

Name: _____ Teacher: _____ School: _____

Grade 4: Lesson 7 Describe the characters.

Washington Irving's The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

as retold by Kim T. Griswell

Ten years passed. The soldier's flesh and bones turned to dust, but stories of this hauntings grew. Into this haunted hollow came a scarecrow of man with ears as big as saucers and a tiny head that bobbed atop a spindly neck. Long arms dangled from his shirtsleeves. When he walked, his baggy clothes flapped as if a strong wind blew around his stick-thin frame. His name was Ichabod Crane. He came to Tarry Town to teach in the one-room schoolhouse that teetered on the edge of Sleepy Hollow.

Ichabod Crane settled quickly into a routine. His green, glassy eyes watched his small band of students to catch them in the slightest infraction. A few minutes tardy? Into the corner! A misspelled word? Spell it gain, one hundred times! Toys in the classroom? Popguns, whirligigs, little paper gamecocks went straight on the teacher's desk. And no amount of pleading could convince Ichabod Crane to return his students' treasures.

At the end of the school day, Ichabod Crane headed to the attic room he rented from Farmer Van Ripper. The walk took him along the stream, its edges just starting to crisp with ice. Frigid wind wailed through the woodland and stung his saucer-shaped ears. He shrugged his coat higher on his shoulders (which only served to make his bony wrists colder).

Twilight fell; the locals called it "the witching hour." As the sun dipped below the hills, trees turned to ghouls. Bushes rustled and leaves crackled. With every ominous sound, Ichabod's ears turned. His tiny head bobbed and swayed, first one way, then another. Shivers crept like bony fingers up his spine. All Ichabod could think to do was to sing psalms, or songs. He hoped the words would drive the shadows back to where they belonged.

He hoped the words would drive the shadows back to where they belonged. It did not work. As Ichabod rounded a corner, a great black beast thundered down the road. "Out of the way!" cried a voice. "Mischief is afoot this night!" More horses followed, breath steaming, hooves pounding.

Ichabod ran, his coattails flapping, not stopping to breathe until he'd slammed the door of his attic room behind him.

That weekend, Ichabod made himself useful to the valley's farmers. He pitched hay into wagons, hammered nails into sagging fences, and stacked wood beneath slanted sheds. As he worked, his greedy ears gathered gossip to carry from farm to farm like corn in a basket.

The farm wives flocked to him like hens, clucking at tales of their neighbors' doings. When the schoolteacher told them of the horsemen he'd seen, one portly, goodwife shook her head.

"Ay, that would be Brom Bones and his gang!" she chuckled. "The young man is well loved 'round these parts, through he's a bit of a prankster."

"Brom Bones?" Ichabod's eyebrows twitched. "A rather odd surname." (Surname just means last name.)

“Ah!” The goodwife waved a hand. “Just a nickname he’s earned for his strong broad shoulders. The young man’s family name is Van Brunt.”

Brom, if the women were to be believed, was the most eligible bachelor of Sleepy Hollow. With his herculean strength, he could raise a barn in a single day. He was wrestling champ of the county, as well. And when seated on a horse, no rider could catch him.

Ichabod had seen his type before. Every village along the Hudson River had his favorite son. They were all the same – red-faced and good-humored, with brains no bigger than the peas they planted.

“That boy loves only two things,” said the goodwife. “His horse, Daredevil, and young Katrina Van Tassel.”

Task: Complete your explanatory paragraph by describing Brom Bones and writing a concluding sentence. You have three ways from your chart to describe him: how others see him, his physical ability, and things he loves. Be sure to use details from the text.