

Word Study Read

Tall Tale

Remember to annotate as you read.

Notes

# John Henry

- 1 John Henry’s parents knew nothing about agriculture, but they knew how to cultivate a powerful boy. When he was just a baby, he could hoist enormous hammers into the air and hurl them like missiles!
- 2 When John Henry grew up, he became a steel driver for the railroad. He spent hours hammering spikes into solid rock. It was backbreaking manual labor, and he was unsurpassed. Then one year when the railroad was constructing a tunnel, a salesman showed up and introduced a newly manufactured machine. It was a steam drill. The salesman bragged that it could outwork any man.
- 3 “It can’t outwork mighty John Henry,” replied the railroad boss, and so a contest between John Henry and the machine was arranged. The salesman managed to manipulate the newfangled machine into the tunnel. John Henry had only a hammer and two strong arms, but it was his mission to beat the machine.
- 4 At first, the machine worked faster than John Henry, so John Henry grabbed another hammer and worked with both arms. Without intermission, he hammered. The ground trembled until the machine overheated and stopped.
- 5 John Henry strode out of the tunnel with his hammers held high in triumph. Then he slumped to the ground. Fellow workers rushed to help him, but it was too late. John Henry had beaten the machine, but he had taken his final breath.

# BuildReflectWrite

## Build Knowledge

Identify three important events in the history of California, and then describe in a few sentences how these events affected workers.

Events	Effects on Workers

## Reflect

### How does access to resources influence people’s lives?

Based on this week’s texts, write down new ideas and questions you have about the essential question.

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## Research and Writing

### Informative/Explanatory

“Seattle: Up and Down—and Up Again” describes how Seattle was affected by a gold rush in the 1800s. Research another city that was affected by a gold rush, and write an informative report about how the gold rush affected that city.

### Conduct Research

Use your guiding questions to conduct research this week. Gather information from at least three sources, including both print and online sources. Use your sources to plan your informational report.