

Name _____

The Steel-Driving Man

In the heart of the American South, there lived a man whose strength and determination were legendary. His name was John Henry, and he was known far and wide as the steel-driving man.

Born into slavery, John Henry was no stranger to hard work. From a young age, he showed a remarkable talent for wielding a hammer, able to drive steel spikes into rock with unmatched precision and speed.



As he grew older, John Henry became known as the best steel-driver in the land. He worked on the railroads, driving spikes to lay the tracks that would connect the vast expanse of the country.

But John Henry's most famous feat came when he faced off against a steam-powered drill in a contest to see who could drive through a mountain faster. The drill, operated by the latest technology, seemed unbeatable. But John Henry was determined to prove that nothing could match the power of the human spirit.

With sweat pouring down his brow and muscles straining with every swing of the hammer, John Henry drove his spike into the rock with such force that the ground shook beneath his feet. He worked tirelessly, refusing to give in to exhaustion or defeat.

In the end, John Henry emerged victorious, his hammering echoing through the mountains as he drove the final spike into the rock. But his victory came at a cost, for as he fell to the ground, exhausted from his efforts, he breathed his last breath, leaving behind a legacy that would never be forgotten.

To this day, the legend of John Henry lives on, a symbol of strength, perseverance, and the enduring power of the human spirit.

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Reading Comprehension Questions

1. What was John Henry known for?
 - A) Driving steel spikes
 - B) Operating steam-powered drills
 - C) Building houses
 - D) Painting murals
2. Where did John Henry work?
 - A) In a factory
 - B) On the railroads
 - C) In a mine
 - D) On a farm
3. What was John Henry's most famous contest against?
 - A) A steam-powered drill
 - B) A horse
 - C) Another steel-driver
 - D) A bear
4. How did John Henry emerge from the contest?
 - A) Unscathed
 - B) Defeated
 - C) Victorious
 - D) Without a scratch
5. What is the main message of the story?
 - A) Steam-powered drills are better than humans.
 - B) Mountains are impossible to drill through.
 - C) John Henry was lazy and unreliable.
 - D) Hard work and determination can overcome any challenge.