother could carry only a tiny bagful.

One day Mitzi wondered why they were settling for crumbs when there were huge chunks of cheese and loaves of bread to take. When she spotted a two-pound hunk of cheese, Mitzi climbed up the cabinets, as graceful as could be, and hauled that cheese back to their den. Boy, did the mice have a bountiful feast that night!

Mitzi continued to take food and did not worry that the humans would catch her. She was not only very strong, but she was also quite quick. They had no chance of catching her.

Father, however, was not so quick. One day, a human caught him by the tail and locked him up in a cage! Mother was beside herself with sadness.

“Don’t worry,” Mitzi said, “I’ll get Father back as soon as possible.” Then she marched upstairs, found the cage, picked it up over her head, and marched back down the stairs to their den. The humans watched Mitzi in amazement.

Soon the two families struck a deal. The humans would give the mice all the food they wanted if Mitzi Mouse would work at their moving company. The deal brought both families much happiness.

Mount Rushmore

Mount Rushmore qualifies as a great American symbol. The

heads of four presidents are carved into the mountain—George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln. They are legends in U.S. history.

The memorial is located in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Work began on October 4, 1927. But it took a long time to complete the project. Almost 400 men and women worked between 1927 and October 31, 1941.

It was not easy work. They faced many challenges. Workers had to deal with extreme weather. In the summer months, it was very hot. In the winter months, it was freezing cold and windy.

The weather was just one problem. In order to carve the stone face of the mountain, workers had to trudge up 700 steps to the top. Then they sat in chairs made up of boards and ropes. The chairs were lowered over the edge on cables. Once in position in front of the mountain, the workers could begin to carve.

Some of the equipment was basic. The workers used drills and chisels. They also wedged dynamite into the rock. This way, they could blast through the rock more quickly. During the project, workers removed around 450,000 tons of rock from the mountain. Mount Rushmore was made almost a century ago. But it will stand for many years to come. It is a lasting part of America's heritage.

The Adventures of Paul Bunyan

Many years ago, Paul Bunyan was born in Maine. He was an enormous baby and continued to grow and grow. As a young fellow, Paul was so hungry that he gobbled up fifty eggs and ten sacks of buttered beans every day.

Growing up in the woods with his mother and father, Paul helped his father cut down trees. Paul possessed the strength of twelve men and could chop down a hundred trees with a single stroke of his large, sharp axe.

When Paul grew older, he left Maine and journeyed west to look for work in other forests. He settled in a logging camp in Minnesota. In the summer, giant mosquitoes created a problem at the camp. Paul had an idea for getting rid of them—bring in giant bees to destroy the mosquitoes. But the bees ended up marrying the mosquitoes, and soon produced young insects. Now the problem was even worse and the men were at their wits' end. Those insects could sting from both ends!

The insects loved sweets, though, and one day they attacked a ship delivering sugar to the camp. The mosquitoes and bees ate so much sugar they were unable move, and that problem was solved. When winter came, another problem happened in camp. The weather became so bitterly cold during a blizzard that the men grew long, long beards for warmth. When the men spoke, their words suddenly froze in mid-air. Everything they said remained frozen all winter long, and did not melt until spring.

Eventually, Paul moved on from the logging camp. There are some who say he still lives in the woods.

Why Is That Lake Pink?

In Western Australia, there are the “Pink Lakes.” These natural lakes are not pink as the result of a mistake. They get their color from the presence of algae. The lakes contain salt water. The high levels of salt create carotenoids. Carotenoids are organic pigments that can be found in plants and other organisms such as algae. Carotenoids are usually yellow to red in color.

Some lakes change color depending on temperature. One lake turns pink when the weather gets warm and dry. According to Dr. Mark Norman, high temperatures cause the water to evaporate. This causes the salt level to increase to 8 or 10 times that of the ocean. This creates an ideal habitat for the single-cell algae that produce carotenoids, turning the lake pink as a result.

Dr. Norman is a biologist who manages the lake and tracks the patterns of temperature and color. He said the lake returns to its normal colors, which are blues and browns, when the weather cools down and rains return in the winter. This usually happens in June in Australia.

Australia has quite a few pink lakes, but they can be found in other places too. There are hundreds of pink lakes throughout the world. Each lake is a different shade of pink. This is because each lake has different levels of algae and salt in the water. Some of the lakes are even bright pink like bubblegum.

You can enjoy a yummy picnic lunch near a quiet pink lake in Spain, Tanzania, Bolivia, Kenya, or Mexico.

Sinbad and Whale Island

Sinbad had big dreams—and he needed money to accomplish them. One day, Sinbad set sail with other merchants, hoping to make his fortune. After several days of sailing, they dropped anchor at a small island, intending to spend the night. However, the merchants were in for a big surprise! This was no ordinary island. It was actually a whale that had been sleeping so long that trees had started to grow on its back. When the sun set, the merchants prepared a fire. Soon, the heat of the fire woke the whale! Desperate to put out the fire, the whale dove deep into the ocean—taking the merchants along with it.

Sinbad was not a great swimmer, but he grabbed ahold of a big branch from a tree and tried to stay afloat in the stormy waves caused by the whale's dive. When the waves had calmed, he saw the merchants had left without him! They had taken their ship and were already far away. Sinbad did the only thing he could do. He climbed on top of the branch and continued to row until he made it to another island.

This island had a king, and this king had a very big problem. A weird, scary sea monster was attacking the people of the island. Sinbad arrived just in time to help him scare it off! As a reward, the king offered Sinbad a spot in his court. Soon Sinbad was declared one of the king's favorites, and his majesty showered Sinbad with wealth and gifts.

A year later, the merchants who had left Sinbad behind landed on the island. Sinbad told the king he wanted to go back with them. The king sadly agreed to let him go. He gave Sinbad his own ship and crew. Sinbad was happy to lead the way home in his beautiful new ship, filled with all of his treasure.

The Pony Express

Back in 1860, delivering the mail was not easy. The route from Missouri to California was 2,000 miles. Mail could either be taken over land by stagecoach or by ship across the sea. The stagecoach trip took 25 days, while the ship voyage took several months. People were looking for a speedier system.

The creation of the Pony Express changed things. This company used relay teams of riders and horses. The Pony Express could deliver mail in just ten days.

The company set up nearly two hundred relief stations along the route. A rider and horse would take off from the first station. Because of the rapid speed, the rider needed to switch horses about every ten miles. The rider himself would travel up to one hundred miles before a new rider took his place.

The teams rode day and night in all weather, with no exceptions. The mail had to go through. Despite the tough conditions, one relay team finished the route in record time. They made the trip in seven days and 17 hours.

The Pony Express began operating in April 1860, but in 18 months it was gone. The company never made money, losing as much as \$200,000. The telegraph was another reason the Pony Express failed. Once it became possible to send messages instantly through telegraphs, the slow mail system was doomed. The Pony Express shut down in October 1861.