

# The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

Teacher Guide  
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# How to Use This Book

This book is a part of the core curriculum in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade English class at Logos School. Each story is easily read as one assignment.

## Five Elements of Short Stories in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*

The rural village of Sleepy Hollow is the location for this story. The heavily Dutch settlement reflects the rural economy and lifestyle of the time, clearly opposite of the educated Ichabod Crane. References to the Hessian soldiers during the War for Independence date this story after the War, but no specific year is given.

There are three main characters in this story: Ichabod Crane, Brom Bones, and Katrina Van Tassel. Crane is the local school teacher and singing master. He is quite the storyteller, and he specializes in local ghost stories. He uses compliments to charm his way into the kitchens and homes of the local families where he enjoys hospitality and home cooking. Brom Bones, the nickname of the burly Abraham Von Brunt, is the local farmer vying with Crane for the hand of the fair Katrina Van Tassel, daughter of the wealthy Baltus Van Tassel. Brom Bones enjoys tormenting Crane at every opportunity. Katrina, however, is quite fond of flirting with both of these men and basks in the attention they give.

The obvious external conflict in the story is Ichabod Crane vs. Brom Bones in their affections for Katrina. They represent different aspects of manhood: Ichabod the intellectual and Brom the physical laborer. In the final chase of the book, we see Ichabod and the Headless Horseman. Although the Horseman is never clearly identified, the reader is left to make his own summation. Ichabod, for all his ghost-story telling, is frightened in his travels along the dark road. His attempts to settle himself and raise his level of courage fail as the Headless Horseman chases him down the dark country roads.

Several themes rise to the surface in this story. One of the most obvious is human selfishness. Ichabod has a selfish desire for home-cooked foods and the comforts of home. Brom Bones selfishly desires the affections of Katrina Van Tassel as a way of securing his financial future in owning the farm. Katrina selfishly leads both gentlemen on, as if playing a game. She had no true intentions of accepting either one as a suitor. Another theme is the supernatural. How do Christians explain the seemingly unexplainable? Should Christians be afraid to read “scary” stories? Is there any place in Christian literature for the horror genre?

# Grading and Accountability

No matter your school situation, record keeping is an important part of keeping track of student progress. Schools require more active record keeping on the part of the teacher, while homeschools may use simpler methods of accountability to prove student accomplishment.

There are some basic tools included in this teacher's guide to help grade the students. The first option is the list of discussion questions. These will help keep track of the important elements of the story. They can also be used as comprehension questions requiring a written response. Answers can be structured as brief statements or as complete sentences. A second option for grading is the set of quizzes. These are grouped reasonably and easily scheduled. Once again, brief answers or complete sentences can be used to assess student understanding of the storyline and concepts. A final option is for the book test to be administered when the student has completed the reading. Using a variety of testing techniques, students can demonstrate their knowledge of the storyline basics as well as the development of theme. Opinion questions are offered as a way of allowing the student to formulate and support an opinion in response to the reading. These tools may be adapted to best meet your situation.

Writing is another tool for assessing student knowledge and skill ability. Character sketches allow students to descriptively express an understanding of the relationships built within the storyline. Essays allow students to organize their thoughts based upon story events. Chapter summaries allow a student to keep track of complicated plot lines while incorporating new vocabulary and applying grammar concepts learned in English instruction. Creative writing, such as poetry, interviews, and comic illustrations, offers additional opportunities to put pen to paper. Writing assignments are also flexible enough to allow the teacher or parent to determine a proper grading standard.

## Author Biography

### Washington Irving

April 3, 1783 – November 28, 1859

Named for our first president, young Irving actually met George Washington in New York City at the age of six. The youngest of six children, he showed an aptitude for writing and storytelling at a young age. His brothers, prominent New York merchants, often supported him financially in the early days of his career. His travels throughout upstate New York provided wonderful material for his future books.

Irving created a successful pseudonym, Diedrich Knickerbocker, for the satirical *A History of New York in 1809*. While traveling in Europe, he made a life-long friendship with Sir Walter

Scott, and later served as a minister to Spain under President John Tyler.

Irving was one of the first American writers of talent to be recognized in Europe during his lifetime. He was a master of the short story and preferred setting his tales in America, based on the Dutch folklore of northern New York.

# Comprehension Questions

# The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

1. Who is the main villain of the story? Who do the townspeople think this villain might be? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Who is the hero of this story? What is he like? What is his profession within the village? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What kind of a teacher is Ichabod Crane? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. How does Ichabod make himself liked by the people of the town? What else does he do? \_\_\_\_\_

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