



ESCAPE FROM SLEEPY HOLLOW:

HEADLESS IN NEW YORK

Teacher Guide

Companion Guide for the Novel by Kevin Purdy

This teacher guide includes:

✓ Think-Aloud Strategies	✓ Literary Elements Instruction
✓ Discussion Questions	✓ Character Analysis
✓ Vocabulary Support	✓ Setting and Theme Discussions
✓ Reading Comprehension Activities	✓ Small-Group and Partner Activities
✓ Prediction and Inference Prompts	✓ Suggested Student Responses

Designed for Grades 5–7

Classroom Use • Literature Circles • Small Groups • Whole-Class Instruction • Homeschooling

Teaching Focus

This guide is designed to help teachers encourage active reading through discussion, questioning, prediction, visualization, inference, and critical thinking. The activities may be adapted for whole-class instruction, small-group work, partner discussions, or independent reading.

For more information and suggestions about improving reading comprehension, fluency, and enjoyment, visit PurdyBooks.com, and be sure to sign up for the PurdyBooks newsletter to get monthly inspiration.

Introduction for Teachers

Welcome to the teacher guide for *Escape from Sleepy Hollow: Headless in New York*.

This guide is designed to help teachers, homeschool educators, librarians, and parents encourage active reading while enjoying a fun and suspenseful middle-grade adventure. Based on Washington Irving's classic tale *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, this novel is part of the *Spooky Classic Literature Adaptations* and combines mystery, humor, friendship, and spooky excitement in a story that is especially appealing to readers in grades 5–7.

Unlike traditional worksheets that focus primarily on recalling facts, this guide encourages students to think deeply about what they read. Through discussion, prediction, visualization, questioning, vocabulary development, literary analysis, and personal reflection, students learn to interact with the text and become more engaged readers.

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to be flexible.

Teachers may use the activities in a variety of ways:

- Whole-class discussions
- Small-group discussions
- Literature circles
- Partner activities
- Independent reading assignments
- Homework assignments
- Homeschool instruction

You do not need to complete every activity. Feel free to select the questions and activities that best fit the needs of your students. This guide is available in PDF and Word document forms for easy revision and printing.

The Student Reading Guide

Each chapter in the Student Reading Guide contains a variety of activities designed to strengthen reading comprehension and critical thinking skills.

Most chapters include:

- Vocabulary activities
- Reading comprehension questions
- Prediction activities
- Character analysis
- Literary elements
- Creative response activities
- Personal connections to the text

While the format remains consistent throughout the book, the focus changes from chapter to chapter to maintain student interest and provide practice with a variety of reading skills.

Think-Aloud Strategies

One of the most effective ways to improve reading comprehension is through think-alouds.

A think-aloud occurs when readers pause during or after reading to share what is happening inside their minds. Skilled readers naturally make predictions, ask questions, create mental images, draw conclusions, and connect stories to their own experiences. By modeling these processes aloud, teachers help students become more aware of the strategies successful readers use.

Throughout this guide, think-aloud suggestions are provided to help spark classroom conversations and deepen student understanding.

Examples of think-aloud prompts include:

- “I wonder why...”
- “This makes me think...”
- “I predict...”
- “This reminds me of...”
- “I’m picturing...”
- “I’m surprised that...”
- “I noticed that...”

There are no single correct answers to many of these prompts. The goal is to encourage students to support their ideas with evidence from the text and to listen respectfully to the ideas of others.

Reading Skills Emphasized in This Guide

Students will have opportunities to practice a variety of important reading skills, including:

- Vocabulary Development
- Prediction
- Questioning
- Visualization
- Making Connections
- Character Analysis
- Setting Analysis
- Theme
- Cause and Effect
- Inference
- Literary Elements
- Critical Thinking
- Discussion Skills

As students progress through the novel, these skills work together to help them become more confident, thoughtful, and independent readers.

Most importantly, remember that reading should be enjoyable. Encourage students to discuss, question, imagine, and even disagree as they explore the mysteries surrounding Hammy, the Headless Horseman, and the strange events that unfold in Sleepy Hollow and New York City.

Happy reading!

Chapter 1 Teacher Guide

Disappearing Legend

Chapter Overview

Students are introduced to Hammy, his friends Leo and Gwen, and the valuable first-edition copy of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* that has been passed down through Hammy's family. When the book suddenly disappears, Hammy becomes increasingly worried. The chapter ends with a cliffhanger that launches the central mystery of the story.

Reading Skills Focus

Primary Focus: Prediction

Secondary Focus: Character Analysis and Suspense

Vocabulary Answers

Vocabulary Word	Definition
literary	related to books and writing
precious	very valuable or important
frantically	in a hurried or panicked way
improvised	created or changed without planning ahead
descriptive	using details that help readers imagine something clearly

Reading Focus: Prediction — Answer Guide

1. What clues suggest that Hammy's book may have been taken instead of simply lost?

Possible answers:

- Hammy seems convinced he did not lose the book.
- The book is valuable and meaningful to him.
- The book disappeared unexpectedly.
- The timing of the disappearance seems suspicious.
- Hammy immediately suspects something is wrong.

Students should support their answers with details from the chapter.

Spotlight Skill: Character Analysis — Answer Guide

Choose TWO words that best describe Hammy.

Most likely answers:

☒ Responsible

☒ Nervous

Other answers may be accepted if students provide strong evidence from the text.

Sample Evidence

Responsible

- Hammy cares deeply about the missing book because it belongs to his family.
- He wants to find it and return it safely.

Nervous

- He worries about the missing book.
- He feels anxious about what might happen next.

Literary Spotlight — Answer Guide

Suspense: What event creates suspense at the end of this chapter?

Possible answers:

- Hammy's backpack is suddenly pulled away.
- Someone appears to be interfering with Hammy.
- The reader does not know who took the backpack.
- The missing book mystery becomes more serious.

Cliffhanger: Why do you think the author ended the chapter at this exact moment?

Possible answers:

- To make readers want to keep reading.
- To increase suspense.
- To leave an important question unanswered.
- To create excitement before the next chapter.

Discussion Point:

A cliffhanger encourages readers to continue because they want immediate answers.

Your Turn — Writing Activity

Imagine you are Hammy. You discover that a valuable family treasure has disappeared, and you may only have a few hours to find it. Write a five-sentence paragraph explaining what you would do next.

Assessment Suggestions:

Look for:

- Complete sentences
- Clear organization
- Realistic problem-solving
- Connection to the situation in the story

Strong responses may include:

- Searching likely locations
 - Asking friends for help
 - Informing parents or trusted adults
 - Looking for clues
 - Remaining calm and making a plan
-

What Happens Next? — Prediction Guide

1. What do you think will happen immediately after Hammy's backpack is pulled away?

Answers will vary.

Reasonable predictions:

- Hammy turns around and discovers who grabbed it.
 - A bully is involved.
 - The missing book mystery becomes more complicated.
 - Gwen and Leo become involved.
-

2. What do you predict Hammy, Gwen, and Leo will be doing by the end of Chapter 2?

Answers will vary.

Possible predictions:

- Searching for the missing book

- Confronting the person who took it
- Developing a plan
- Becoming involved in a Halloween adventure
- Visiting Sleepy Hollow locations

Encourage students to explain *why* they made their prediction.

Rate This Chapter

Rate this chapter from 5 stars (best) to 1 star (least favorite).

No right or wrong answer.

Teachers may wish to ask:

- What made you choose that rating?
 - Which part of the chapter stood out most?
 - Did the ending make you want to continue reading?
-

My Favorite Part Was...

Responses will vary.

Common answers may include:

- Learning about Hammy and his friends
 - The Halloween setting
 - Mr. Holland's classroom
 - The mystery surrounding the missing book
 - The cliffhanger ending
-

Teacher Discussion Opportunity

Chapter 1 is an excellent place to introduce the idea that readers constantly make predictions. Ask students:

“Which prediction from this chapter turned out to be correct later in the book?”

This question works especially well if students revisit the guide after finishing several chapters and helps reinforce active reading skills.

Chapter 2 Teacher Guide

A Grave Proposal

Chapter Overview

In this chapter, Hammy learns that James and Ely may know more about the disappearance of the valuable first-edition copy of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* than they initially admitted. As the confrontation escalates, James presents Hammy with a troubling proposal: meet him and Ely at the Headless Horseman Bridge on Halloween night if he wants any chance of recovering the missing book.

Meanwhile, readers learn more about the personalities of Hammy, Leo, Gwen, James, and Ely. The chapter balances suspense with humor while introducing the central challenge that will propel the story forward.

Reading Skills Focus

Primary Focus: Conflict

Secondary Focus: Character Analysis and Prediction

Vocabulary Answers

Vocabulary Word	Definition
befuddled	confused or puzzled
belated	arriving later than expected
offense	something wrong that a person has done
sinister	suggesting evil, danger, or trouble
proposal	a plan, suggestion, or offer

Think-Aloud Opportunities

Think-Aloud #1

“Gwen reacts very differently than Hammy does when dealing with bullies. I’m noticing how the characters solve problems in different ways. Leo seems calm during situations that make Hammy panic. I’m wondering how Leo’s personality might help the group later in the story.”

Think-Aloud #2

“The mention of Sleepy Hollow Cemetery and the Headless Horseman Bridge makes me think the story is moving toward something much bigger than a missing book.”

Reading Focus: Conflict

1. What conflict is Hammy facing in this chapter?

Possible answers:

- Hammy wants his father's book back.
- James and Ely appear to have taken the book.
- Hammy must decide whether to cooperate with the bullies.
- He is being pressured into meeting them on Halloween night.

Students may identify either the external conflict (Hammy vs. James and Ely) or the internal conflict (whether to accept the challenge).

2. Do you think Hammy should trust James? Why or why not?

Most students will answer **No**.

Possible evidence:

- James has bullied Hammy before.
- James refuses to return the book.
- James enjoys making other students uncomfortable.
- His proposal sounds suspicious.

Some students may argue Hammy has little choice because of the book. Accept answers supported with evidence.

Spotlight Skill: Character Analysis

Character Descriptions

Accept reasonable answers supported by the chapter.

Character	Possible Descriptions
Hammy	nervous, worried, responsible, cautious
Leo	confident, humorous, calm, practical
Gwen	brave, fierce, protective, outspoken
James	manipulative, intimidating, sarcastic, mean
Ely	goofy, clueless, immature, comic relief

Which character would you most like as a friend?

Answers will vary.

Look for:

- A clear choice.
- Supporting evidence from the chapter.
- Logical reasoning.

Common responses:

- Leo because he stays calm.
- Gwen because she is loyal and protective.
- Hammy because he is thoughtful and trustworthy.

Literary Spotlight: Humor

What part of the chapter did you find funniest?

Answers will vary.

Common responses:

- Gwen twisting Ely's ear.
- Ely misunderstanding words.
- James becoming frustrated with Ely.
- Gwen's sarcastic comments.
- Ely's attempts at helping James.

How does humor help make the story more enjoyable?

Possible answers:

- It balances the tension.
 - It makes characters more memorable.
 - It provides relief from the conflict.
 - It keeps the story entertaining.
 - It helps readers connect with the characters.
-

Your Turn Writing Activity

If you were Hammy, would you accept James' proposal?

Writing Assessment:

Look for:

- Five complete sentences.
- A clear opinion.
- Supporting reasons.
- Logical organization.

Strong responses may include:

Accepting

- The book is important.
- There may be no other way to get it back.

Refusing

- James cannot be trusted.
- The situation seems dangerous.
- An adult should be informed.

What Happens Next? (Predictions)

1. What do you think James and Ely are planning?

Answers will vary.

Reasonable predictions:

- They want to scare Hammy.
- They want to embarrass Hammy.
- They are setting up a challenge.
- They may be planning another prank.

2. What do you predict Hammy, Leo, and Gwen will decide to do after school?

Answers will vary.

Strong predictions may include:

- Meeting at the bridge.

- Trying to recover the book.
 - Making a plan together.
 - Investigating James and Ely.
-

Discussion Questions

1. Why does James enjoy controlling the situation?
 2. How do Gwen and Leo react differently to conflict?
 3. Why is Hammy especially upset about the missing book?
 4. Do you think James intended from the beginning to send them to the cemetery?
 5. What clues suggest the adventure is about to become much bigger?
-

Extension Activity

Character Ranking

Ask students to rank the five major characters in order from:

Most trustworthy → Least trustworthy

Students must justify each placement with evidence from the chapter.

This activity encourages deeper thinking about character motivation and reliability.

Rate This Chapter

No right or wrong answer.

Encourage students to explain:

- Why they chose their rating.
 - Which scene stood out most.
 - Whether the chapter made them want to continue reading.
-

Teacher Note

Chapter 2 develops both the novel's central conflict and its tone. While the missing book remains a serious problem, much of the chapter's humor comes from the interactions between James and Ely, especially Ely's confusion and James' growing frustration. This combination of tension and humor becomes one of the defining features of the novel.

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Chapter 3: The Plan

Chapter Summary

Hammy, Leo, and Gwen discuss James's challenge during lunch. Hammy worries about what might happen if they meet the bullies at the Headless Horseman Bridge, while Gwen and Leo encourage him to move forward with a plan. By the end of the chapter, the trio prepares for a Halloween night adventure that none of them will soon forget.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Analyze how characters solve problems.
 - Make inferences based on character actions.
 - Identify and interpret metaphors.
 - Explore the theme of friendship.
 - Make predictions using textual evidence.
-

Vocabulary Challenge Answer Key

Definition	Answer
a difficult choice between two options	dilemma
a positive attitude or hopeful outlook	optimism
large in amount; more than enough	ample
dangerous or risky	perilous
a planned meeting between people	rendezvous

Reading Focus: Problem Solving

1. What problem is Hammy trying to solve in this chapter?

Possible answers:

- He wants to recover his father's missing book.
- He must decide whether to meet James and Ely.
- He is trying to figure out how to get the book back without getting into trouble.

Students may mention one or more of these ideas.

2. What plan do Leo and Gwen suggest?

Answer:

Leo and Gwen suggest that Hammy tell his mother he is going trick-or-treating with them and spending the night at their house. Then they can meet James and Ely at the bridge without revealing their actual plans.

3. Do you think their plan is a good one? Why or why not?

Answers will vary.

Strong responses should include evidence and reasoning.

Possible answers:

Yes

- It gives Hammy a chance to get the book back.
- The three friends will be together.

No

- It involves lying to parents.
- Meeting bullies at night is dangerous.
- The plan could lead to bigger problems.

Spotlight Skill: Inference

What can you infer about Hammy from the fact that he barely touches his lunch?

Possible answers:

- He is worried.
- He is stressed about the missing book.
- He is distracted.
- The situation is serious enough to affect his appetite.

Students should recognize that Hammy's actions reveal his feelings.

What can you infer about Gwen from the way she reacts to James and Ely?

Possible answers:

- She is fearless.
 - She stands up to bullies.
 - She is protective of her friends.
 - She does not intimidate easily.
 - She is confident and outspoken.
-

Literary Spotlight

Metaphor

The narrator says that Hammy and the twins had become “a single three-headed creature.”

What does this metaphor tell readers about the friendship between Hammy, Leo, and Gwen?

Possible answers:

- They spend a lot of time together.
- They act like a team.
- They know each other very well.
- They often think and act together.
- Their friendship is extremely close.

Discussion Point

This metaphor exaggerates their closeness to help readers understand how connected the three friends are.

Humor

Which scene in this chapter did you find funniest?

Answers will vary.

Common responses:

- The “Invisible Hammy” game.
 - Gwen and Leo pretending they cannot find Hammy.
 - James becoming frustrated with Ely.
 - Gwen’s sarcastic comments.
 - Hammy’s reactions to his friends.
-

Your Turn Writing Activity

If you were Hammy, would you go to the bridge? Why or why not?

Writing Assessment:

Look for:

- A clear opinion.
- Supporting reasons.
- Complete sentences.
- Logical explanation.

Possible approaches:

Go to the bridge

- The book is important.
- Friends are helping.
- It may be the only way to get the book back.

Do not go

- The situation is dangerous.
- James cannot be trusted.
- An adult should become involved.

Theme Connection

How do Leo and Gwen show that they are good friends to Hammy?

Possible answers:

- They support him when he is worried.
- They help him create a plan.
- They agree to go with him.
- They stand up to James and Ely.
- They try to help him recover the book.

Students should support answers with examples from the chapter.

Discussion Opportunity

Ask students:

Would Hammy have agreed to meet James and Ely if he did not have Leo and Gwen as friends? Why or why not?

This helps students explore how friendship influences decisions.

What Happens Next?

What do you think will happen when the friends meet James and Ely at the bridge?

Answers will vary.

Reasonable predictions:

- James will create another challenge.
- The book will not be returned immediately.
- The group will enter the cemetery.
- Something spooky will happen.
- The situation will become more dangerous.

Encourage students to support predictions with clues from the chapter.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is Hammy more worried than Leo and Gwen?
 2. How do Leo and Gwen approach problems differently?
 3. Why does James enjoy controlling the situation?
 4. What clues suggest the upcoming meeting will not go smoothly?
 5. How does friendship help Hammy face difficult situations?
-

Teacher Note

Chapter 3 is an excellent chapter for discussing **inference** because readers learn a great deal about the characters through their actions rather than direct descriptions. It is also the chapter where the theme of **friendship** begins to emerge more clearly. Even though Leo and Gwen tease Hammy constantly, their willingness to help him shows that they are loyal friends who stand by him when he needs them most.

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Chapter 4: Meeting at the Bridge

Chapter Summary

Hammy, Leo, and Gwen meet James and Ely at the Headless Horseman Bridge. Instead of returning the missing book, the bullies challenge the trio to enter Sleepy Hollow Cemetery and take photographs with the mysterious Bronze Lady statue. To ensure they complete the task, James takes their cell phones and gives them a disposable camera. The chapter increases suspense while introducing the cemetery adventure.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Analyze how setting creates mood.
 - Distinguish between facts, legends, and rumors.
 - Identify imagery and hyperbole.
 - Use sensory details in descriptive writing.
 - Make predictions using textual evidence.
-

Vocabulary Challenge Answer Key

Definition	Answer
a building used to hold the remains of the dead	mausoleum
able to be thrown away after use	disposable
a feeling of disappointment or concern	dismay
the opinions people have about a person or thing	reputation
teasing or mocking in an unkind way	taunting

Reading Focus: Setting and Mood

1. What details in this chapter help create a spooky mood?

Possible answers:

- The rain.
- The Headless Horseman Bridge.
- The cemetery setting.
- The stories about the Bronze Lady.
- The approaching darkness.
- James's warnings and threats.

Students should identify specific details from the text.

2. How do the rain, bridge, and cemetery affect the mood of the story?

Possible answers:

- They create suspense.
 - They make the setting feel mysterious.
 - They increase tension and uncertainty.
 - They make readers expect something spooky to happen.
-

3. Would the chapter feel different if it took place on a sunny afternoon? Explain your thinking.

Answers will vary.

Strong responses may include:

- The story would feel less frightening.
- The bridge and cemetery would seem less mysterious.
- The atmosphere would be more ordinary.
- The tension would be reduced.

Spotlight Skill: Fact or Legend?

Choose one claim James makes about the Bronze Lady.

Possible claims:

- The Bronze Lady walks through the cemetery at night.
- She chases visitors.
- Sitting on her lap causes bad luck.
- A ghost appears from the mausoleum.

Do you think it is a fact, a legend, or a rumor? Why?

Most students should conclude these claims are:

Legend or Rumor

Possible explanations:

- There is no evidence supporting the claims.
- The stories have likely been passed from person to person.
- James may be exaggerating to scare the others.

Discussion Opportunity

Ask students:

Why do people enjoy telling spooky legends even when they may not be true?

Literary Spotlight

Imagery

Which description helped you most clearly picture the setting?

Answers will vary.

Strong examples may involve:

- The rainy bridge.
 - The cemetery.
 - The Bronze Lady.
 - The disposable camera exchange.
 - James holding the book over the river.
-

What did you imagine when you read that part?

Answers will vary. Look for sensory details and thoughtful explanations.

Hyperbole

James claims that the Bronze Lady will chase people through the cemetery and haunt them for life.

Do you think James is exaggerating? Why?

Answer: **Yes.**

Possible explanations:

- James is trying to frighten Hammy, Leo, and Gwen.
- There is no evidence that the statue comes alive.
- The statement is extreme and unrealistic.

Discussion Point

Hyperbole is intentional exaggeration used to entertain, emphasize, or create strong emotions.

Your Turn Writing Activity

Imagine that you are standing on the bridge with Hammy, Leo, and Gwen.

Write a five-sentence paragraph describing what you see, hear, and feel.

Writing Assessment:

Look for:

- At least five complete sentences.
- Sensory details.
- References to sight, sound, or emotion.
- Details connected to the setting.

Strong responses may include:

See: rain, bridge, river, cemetery

Hear: water, wind, voices, traffic

Feel: nervous, excited, cold, curious

What Happens Next?

What do you think the friends will find when they enter the cemetery?

Answers will vary.

Reasonable predictions:

- The Bronze Lady statue.
- Cemetery guards.
- More challenges from James and Ely.
- Spooky surprises.
- Nothing unusual at all.
- Something connected to the Headless Horseman legend.

Students should support predictions with clues from the chapter.

Discussion Questions

1. Why does James enjoy controlling the situation?
 2. Why does Hammy agree to continue with the challenge?
 3. How do Leo and Gwen react differently to James's stories?
 4. Why is the cemetery such an effective setting for suspense?
 5. Do you think James actually believes the Bronze Lady stories?
-

Extension Activity

Local Legends Investigation

Ask students to research a local legend, ghost story, unusual landmark, or piece of community folklore from their own town or region.

Students should answer:

- What is the legend?
- Is it based on fact, rumor, or folklore?
- Why do people continue telling the story?

Students may present their findings orally or in a short written paragraph.

Rate This Chapter

There are no right or wrong answers.

Possible follow-up questions:

- Which scene was most suspenseful?
- Did the bridge meeting turn out the way you expected?
- Which character stood out most in this chapter?

Teacher Note

Chapter 4 marks an important transition in the novel. Up to this point, the mystery has focused on the missing book and the bullies' challenge. In this chapter, the setting begins to take center stage. The combination of rain, darkness, local legends, and the cemetery creates a classic spooky atmosphere that prepares readers for the adventure ahead. This chapter is especially useful for teaching how **setting influences mood** and how legends can shape characters' expectations.

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Chapter 5: Into the Cemetery

Chapter Summary

Hammy, Gwen, and Leo enter Sleepy Hollow Cemetery at night and search for the mysterious Bronze Lady statue. Along the way, they encounter eerie tombstones, mausoleums, and cemetery guards while discussing local legends. Each character reacts differently to the spooky surroundings. After taking photographs with the Bronze Lady, the chapter ends with a dramatic cliffhanger when Gwen and Leo spot something terrifying behind Hammy.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Practice visualization skills while reading.
 - Analyze character reactions to fear.
 - Identify suspense and foreshadowing.
 - Explore the theme of friendship.
 - Make predictions using textual evidence.
-

Vocabulary Challenge Answer Key

Definition	Answer
serious, sad, or solemn	somber
respectfulness and self-control	dignity
skilled at doing something	proficient
causing feelings of fear or discomfort	unnerving
the entrance or beginning of something	threshold

Reading Focus: Visualization

1. What details helped you picture the Bronze Lady?

Possible answers:

- Her dark bronze appearance.
- Her downcast eyes.
- The moonlight shining on the statue.
- The statue sitting beside the mausoleum.
- Her sad or solemn expression.

Students should cite specific descriptions from the text.

2. What details made the cemetery seem spooky?

Possible answers:

- Darkness and clouds.
 - Tombstones and mausoleums.
 - The cemetery at night.
 - Cemetery guards.
 - The quiet atmosphere.
 - The legends surrounding the Bronze Lady.
 - Hammy's fearful imagination.
-

Spotlight Skill: Character Analysis

Character Reactions

Character	How does this character react in the cemetery?
Hammy	Nervous, frightened, cautious, easily startled
Leo	Uses humor, jokes, and teasing to deal with fear
Gwen	Brave, confident, sarcastic, takes charge

Which character reacts most like you would? Explain.

Answers will vary.

Look for thoughtful explanations supported by evidence from the chapter.

Literary Spotlight

Suspense

List two moments that increased the suspense.

Possible answers:

1. Sneaking through the cemetery after dark.
 2. Hiding from the cemetery guards.
 3. Approaching the Bronze Lady statue.
 4. The strange atmosphere around the mausoleum.
 5. Gwen and Leo suddenly becoming frightened at the end.
-

Why do you think the author ended the chapter before revealing what Hammy saw?

Possible answers:

- To create a cliffhanger.
 - To make readers want to continue.
 - To increase suspense.
 - To build excitement for the next chapter.
-

Foreshadowing

Earlier in the chapter, the characters discuss the Bronze Lady and the possibility that something strange could happen.

Do you think these conversations may have been clues about later events?

Possible answers:

Yes.

The discussions prepare readers for something unusual or frightening happening later in the chapter.

Students may mention:

- Stories about the Bronze Lady.
 - The spooky atmosphere.
 - Hammy's growing fear.
 - Leo's jokes about ghosts and the mausoleum.
-

Your Turn Writing Activity

Imagine you are writing a journal entry after visiting the Bronze Lady.

Assessment Checklist:

- Written in first person.
- Includes feelings and reactions.
- Includes details from the cemetery.
- Describes memorable events.
- Uses complete sentences.

Possible emotions:

- Fear
- Nervousness
- Excitement
- Curiosity
- Relief

Theme Connection

Find one example of a character helping, encouraging, or protecting a friend.

Possible answers:

- Gwen leads the group through the cemetery.
- Leo encourages Hammy.
- Gwen and Leo complete the challenge alongside Hammy.
- The twins stay with Hammy despite being frightened.

Why is friendship important in this chapter?

Possible answers:

- Friends help each other face fears.
- Hammy would not have entered the cemetery alone.
- The twins provide support and encouragement.
- Working together helps them complete the challenge.

What Happens Next?

1. What do you think Gwen and Leo saw behind Hammy?

Predictions will vary.

Many students may predict:

- The Headless Horseman.
 - A ghost.
 - A cemetery guard.
 - A living statue.
 - Some other frightening figure.
-

2. What do you predict will happen at the beginning of Chapter 6?

Predictions may include:

- The friends will run.
- They will discover the Headless Horseman.
- The mystery will deepen.
- Someone will chase them through the cemetery.

Students should support predictions with clues from the chapter.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is Hammy more frightened than Gwen and Leo?
2. Why does Leo joke so much when things become scary?
3. How does the cemetery setting affect the mood of the story?
4. Do you think the Bronze Lady stories are legends, rumors, or facts?
5. Which part of the chapter would make the best scene in a movie?

Research Extension Activity

Students may choose one topic:

- Sleepy Hollow Cemetery
- The Bronze Lady statue
- The town of Sleepy Hollow
- Washington Irving
- The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

Students should answer:

- What did you learn?
- What surprised you?
- How does it connect to this chapter?

This activity helps students connect fiction with real-world history and locations.

Rate This Chapter

There are no right or wrong answers.

Possible discussion prompts:

- Which scene was your favorite?
 - Which scene was the spookiest?
 - Did the chapter make you want to keep reading?
 - What was the most suspenseful moment?
-

Teacher Note

Chapter 5 is one of the strongest suspense chapters in the novel. The author combines a real historical setting, local legends, humor, and character interactions to gradually build tension. The chapter is especially useful for teaching suspense, foreshadowing, characterization, and visualization because readers experience the cemetery largely through Hammy's nervous perspective. The cliffhanger ending provides an excellent opportunity for prediction activities before students begin Chapter 6.

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Chapter 6: Headless in Sleepy Hollow

Chapter Summary

The terrifying figure behind Hammy is revealed to be the Headless Horseman. Hammy, Leo, and Gwen flee through Sleepy Hollow Cemetery while the mysterious rider pursues them. The friends race across the Old Horseman Bridge, hide among rocks near the river, and narrowly avoid being caught. Just when they think they may have escaped, a cemetery guard spots them, forcing them to run even deeper into the cemetery.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Draw conclusions using textual evidence.
 - Analyze cause-and-effect relationships.
 - Identify suspense techniques.
 - Explore how courage can exist alongside fear.
 - Make predictions based on story events.
-

Vocabulary Challenge Answer Key

Definition	Answer
dangerous or risky	perilous
a daydream or deep thought	reverie
made louder or stronger	amplified
land or ground in a particular area	terrain
not being genuine or truthful	insincerity

Spotlight Skill: Drawing Conclusions

What evidence suggests that the Headless Horseman is dangerous?

Possible answers:

- The horseman chases the children through the cemetery.
- The horse rears up and charges toward Hammy.
- The friends run away in fear.
- The hoofbeats continue following them.
- The horseman seems determined to catch them.

Students should support answers with specific examples from the text.

Do you think the Horseman is real, a prank, or something else?

Answers will vary.

Accept any reasonable response supported by evidence.

Examples:

The Horseman is real

- The friends all see him.
- He follows them throughout the cemetery.
- The hoofbeats continue even after they hide.

The Horseman is a prank

- The appearance resembles the famous legend.
- Someone could be wearing a costume.
- It is Halloween night.

Something supernatural

- The horseman seems impossible to escape.
- He appears suddenly and repeatedly.
- The atmosphere feels mysterious and eerie.

Reading Focus: Cause and Effect

1. Why do Hammy, Leo, and Gwen jump off the bridge?

Cause:

- The Headless Horseman is chasing them and closing in.

Effect:

- They hide below the bridge among rocks and bushes.
-

2. Why do the friends hide among the rocks and bushes?

Cause:

- They hope the Horseman will not see them.

Effect:

- The Horseman crosses the bridge and eventually rides away.
-

3. What causes the trio to run deeper into the cemetery at the end of the chapter?

Possible answer:

- A cemetery guard spots them and shouts at them.
 - They are afraid of being caught.
 - The gate is locked, so they cannot leave.
-

Your Turn Writing Activity

Journal Entry: Hiding Beneath the Bridge

Assessment Checklist:

- ✓ Written in first person
- ✓ Includes feelings and thoughts
- ✓ Describes the setting
- ✓ Uses details from the chapter

✓ Contains complete sentences

Possible emotions:

- Fear
- Panic
- Relief
- Confusion
- Exhaustion

Literary Spotlight

Suspense

List two moments that increased suspense.

Possible answers:

1. The Headless Horseman first appears.
2. The chase through the cemetery.
3. Crossing the bridge.
4. Jumping from the bridge.
5. Hiding while hearing the hoofbeats.
6. The Horseman stopping above them.
7. The cemetery guard spotting them.

Which moment was the most suspenseful? Why?

Answers will vary.

Students should explain their reasoning with details from the chapter.

Personification

“The clip-clop of hoof beats grew louder and closer.”

What effect does repeatedly hearing the hoofbeats have on the reader?

Possible answers:

- Creates tension and suspense.
- Makes the Horseman seem relentless.
- Helps readers feel the characters’ fear.
- Builds anticipation.

- Makes the danger feel close.

Teacher Note:

Technically, this example functions more as **sound imagery** than personification. Students may discuss how the repeated hoofbeats create suspense and help readers “hear” the danger approaching.

Theme Connection

Courage does not always mean being fearless. How does Hammy show courage in this chapter even though he is frightened?

Possible answers:

- He keeps running despite being terrified.
- He jumps off the bridge.
- He hides quietly while the Horseman searches nearby.
- He continues moving even when he wants to give up.
- He follows Gwen and Leo through dangerous situations.

Discussion Point:

Students often think courage means not being afraid. This chapter provides a strong example that courage means acting despite fear.

What Happens Next?

What do you think the cemetery guard will do now that he has spotted the three friends?

Predictions may include:

- Chase them through the cemetery.
- Call for help.
- Try to escort them out.
- Catch them and contact their parents.
- Mistake them for troublemakers.

Encourage students to support predictions with evidence from the chapter.

Discussion Questions

1. Why does Gwen naturally become the group’s leader?
2. How does Leo use humor during frightening situations?
3. Why is the bridge such an important location in this chapter?
4. Which escape decision was the smartest one?

5. Would you have jumped off the bridge? Why or why not?

Cross-Curricular Connection

The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

Compare this chapter with Washington Irving's original story.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is the bridge important in both stories?
 - How does the author's version of the Horseman compare with Irving's?
 - Which version feels scarier?
-

Rate This Chapter

No right or wrong answers.

Discussion Prompts:

- What was your favorite scene?
 - What was the scariest moment?
 - Which part felt most like a movie?
 - Did the chapter make you want to keep reading?
-

Teacher Note

Chapter 6 serves as the novel's first major action sequence. The pace accelerates dramatically as the mysterious Horseman shifts from legend to apparent reality. The chapter is especially useful for teaching suspense, cause and effect, prediction, and character response to fear. Students are often eager to discuss whether the Horseman is supernatural, human, or something in between, making this chapter an excellent springboard for classroom discussion.

Escape from Sleepy Hollow: Headless in New York

Teacher Guide

Chapter 7: Out of the Cemetery

Chapter Summary

Hammy, Leo, and Gwen continue their desperate attempt to escape Sleepy Hollow Cemetery. Using teamwork, they avoid both the cemetery guards and the Headless Horseman. The trio finally reaches the South Gate, but it is locked. With help from Leo and Gwen, Hammy climbs over the fence. Just when they think they have escaped, the Headless Horseman charges through the cemetery gate, terrifying tourists, James, and Ely alike.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Evaluate character decisions.
 - Analyze leadership qualities.
 - Examine how suspense is developed.
 - Compare settings and mood.
 - Explore themes of friendship and teamwork.
-

Vocabulary Challenge Answer Key

Definition	Answer
people who are in a place or vehicle	occupants
a difficult problem or choice	dilemma
extremely tired	exhaustion
quieter or less intense than before	subdued
a guard or watcher	sentinel

Reading Focus: Evaluating Decisions

1. What was Leo's plan for escaping the cemetery?

Possible answer:

Leo suggested that they run as fast as possible toward the South Gate and, if they spotted lights from the guards or the Horseman, split up and hide.

2. Do you think Leo's plan was a good one? Why or why not?

Answers will vary.

Possible responses:

Yes

- It gave them a clear goal.
- It helped them keep moving.
- It eventually got them to the South Gate.

No

- Splitting up could have been dangerous.
- They might have gotten separated.
- They still faced several obstacles.

Students should support their answers with evidence from the chapter.

Spotlight Skill: Leadership

Who acts as the leader for most of this chapter?

☐ Hammy

☐ Leo

☒ Gwen

☐ James

Give two examples from the chapter that support your answer.

Possible answers:

- Gwen directs the group where to hide.
 - Gwen helps make escape decisions.
 - Gwen takes charge at the South Gate.
 - Gwen organizes the plan to help Hammy climb the fence.
 - Gwen often gives instructions during dangerous situations.
-

What qualities make a good leader?

Possible answers:

- Courage
- Confidence
- Good decision-making
- Responsibility
- Problem-solving
- Staying calm during emergencies
- Helping others

Teacher Note:

Encourage students to distinguish between being bossy and being an effective leader.

Literary Spotlight

Suspense

What moment created the most suspense for you?

Answers will vary.

Possible answers:

- Hiding in the trees.
 - Hearing hoofbeats.
 - Reaching the locked gate.
 - Climbing the fence.
 - The guard spotting them.
 - The Horseman charging through the South Gate.
-

Why did that moment stand out?

Students should explain how the scene created uncertainty, danger, or excitement.

Imagery

The author describes the South Gate area as being lit by lamps and nearby town lights.

How does this setting differ from the darker parts of the cemetery?

Possible answers:

Dark Cemetery

Isolated

Shadowy

Hard to see

Feels mysterious

Creates fear

South Gate

Near town

Well lit

Easier to see

Feels safer

Creates hope

Discussion Point:

The brighter setting briefly gives readers hope that the characters might finally escape.

Your Turn Writing Activity

Imagine you are one of the tourists leaving the cemetery when the Horseman charges through the South Gate.

Assessment Checklist:

- ✓ Describes what the student sees.
- ✓ Describes what the student hears.
- ✓ Includes emotions and reactions.
- ✓ Uses details from the chapter.
- ✓ Contains at least five complete sentences.

Possible sensory details:

See

- A giant horse
- A glowing pumpkin head

- Panicked tourists
- The cemetery gate

Hear

- Hoofbeats
- Screaming
- Shouting
- The horse's snorting

Feel

- Fear
- Confusion
- Shock
- Panic

Theme Connection

Describe one example of the friends working together in this chapter.

Possible answers:

- Leo and Gwen help Hammy climb the fence.
- The friends warn each other about danger.
- They stay together despite being frightened.
- They share ideas for escaping.

Why would it have been harder for Hammy to escape the cemetery alone?

Possible answers:

- He is more cautious than the twins.
- He would not have known where to go.
- Gwen provided leadership.
- Leo encouraged him.
- The twins physically helped him over the fence.

Teacher Note:

This question highlights one of the novel's major themes: friendship provides strength during difficult situations.

Discussion Questions

1. Why does Hammy blame himself for the situation?
 2. How do Leo and Gwen react differently to danger?
 3. Would you have climbed the fence? Why or why not?
 4. Why is the locked gate such an effective obstacle?
 5. How do James and Ely change when they see the Horseman?
-

Extension Activity

Escape Plan Challenge

Ask students:

“If you were trapped inside the cemetery, what would your escape plan be?”

Students should:

- Describe their plan.
- Explain why it would work.
- Identify possible risks.

This activity encourages problem-solving and creative thinking.

Rate This Chapter

No right or wrong answers.

Discussion prompts:

- What was your favorite part?
 - What was the most exciting scene?
 - What was the most suspenseful moment?
 - Which character made the best decision?
-

Teacher Note

Chapter 7 serves as the climax of the cemetery sequence. The chapter combines suspense, action, teamwork, and humor while reinforcing Gwen’s leadership role and the importance of friendship. The dramatic appearance of the Horseman at the South Gate raises the stakes and confirms that the danger is no longer confined to the cemetery, setting up the next phase of the adventure.

Escape from Sleepy Hollow: Headless in New York

Teacher Guide

Chapter 8: Legendary Swamp

Chapter Summary

After escaping the cemetery, Hammy, Leo, and Gwen race through the streets of Sleepy Hollow. Hammy briefly mistakes a Halloween scarecrow for another monster before the trio reaches Patriots Park. There, Hammy realizes the park was once known as Wiley's Swamp, the very location where Ichabod Crane first encountered the Headless Horseman in Washington Irving's famous story. As they hide near a monument, the sound of approaching hoofbeats suggests the Horseman may have followed them.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Make connections between the novel and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*.
 - Analyze how sound contributes to suspense.
 - Practice using vocabulary words in context.
 - Visualize a setting through drawing and description.
 - Make predictions based on story clues.
-

Vocabulary Challenge

Students create original sentences using the vocabulary words.

Sample Sentences

minuscule — The minuscule flashlight barely lit the trail.

dwindled — Our supply of snacks dwindled during the long hike.

contemplations — Hammy's contemplations kept him awake late into the night.

conviction — Gwen spoke with conviction when she insisted they keep moving.

monument — The monument stood in the center of the park.

Grading Suggestions

Look for:

- ✓ Correct use of the word
 - ✓ Sentence demonstrates understanding
 - ✓ Complete sentence structure
 - ✓ Vocabulary word clearly circled
-

Reading Focus: Making Connections

Story Connection Detective

In Washington Irving's story, Wiley's Swamp is important because:

Possible answers:

- Ichabod Crane first encounters the Headless Horseman there.
 - It is one of the story's most suspenseful locations.
 - It helps begin the famous chase scene.
-

In this chapter, Patriots Park becomes important because:

Possible answers:

- Hammy realizes it is Wiley's Swamp.
- The friends hide there.
- The Horseman appears to follow them there.
- The location connects the modern story to Irving's original tale.

Literary Spotlight

Sounds in the Story

Matching Activity Answer Key

Effect	Answer
Creates fear and anticipation	A. Clip-clop
Shows danger from traffic	C. Blaring horns
Reveals hidden communication	B. Hiss
Shows sudden fright	D. Screech

Onomatopoeia

Think of another word that is an onomatopoeia.

Possible answers:

- Buzz
- Bang
- Crash
- Boom
- Pop
- Sizzle
- Splash
- Clang
- Thud
- Creak

Accept any reasonable sound word.

Quick Sketch Activity

Patriots Park Sketch

Student drawings will vary.

Check for inclusion of:

- ✓ Statue
- ✓ Hiding place
- ✓ Horseman
- ✓ Road

Discussion Questions:

- Why did you place the Horseman where you did?
- Which feature seems most important in the chapter?
- Which part of your drawing feels the spookiest?

Your Turn Writing Activity

Hiding Beside the Statue

Assessment Checklist:

- ✓ Written in first person
- ✓ Includes thoughts and feelings
- ✓ Uses details from the chapter
- ✓ Describes suspense
- ✓ Contains at least five complete sentences

Possible feelings:

- Fear
- Nervousness
- Curiosity
- Panic
- Uncertainty

Prediction Meter

Circle the prediction you think is MOST likely.

There is no single correct answer.

Students should support their prediction using clues from the chapter.

Possible evidence:

A. The Horseman rides away

- He may lose track of them.

B. The Horseman discovers the kids

- The hoofbeats are getting closer.

C. The cemetery guards arrive

- The guards have already been chasing them.

D. Something completely unexpected happens

- Many surprising events have already occurred in the story.

Discussion Questions

1. Why does Hammy immediately connect Patriots Park to *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*?
2. How does knowing the original legend increase suspense?
3. Why does Hammy mistake the scarecrow for another monster?
4. How do Leo and Gwen react differently to frightening situations?
5. Why do you think the author chose Patriots Park for this scene?

Literary Connection

Comparing Stories

Discuss how the author uses locations from Washington Irving's original story.

Questions:

- Why might readers enjoy recognizing places from the original legend?
- How does using Wiley's Swamp make the chapter more suspenseful?
- What similarities do you notice between Ichabod Crane and Hammy?

Extension Activity

Soundtrack for Suspense

Ask students:

“If this chapter were a movie scene, what sounds would be most important?”

Students might list:

- Hoofbeats
- Wind
- Traffic
- Rustling leaves
- Hissing voices
- Breathing
- Rain

Discuss how sounds help create mood and suspense.

Rate This Chapter

No right or wrong answers.

Discussion prompts:

- What was the most suspenseful moment?
 - What part felt most like a movie scene?
 - What prediction did you choose and why?
 - Which sound in the chapter was most effective?
-

Teacher Note

Chapter 8 provides an excellent opportunity to connect the novel directly to Washington Irving’s original *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. Students often enjoy recognizing Wiley’s Swamp and understanding its importance in both stories. The chapter also offers strong examples of suspense through sound imagery, making it ideal for discussing how authors create tension without relying solely on action.

Escape from Sleepy Hollow: Headless in New York

Teacher Guide

Chapter 9: Ghouls on Parade

Chapter Summary

The friends continue their escape through Tarrytown and decide to head toward the police station. Along the way, Gwen steps in horse manure, they encounter Randy and Tammy Purcell returning from the Halloween parade, and the mystery of the Headless Horseman deepens. Just when safety seems within reach, the Horseman appears directly in front of the police station, forcing the trio to abandon their plan and run once again.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Practice vocabulary through matching definitions.
 - Analyze character behavior during stressful situations.
 - Examine how humor can exist alongside suspense.
 - Distinguish between facts, opinions, and predictions.
 - Gather evidence to support conclusions.
-

Vocabulary Challenge Answer Key

Vocabulary Word	Definition
apprehended	arrested or captured
cantering	moving at an easy horse-running pace
gravity	seriousness or importance
decapitated	having the head removed
adorned	decorated or embellished

Character Ranking Challenge

Rank the characters from most calm (1) to least calm (3).

Suggested ranking:

1 — Leo

2 — Gwen

3 — Hammy

Accept reasonable variations if students provide evidence.

Explain one of your rankings.

Possible answers:

Leo

- Remains logical throughout the chapter.
- Talks through problems calmly.
- Communicates with Randy and Tammy normally.

Gwen

- Takes charge but becomes frustrated and impatient.

Hammy

- Frequently worries about the Horseman.
 - Panics more easily than the others.
-

Literary Device Hunt

Find the Humor

There is no single correct answer. Students may choose:

- ☐ Gwen stepping in horse manure
- ☐ Hammy worrying about missing the parade
- ☐ Leo trying to explain things to Hammy
- ☐ Gwen's comments to the Purcell twins
- ☐ "Plan B"

Why was it funny?

Possible answers:

- Unexpected situation.
 - Character reactions.
 - Sarcasm.
 - Embarrassment.
 - Timing of the joke during a tense moment.
-

Mood Meter

Circle the mood you felt most strongly while reading.

Answers will vary.

Find one moment that created that mood.

Possible examples:

Nervous

- Hearing hoofbeats again.

Excited

- The race toward the police station.

Amused

- Gwen stepping in horse manure.

Scared

- The Horseman appearing outside the station.

Curious

- Meeting Randy and Tammy.

Encourage students to support answers with evidence from the text.

Mystery Detective

List two clues that suggest the Horseman is intentionally tracking them.

Possible answers:

Clue #1

- The Horseman repeatedly appears wherever the friends go.

Clue #2

- He blocks their path to the police station.

Additional possibilities:

- He follows them from the cemetery.
- He reappears after they think they escaped.
- He seems focused specifically on Hammy, Leo, and Gwen.

Fact, Opinion, or Prediction?

Answer Key

Statement	Answer
The police station is nearby.	F
Gwen is the bravest member of the group.	O
The Horseman will eventually catch the kids.	P
Randy and Tammy rode horses in the parade.	F
Hammy worries more than Leo.	O

Quick Creative Activity

Newspaper Headline

Answers will vary. Possible examples:

- Mysterious Horseman Terrorizes Tarrytown!
- Sixth Graders Flee Strange Halloween Pursuer!
- Headless Rider Sighted Near Police Station!
- Halloween Chase Stuns Local Students!

Look for creativity and connection to chapter events.

Your Turn Writing Activity

Imagine you are Randy or Tammy Purcell.

Assessment Checklist:

- ✓ Written from Randy's or Tammy's perspective
- ✓ Includes observations about the trio
- ✓ Describes confusion or concern
- ✓ Uses details from the chapter
- ✓ Contains complete sentences

Possible observations:

- The friends looked frightened.
- They seemed in a hurry.
- Their explanations were unusual.
- Something seemed wrong.

Prediction Meter

What do you think will happen first in Chapter 10?

There is no single correct answer. Students should support their choice with evidence. Possible reasoning:

The kids reach the police station

- They are very close already.

The Horseman catches up

- He is directly in front of them.

An adult finally believes their story

- They may encounter police officers.

The Horseman disappears

- He has vanished before.

Something completely unexpected happens

- The story often surprises readers.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think the author included Randy and Tammy in this chapter?
 2. How does humor help balance the suspense?
 3. Why is Gwen so frustrated throughout the chapter?
 4. Why don't the friends tell Randy and Tammy the entire truth?
 5. What would you have done if you were standing outside the police station?
-

Mini-Lesson: Fact, Opinion, and Prediction

Review:

Fact

- Can be proven true.

Opinion

- Personal belief or judgment.

Prediction

- A statement about what may happen in the future.

Extension:

Ask students to create one fact, one opinion, and one prediction about Chapter 10.

Rate This Chapter

No right or wrong answers. Discussion prompts:

- Which scene was funniest?
 - Which scene was most suspenseful?
 - Did the Horseman seem more dangerous in this chapter?
 - Which character would you most want beside you during an emergency?
-

Teacher Note

Chapter 9 is particularly effective because it blends humor and suspense. Students often enjoy the horse manure scene and the awkward encounter with Randy and Tammy, but those lighter moments also make the Horseman's sudden appearance near the police station feel even more dramatic. The chapter provides excellent opportunities to discuss mood, evidence-based predictions, and how authors use humor to increase the impact of frightening scenes.

Chapter 10 Teacher Guide

Unexpected Train Ride

Chapter Overview

After narrowly escaping the Headless Horseman near the police station, Hammy, Leo, and Gwen race toward the Tarrytown train depot. Believing they have finally found a way to escape, they board a southbound train and develop a simple plan: ride to Irvington and return on the next train.

Unfortunately, Hammy discovers too late that they boarded an express train. Instead of stopping in Irvington, the train speeds past the station and continues toward New York City.

This chapter marks an important turning point in the novel. For one of the first times, Hammy becomes the group's problem-solver and takes decisive action during a crisis.

Reading Skills Focus

Primary Focus: Cause and Effect

Secondary Focus: Character Development, Problem-Solving, and Prediction

Vocabulary Answers

apprehensive — worried or nervous about what might happen

barrier — something that blocks movement or progress

conductor — a person who collects tickets and assists passengers on a train

express — a train that skips some stations and makes fewer stops

anguish — emotional pain, distress, or suffering

Cause and Effect Challenge Answers

Hammy refused to climb over the fence. → The twins had to follow another route.

The Horseman jumped the fence. → The Horseman proved even more dangerous than expected.

The friends ran through the train station. → The friends headed toward the depot.

Hammy and twins boarded the train. → The Horseman was temporarily left behind.

The train was an express train. → The friends were headed all the way to New York City.

Character Spotlight Answers

Hammy Saves the Day

Students should check:

- ✓ Finds a way around the fence
- ✓ Suggests a plan involving the train
- ✓ Boards the train first
- ✓ Helps the group escape the Horseman
- ✓ Figures out where they should get off the train

Discussion for why/how Hammy is becoming a stronger character:

Possible responses:

- Hammy is becoming more confident.
- He is beginning to trust his own ideas.
- His knowledge helps the group.
- He takes action instead of simply worrying.
- He shows courage even while being afraid.

Teacher Discussion Point:

This chapter marks one of the first times Hammy becomes the group's problem-solver rather than relying primarily on Gwen and Leo.

Literary Spotlight

Simile Hunt

What is being compared in the simile?

“Like a demon reindeer on Christmas...”

Answer:

The Headless Horseman's horse is being compared to a flying reindeer.

Why is this comparison effective?

Possible answers:

- Readers can easily picture a reindeer leaping through the air.
- The comparison creates a vivid image.
- It combines something familiar (reindeer) with something frightening (demon).
- It emphasizes how unexpectedly high the horse jumps.

Teacher Note:

This simile also adds a touch of humor to an otherwise suspenseful scene.

Quick Activity

Create a Train Warning Sign

Student answers will vary.

Possible examples:

- Beware of Headless Horsemen.
- Watch for runaway legends.
- Do Not Board Express Trains Without Checking the Schedule.
- Warning: Supernatural Pursuers May Be Present.
- Look Both Ways Before Escaping Monsters.

Look for creativity and connection to chapter events.

Problem Solvers

Problem #1

A horseman is chasing you toward a train station.

What would you do?

Answers will vary.

Encourage students to explain their reasoning.

Problem #2

You accidentally board an express train.

What would you do next?

Answers will vary.

Possible responses:

- Stay calm.
 - Ask a conductor for help.
 - Contact family.
 - Get off at the next stop.
 - Find a safe place to wait.
-

Prediction Detective

Circle all the possibilities you think might happen next.

All choices are reasonable predictions.

Students should support their selections with evidence.

Which possibility seems MOST likely?

There is no single correct answer.

Common choices may include:

- ☒ The Horseman follows them.
 - ☒ The friends get lost in New York City.
 - ☒ They meet new characters.
-

Your Turn Writing Activity

Imagine you are sitting on the train as it speeds past Irvington Station.

Assessment Checklist:

- ✓ Written in first person
- ✓ Describes thoughts and feelings
- ✓ Includes details from the chapter
- ✓ Shows understanding of the situation
- ✓ Contains at least five complete sentences

Possible emotions:

- Shock
- Worry
- Confusion
- Excitement
- Fear
- Curiosity

Discussion Questions

1. Why does Gwen become frustrated with Hammy early in the chapter?
 2. Why is Hammy's knowledge of trains suddenly important?
 3. How does this chapter show Hammy growing as a character?
 4. Would you have boarded the train? Why or why not?
 5. How does the express-train twist change the direction of the story?
-

Extension Activity

Route Detective

Using a map of the Hudson River towns, locate:

- Tarrytown
- Irvington
- New York City

Discuss:

- How far did the friends travel?
 - Why might New York City feel overwhelming to sixth graders?
 - How does changing the setting affect the story?
-

Rate This Chapter

No right or wrong answers.

Discussion prompts:

- What was the most exciting moment?
 - What was the biggest surprise?
 - Was boarding the train a smart decision?
 - What would you have done differently?
-

Teacher Note

Chapter 10 serves as a major turning point in the novel. The setting shifts from Sleepy Hollow and Tarrytown to New York City, dramatically expanding the scope of the story. The chapter also highlights Hammy's growth as a character. While Gwen remains the group's leader in many situations, Hammy becomes the key problem-solver, using his knowledge and initiative to help the group escape immediate danger. The express-train revelation creates an excellent cliffhanger and gives students plenty of opportunities to practice prediction skills

Chapter 11 Teacher Guide

Escape to the City

Chapter Overview

After accidentally boarding an express train, Hammy, Leo, and Gwen arrive in New York City at Grand Central Station. While the twins struggle to process their unexpected trip, Hammy attempts to develop a plan for returning home. Unfortunately, the group's problems are far from over. Just when they think they may have escaped the Headless Horseman, they discover that their mysterious pursuer has somehow followed them all the way to New York City.

This chapter represents a major turning point in the novel as the setting shifts from Sleepy Hollow and Tarrytown to one of the largest cities in the world.

Reading Skills Focus

Primary Focus: Character Development

Secondary Focus: Setting, Dialogue, Problem Solving, and Prediction

Vocabulary Challenge Answers

1. shrill — **E** (high-pitched or sharp sounding)
2. disbursed — **D** (spread out or scattered)
3. detrained — **C** (got off a train)
4. hubbub — **A** (crowded activity or confusion)
5. disembark — **B** (leave a train)

Discussion Prompt

How did the surrounding sentences help you determine the meaning of unfamiliar words?

Story Journey Tracker Answers

Correct order:

1. Sleepy Hollow Cemetery
2. Patriots Park
3. Tarrytown Police Station
4. Tarrytown Train Station
5. Grand Central Station

Student explanations will vary.

Character Growth Tracker Answers

Students should check:

- ✓ Explains how the trains work
- ✓ Creates a plan for getting home
- ✓ Helps the twins understand the situation
- ✓ Tries to solve the ticket problem
- ✗ Remains calm the entire chapter

Suggested Responses

Students may note:

- Hammy is becoming more confident.
- He contributes useful knowledge.
- He attempts to solve problems.
- He takes initiative instead of waiting for others.

Dialogue Detective Answers

“Cruel your jets, both of you.” → Leo

“We can’t go all the way to New York City.” → Gwen

“It’s not rocket science.” → Hammy

“What do we do next?” → Leo

“I have no idea where I’m going, but good luck keeping up with me.” → Gwen

Discussion Prompt

How does each character’s dialogue reveal his or her personality?

Possible Responses:

Hammy:

- Knowledgeable
- Nervous
- Practical

Leo:

- Peacemaker
- Humorous
- Flexible

Gwen:

- Direct
- Bold
- Action-oriented

Problem and Solution Challenge Answers

No tickets → Hide in the bathroom

Express train → Ride to Grand Central

Horseman at the station → Board the train

Getting to New York City → Look for train employees

Horseman appears again → Run

Discussion Prompt

Were these effective solutions or temporary solutions?

Grand Central First Impressions

Sample Responses

Students' answers will vary. Possible words:

- Overwhelmed
- Excited
- Nervous
- Curious
- Amazed
- Confused
- Lost
- Scared

Explain One of Your Choices

Look for explanations that connect the chosen feeling to details from the chapter. Example:

"I chose overwhelmed because there are huge crowds, trains, tunnels, and unfamiliar places everywhere."

Quick Creative Activity

Lost and Found Announcement

Student responses will vary.

Sample answers:

- “Attention passengers: A slightly soggy copy of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* has been found wandering the station without its owner.”
- “Lost: One exhausted sixth grader named Hammy. If found, please return to his worried friends.”
- “Found: One pair of patience. Believed to belong to Gwen. Please claim immediately.”

Award credit for creativity and connection to chapter events.

Prediction Web

Check Every Prediction That Seems Possible

All of the listed predictions are reasonable based on the chapter ending:

- ☒ The Horseman continues chasing them.
 - ☒ The friends find help.
 - ☒ Someone finally believes their story.
 - ☒ The Horseman causes chaos in the station.
 - ☒ The friends become separated.
 - ☒ They discover a clue.
 - ☒ Something completely unexpected happens.
-

Which Prediction Seems MOST Likely?

Possible answers:

- The Horseman continues chasing them.
- The friends find help.
- Someone finally believes their story.

The strongest answer is usually:

The Horseman continues chasing them.

Why?

Possible answer:

“Because the chapter ends with the Horseman spotting the friends in Grand Central Station, suggesting the chase is not over.”

Your Turn

Grand Central Station Paragraph

Assessment Checklist:

- ✓ Written in first person
- ✓ Describes what the student sees
- ✓ Describes thoughts and feelings
- ✓ References the Horseman’s appearance
- ✓ Includes details from the chapter

Possible emotions:

- Shock
- Fear
- Panic
- Confusion
- Disbelief
- Anxiety
- Excitement

Teacher Note

Many students will focus on the surprise that the Horseman somehow followed the group all the way to New York City. This realization is the chapter’s major cliffhanger and should be reflected in strong responses.

Chapter 12 Teacher Guide

Debacle on Fifth Avenue

Chapter Overview

The friends escape Grand Central Station and find themselves wandering through the streets of New York City. Hammy attempts to lead Gwen and Leo to his sister Winnie's apartment but soon discovers that he has confused her workplace with her residence. As frustration mounts and the group becomes increasingly lost, the Headless Horseman reappears, forcing them to flee once again.

This chapter highlights the challenges of navigating an unfamiliar city while under pressure. It also shows both the strengths and weaknesses of Hammy's growing leadership role.

Reading Skills Focus

Primary Focus: Setting

Secondary Focus: Character Development, Humor, Prediction, and Vocabulary in Context

Pre-Reading Answers

Debacle

Correct answer:

✓ **A confusing failure or disaster**

Discussion

Ask students:

- Why might an author choose a word like *debacle* for a chapter title?
- What expectations does it create before reading?

Possible Response:

Students should predict that something will go wrong, a plan will fail, or the characters will encounter unexpected trouble.

Vocabulary Challenge Answers

Lost in the City

Vocabulary Word	Definition
maze-like	confusing and difficult to navigate
revelers	people celebrating or partying
tirade	a long, angry speech
inconspicuous	not easily noticed
glowing coal	a glowing piece of burning wood or coal

Vocabulary Discussion

Ask which vocabulary word best describes:

- Grand Central Station? (*maze-like*)
 - The Halloween crowds? (*revelers*)
 - Gwen's angry speech? (*tirade*)
 - The Horseman trying to blend into the crowd? (*inconspicuous*)
-

Reading Check Answers

1. Why does Hammy want to stay close to Gwen and Leo?

✓ He worries they could become separated in the crowded station.

2. Where does Hammy first lead the group?

✓ Toward the station exits

3. What clue makes Leo think they may be heading in the right direction?

✓ Fifth Avenue

4. What important mistake does Hammy make?

✓ He confuses his sister's workplace with her apartment.

5. What causes Leo to shout, "Run!"?

✓ The Headless Horseman

Character Tracker Answers

Students should check:

- ✓ Tries to help
- ✓ Gets frustrated
- ✓ Pretends to know more than he does

- ✓ Makes an important mistake
- ✓ Continues searching for solutions
- ✗ Gives up

Suggested Discussion

Hammy is changing throughout the novel.

Earlier chapters:

- Nervous
- Passive
- Relies heavily on the twins

This chapter:

- Takes initiative
- Tries to solve problems
- Makes mistakes
- Accepts responsibility

Literary Spotlight Answers

Humor in a Serious Situation

Event	Answer
Leo suggests “The Legend of Headless Hammy”	B
Gwen threatens to create a real headless person	A
Hammy keeps guessing where to go	C

Discussion Prompt

Why include humor during frightening scenes? Possible Answers:

- Provides relief from tension
- Makes characters feel realistic
- Keeps the story enjoyable
- Balances scary moments with funny moments.

Setting Detective

Student responses will vary.

Possible answers:

Grand Central Station

- Crowded
- Busy
- Noisy
- Confusing
- Massive

Fifth Avenue

- Rainy
- Dark
- Busy
- Urban
- Filled with Halloween costumes

Quick Write

Suggested Responses / Assessment Notes

Student answers will vary. Look for:

- A clear opinion
- Support from details in the chapter
- Logical reasoning
- A complete paragraph of approximately five sentences

Possible Response (Hammy is helping):

Hammy is helping the group because he remembers that his sister works in New York City. Even though he cannot remember every detail, he gives the group a destination and keeps them moving. His idea leads them to Fifth Avenue instead of wandering aimlessly. He is trying to solve the problem despite being scared and tired. Without Hammy, the group would have even fewer clues about what to do next.

Possible Response (Hammy is making things worse):

Hammy unintentionally makes things worse because he is unsure where his sister lives. He mistakes her workplace for her apartment and leads the group in the wrong direction. This wastes time and frustrates Gwen. The friends spend valuable time searching for the wrong place. However, Hammy is honestly trying to help rather than cause problems.

Prediction Time

1. *What do you think the friends should do next?*

Suggested Answers:

- Find a police officer or trusted adult.
- Look for a safe indoor location.
- Contact Hammy's sister.
- Ask for directions or help.
- Continue moving away from the Horseman.
- Find a way to return to Grand Central Station.

Accept any reasonable answer supported by evidence from the story.

2. *Why do you think the Horseman continues following them?*

Suggested Answers:

- He is trying to catch them.
- He wants something from them.
- He is connected to the missing book.
- He has a specific reason for watching the three friends.
- He may be trying to protect them, even if they do not realize it yet.

Discussion Note:

This question is designed to encourage inference and prediction. At this point in the story, students do not yet know the Horseman's true identity, so multiple answers may be reasonable if supported by evidence from the text.

Extension Activity

New York City Survival Guide

Have students create a one-page guide called: **"How Not to Get Lost in New York City"**

Include:

- Five pieces of advice
- A simple map or sketch
- One humorous warning
- One piece of advice Hammy should have followed

Optional: Students can work individually or in pairs.

Research Connection

Fifth Avenue Investigation

Students research:

- Why Fifth Avenue is famous
- Major landmarks located there
- Famous stores or buildings
- Why tourists often visit it

Discussion Prompt: How is Fifth Avenue different from the towns of Sleepy Hollow and Tarrytown?

Teacher Note

Chapter 12 is an excellent example of how setting influences character behavior. In Sleepy Hollow, Gwen often took charge because she knew the area well. In New York City, everyone feels uncertain. Even Hammy, who knows slightly more than the twins, struggles to navigate unfamiliar surroundings.

Students should also notice that Hammy's mistakes are becoming more meaningful. Earlier mistakes often came from fear. Here, they come from overconfidence and faulty memory. This creates a more complex and realistic character while continuing his growth throughout the story.

Chapter 13 Teacher Guide

A Stroll in the Park

Chapter Overview

The friends flee through New York City and seek refuge in Central Park. Along the way, Hammy freezes with fear, mistakes a statue for the Headless Horseman, and struggles to keep pace with Gwen and Leo. The trio attempts to find help from carriage drivers but receives little assistance. Just when they believe they have escaped their pursuer, the Headless Horseman reappears in a surprising new form—riding in a horse-drawn carriage.

This chapter combines suspense, humor, characterization, and vivid setting descriptions while continuing the chase through an iconic New York City location.

Reading Skills Focus

Primary Focus: Setting and Visualization

Secondary Focus: Suspense, Characterization, Vocabulary Development, and Prediction

Pre-Reading Discussion

Possible Responses

What sounds might students hear in a dark park?

- Wind
- Rustling leaves
- Footsteps
- Animal sounds
- Voices
- Traffic in the distance

What things might make students nervous?

- Darkness
 - Being alone
 - Strange noises
 - Not knowing where they are
 - Unexpected people or animals
-

Vocabulary Challenge Answer Key

Sort It Out!

Feelings & Emotions

- irate
- imminent

(Teachers may discuss that “imminent” describes something about to happen and often creates feelings of anxiety.)

Talking & Communication

- cajoling
- visage

(Note: Some students may not place “visage” here. Accept reasonable discussion. It means face or appearance.)

Thinking & Understanding

- reverie
- surmised

Bonus Sentence

Answers will vary.

Students should use the vocabulary word correctly and demonstrate understanding of its meaning.

Vocabulary Definitions

- reverie — a daydream or deep thought
 - imminent — about to happen very soon
 - cajoling — persuading through encouragement or repeated urging
 - irate — very angry
 - visage — a person’s face or appearance
 - surmised — guessed or concluded from evidence
-

Reading Check Answers

1. Why does Hammy freeze instead of running?

✓ He becomes frightened and overwhelmed.

2. What does Hammy mistake for the Headless Horseman?

✓ A statue

3. Where do the friends hide?

✓ Central Park

4. Why do the carriage drivers refuse to help?

✓ Both B and C could be supported.

(They are closing and are generally unwilling to become involved.)

5. What surprising vehicle is the Horseman using?

✓ A carriage

Literary Spotlight Answer Guide

Building Suspense

Possible answers:

- Hammy freezing while the Horseman approaches
- The friends hiding in Central Park
- Hearing “Stop those kids”
- Running deeper into the dark park
- Hearing hoofbeats again after believing they escaped

Why do these moments create suspense?

Possible responses:

- Readers worry about the characters.
- Danger seems close.
- The outcome is uncertain.

- The Horseman appears difficult to escape.

Setting Focus

Central Park at Night

Possible Safe Elements

- Other people nearby
- Carriage drivers
- Public paths
- Lights
- Open spaces

Possible Scary Elements

- Darkness
- Trees
- Isolation
- Unfamiliar surroundings
- Limited visibility

Discussion Prompt:

How can one setting feel both safe and dangerous at the same time?

Character Comparison

Students may choose any character if supported with evidence.

Hammy

Possible evidence:

- Continues moving despite fear.
- Tries to identify landmarks.
- Notices details.

Gwen

Possible evidence:

- Takes charge.
- Makes quick decisions.
- Keeps moving.

Leo

Possible evidence:

- Finds hiding places.
- Looks for help.
- Remains calm under pressure.

Visualizing the Scene

Student sketches and descriptions will vary.

Teacher Discussion

Ask:

Which details from the text helped you picture the statue?

Possible answers:

- Massive horse
- Raised front legs
- Bulging eyes
- Bronze appearance
- Rider pointing

Quick Fun Activity

What Happens in Central Park?

Answers will vary.

Possible examples:

- Scarecrow
- Tree stump
- Garbage can
- Mailbox
- Park bench
- Statue
- Bushes

Discussion Prompt:

Why do ordinary objects often appear frightening in the dark?

Prediction Time

Why do you think he changed from a horse to a carriage?

Suggested Answers:

- He needed a faster way to travel through New York City.
- A carriage fits in better with the horse-and-carriage rides in Central Park.
- He may have borrowed or taken the carriage to continue chasing the friends.
- The carriage allowed him to follow the trio after they left the area with the tourist carriages.
- He is determined to keep up with the friends and is adapting to changing circumstances.

Accept any reasonable prediction supported by details from the chapter.

What do you think will happen next?

Suggested Answers:

- The Horseman will catch up to the friends.
- Someone in Central Park will help the trio.
- The friends will discover who the Horseman really is.
- The chase will continue deeper into Central Park.
- The Horseman will reveal why he has been following them.

Your Turn

Postcard from the Adventure

Assessment Notes

Student responses will vary. Look for:

- First-person point of view
- Details from the chapter
- Description of events, thoughts, and feelings
- Approximately five complete sentences
- Creativity and connection to the story

Sample Response:

Dear Mom and Dad,

You will never believe what happened tonight. My friends and I accidentally ended up in New York City while being chased by the Headless Horseman. We hid in Central Park and even talked to some carriage drivers. Just when we thought we were safe, the Horseman showed up again in a horse-drawn carriage. I hope we make it home soon

Rate This Chapter

Student responses will vary.

Favorite Moment

Possible answers:

- The discovery of Central Park.
- The statue that briefly scares Hammy.
- Meeting the carriage drivers.
- The Horseman returning in a carriage.
- Gwen's comments and reactions.

Biggest Surprise

Possible answers:

- The Horseman riding in a carriage.
- The Horseman finding them again.
- The rude carriage driver.
- The realization that they are alone in a dark part of Central Park.

One Question I Still Have Is:

Possible answers:

- Who is the Headless Horseman?
- Why is he following the friends?
- How does he keep finding them?
- Will the friends ever get home?
- What will happen when the Horseman catches up to them?

Teacher Note:

The “One Question I Still Have Is” response is especially useful for discussion. Student questions can help identify areas of curiosity, confusion, and engagement as the story approaches its climax.

Teacher Note

Chapter 13 offers an excellent opportunity to discuss how setting influences mood. Earlier chapters relied on the eerie atmosphere of Sleepy Hollow Cemetery. Here, the author creates suspense in a completely different environment: one of the most famous parks in the world.

Students should also notice Hammy's continued development. While fear still affects him, he no longer gives up. Even when frightened, he continues moving forward and contributing to the group's efforts. This subtle growth is an important part of his character arc throughout the novel.

Chapter 14 Teacher Guide

Headless in New York

Chapter Summary

The chase reaches its climax in Central Park. Hammy, Gwen, and Leo believe they have finally escaped the Headless Horseman, only to discover he is still following them. After a desperate run through the park, they become trapped on a bridge between two horsemen. The mystery is finally solved when the Horseman removes his pumpkin head and reveals himself to be Mr. Holland. With help from Felix, a Central Park carriage driver, the group rushes back toward Grand Central Station in hopes of catching the last train home.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Analyze the climax of the novel.
 - Identify how suspense is built and then released.
 - Examine how the author uses a surprise reveal.
 - Evaluate clues that foreshadow the mystery's solution.
 - Trace character reactions during a major turning point.
-

Vocabulary Activity Answer Key

Mystery Word Challenge

1. bewilderment
 2. ominous
 3. formidable
 4. detour
 5. cantering
 6. vice
-

Reading Check Answer Key

1. Why do the friends think they have escaped?

They believe the carriage cannot fit on the narrow path through the trees.

2. What surprise do they discover near the opening in the trees?

The Headless Horseman appears again riding a different horse.

3. Where do the three friends become trapped?

On a bridge in Central Park with horsemen on both sides.

4. What shocking discovery does Gwen make?

The Headless Horseman removes his pumpkin head and is revealed to be Mr. Holland.

5. Who is Felix?

A Central Park carriage driver and coworker of Mr. Holland.

6. How did Mr. Holland follow the students?

He used a horse and carriage, later unhitching the horse and riding it through the park.

Literary Spotlight Answer Key

The Big Reveal

Before the Reveal

Possible answers:

- The glowing pumpkin head.
- The horseman appearing in different locations.
- The frightening costume.
- The horseman silently chasing the students.
- The mysterious behavior throughout the story.

After the Reveal

The Horseman is actually Mr. Holland, who has been following the students to keep them safe.

Character Reflection Answer Key

Character	Description
Hammy	B. Tries to understand what is happening
Gwen	A. Takes charge and asks direct questions
Leo	C. Helps keep everyone moving and thinking

Reading Fluency Activity

Which emotion should be strongest?

Fear or Confusion

Students should recognize that the characters are witnessing something impossible—or so they think. The reveal creates both fear and confusion.

Making Connections

Answers will vary.

Encourage students to connect the chapter to experiences where they misunderstood a situation or discovered that something frightening had a logical explanation.

Design the Disguise Activity

This is a fun activity to help students connect with the text in a creative way. Answers will vary.

Possible responses:

- Pumpkin mask
- Wide-brimmed hat
- Black cloak
- Horse
- Gloves
- Dark clothing

Encourage students to support their choices with evidence from the text.

Rate This Chapter

Student ratings will vary.

Encourage students to support their ratings with specific details from the chapter.

Possible reasons for high ratings:

- The mystery of the Headless Horseman is finally solved.
- Mr. Holland is revealed as the Horseman.
- The exciting chase comes to an end.
- Readers learn how Mr. Holland tracked the students.
- The story moves toward its conclusion.

Possible reasons for lower ratings:

- Students wanted more action.
- Students were disappointed that the Horseman was not supernatural.
- Students preferred earlier chase scenes.

One Question I Still Have Is:

Student responses will vary.

Possible questions include:

- What will happen when the friends get home?
- How will their parents react?
- Will James and Ely get into trouble?
- Will Hammy's book be returned?
- What consequences will the friends face?
- Will the friendship between Hammy, Leo, and Gwen change?
- What will happen on the train ride home?

Teacher Discussion Note:

This question is useful for identifying which plot threads students are still thinking about before reading the final chapter.

Prediction

Only one chapter remains after this one. Now that the mystery of the Horseman has been revealed, what important questions still need to be answered?

Suggested Answers:

- Will the friends make it home safely?
- How will their parents react to their adventure?
- Will Hammy get his copy of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* back?
- What will happen to James and Ely?
- Will Mr. Holland explain everything to the parents?
- Will the friends face consequences for their actions?
- How will the story end for Hammy, Leo, and Gwen?

Teacher Discussion Note:

Students should recognize that the central mystery (the Horseman's identity) has been solved, but several story threads remain unresolved. Strong predictions will focus on these remaining conflicts and how the author might bring the story to a satisfying conclusion.

Teacher Notes

Chapter 14 serves as the climax of the novel and resolves the story's central mystery. Throughout the chapter, students should notice how suspense gradually gives way to surprise as the frightening Headless Horseman is revealed to be someone familiar and trustworthy. This chapter provides an excellent opportunity to discuss how authors plant clues throughout a story and how readers' assumptions can sometimes lead them in the wrong direction. Students should also recognize how Hammy, Leo, and Gwen have grown as characters since the beginning of the novel, demonstrating greater courage, persistence, and teamwork. Encourage discussion about the difference between appearance and reality, as well as how the revelation of Mr. Holland's identity changes students' understanding of earlier events in the story.

Looking Ahead to Chapter 15

At the end of this chapter, the mystery is solved, but several questions remain:

- Will the students make the last train?
- Will Hammy get his book back?
- What happened to the phones?
- How will the parents react?
- What consequences will James and Ely face?

These questions help create anticipation for the final chapter.

Chapter 15 Teacher Guide

Back to the Hollow

Chapter Summary

In the final chapter, the mystery of the Headless Horseman is fully explained. Mr. Holland reveals how he followed the students throughout their adventure and why he appeared to be the legendary horseman. The students race to catch the last train home, recover their phones and Hammy's treasured copy of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, and are reunited with their relieved parents. The story concludes with humor, friendship, and a sense of closure as the three friends return safely home after an unforgettable Halloween adventure.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Identify how the author resolves the major conflicts of the novel.
 - Analyze character growth throughout the story.
 - Recognize the purpose of a story's resolution.
 - Evaluate themes that emerge from the novel.
 - Reflect on the complete reading experience.
 - Support opinions with evidence from the text.
-

Pre-Reading: Before You Read

Suggested Responses / Discussion Notes

Student answers will vary. Possible answers include:

- The main problem or conflict is resolved.
- Important questions are answered.
- Characters learn something or grow.
- The ending makes sense based on what happened earlier in the story.
- The reader feels satisfied, happy, surprised, or emotionally connected to the outcome.
- Loose ends are tied up.
- The ending fits the tone and themes of the story.

Teacher Discussion Note:

Before reading, encourage students to think about what they expect from the final chapter. Ask them to identify any unanswered questions from the story so far. After completing the chapter, revisit this question and discuss whether *Escape from Sleepy Hollow: Headless in New York* provided a satisfying ending and why. This activity helps students evaluate the novel as a whole and think critically about how authors conclude stories.

Vocabulary Answer Key

Vocabulary Word	Meaning
sheepish	feeling embarrassed
desolate	empty and lonely
besieged	surrounded by people
reassurance	words or actions that reduce worry
persistent	refusing to give up
alternate	switch back and forth

Reading Check Answer Key

1. Why was Mr. Holland dressed as the Headless Horseman?

He had been riding in the Sleepy Hollow Halloween Parade and later followed the students to keep an eye on them.

2. How did Mr. Holland know the students were planning to go to the cemetery?

He overheard part of the conversation between James, Ely, and the students outside his classroom.

3. What happened to the Purcell family's horse?

Mr. Holland tied the horse at the station and contacted the Purcells, who agreed to pick it up.

4. How did Mr. Holland stay in contact with the students' parents?

He communicated with them through text messages.

5. What important items did Mr. Holland return?

The students' cell phones and Hammy's copy of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*.

6. How did James and Ely react?

They were frightened by their encounter with the Headless Horseman and appeared unlikely to bother the students again.

7. How does the story end?

The students return safely to Tarrytown, reunite with their parents, and recover Hammy's book.

Literary Spotlight Answer Key

Resolving the Conflict

Problem

Hammy's book is stolen.

The students lose their phones.

The Headless Horseman mystery.

The students are stranded in New York City.

Resolution

Mr. Holland recovers it from James and Ely.

Mr. Holland returns them.

Mr. Holland was the Horseman.

Mr. Holland helps them return home.

Character Growth Discussion

Hammy

At the beginning of the story, Hammy avoids risks and lacks confidence. By the end, he has faced numerous frightening situations and shows courage even when he remains afraid.

Gwen

Gwen remains bold and fearless throughout the story, but she also shows loyalty and concern for her friends. Her courage repeatedly helps the group survive difficult situations.

Leo

Leo continues to balance Gwen's impulsiveness and Hammy's caution. He often serves as the group's peacemaker and problem-solver.

Theme Detective

Students may select several themes:

Friendship

The three friends continually help and protect one another.

Courage

The students repeatedly face frightening situations despite their fears.

Responsibility

The students learn that choices have consequences.

Trust

The friends must trust one another throughout the adventure.

Family Importance

Parents and older mentors ultimately help guide and protect the students.

Perseverance

The characters continue moving forward despite numerous setbacks.

Story Timeline Answer Key

1. Hammy's book is stolen.
 2. The students visit the Bronze Lady.
 3. The Headless Horseman appears.
 4. The friends ride an express train.
 5. Mr. Holland reveals himself.
 6. The students return home.
-

My Favorite Moment

Answers will vary. Encourage students to support their choice with specific details from the text.

Possible favorites:

- The Bronze Lady scene
 - The first appearance of the Horseman
 - The train ride to New York City
 - The reveal that Mr. Holland is the Horseman
 - The reunion with parents
 - Humorous interactions between the friends
-

Escape from Sleepy Hollow: The Movie

Teacher Notes

This culminating activity combines:

- Persuasive writing
- Literary analysis
- Character study
- Creative thinking
- Speaking and listening skills

Students should support their casting choices and movie recommendations with evidence from the novel.

For the extension activity, students can collaborate to create a class letter using the strongest ideas from individual letters. This provides excellent practice in revision, discussion, consensus-building, and persuasive writing.

Optional: Teachers may choose to send the completed class letter to a movie studio, production company, author, or publisher.

End-of-Book Discussion Questions

1. Were you surprised that Mr. Holland was the Headless Horseman? Why or why not?
 2. What clues did the author provide before the reveal?
 3. Which character changed the most during the story?
 4. Which scene was the most exciting?
 5. Which scene was the funniest?
 6. If you could add one extra chapter, what would happen?
 7. Would you read another adventure featuring Hammy, Gwen, and Leo?
-

Extension Activities

1. Design a Movie Poster

Create a movie poster for *Escape from Sleepy Hollow: Headless in New York*. Include:

- Title
- Main characters
- A memorable scene
- A movie tagline

2. Write a Sequel Blurb

Write a one-paragraph summary for a possible sequel.

3. Compare Two Legends

Compare the Headless Horseman from Washington Irving's story with the "Headless Horseman" in this novel.

How are they similar? How are they different?

4. Class Debate

Was Mr. Holland justified in following the students all night without revealing himself sooner?

Have students support their arguments with evidence from the text.

Teacher Notes

Chapter 15 provides resolution to the major conflicts of the novel and brings the adventure to a satisfying conclusion. Students should notice how the author answers the remaining questions, reunites the friends with their families, and restores Hammy's missing book. This chapter is a good opportunity to discuss what makes an effective ending and whether the story's conclusion feels earned. Encourage students to reflect on how Hammy, Gwen, and Leo have changed since Chapter 1 and how the themes of friendship, courage, trust, and perseverance are reinforced in the final pages. The chapter's blend of humor, relief, and closure helps bring the novel full circle. On the following pages, you will find supplemental teaching suggestions and activities.

Final Teacher Reflection

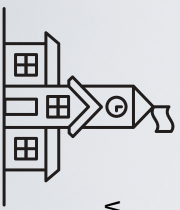
This chapter provides a strong opportunity to discuss how authors conclude stories. Students can examine how the author resolves conflicts, rewards characters for their growth, and leaves readers with both closure and the possibility of future adventures.

If students enjoyed this novel, consider introducing additional spooky literature, including Washington Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and other books in the Spooky Classic Literature Adaptations series, including *The Legend of Decimus Croome: A Halloween Carol*.

Sleepy Hollow Story Map

As you read "Escape from Sleepy Hollow," add setting and plot details to this story map.

In six different spots in the book, explain what is happening on the top line and where it is happening on the bottom line.



what:

.....

where:

.....



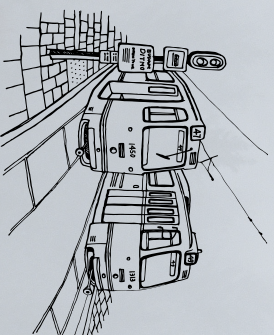
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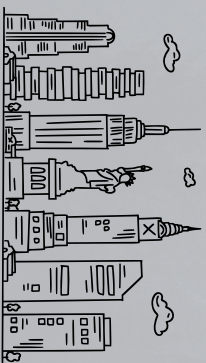
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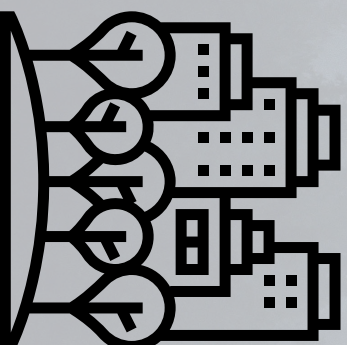
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Map of Sleepy Hollow and Tarrytown



Sleepy Hollow Cemetery



Headless Horseman Bridge

**Sleepy
Hollow**

Broadway



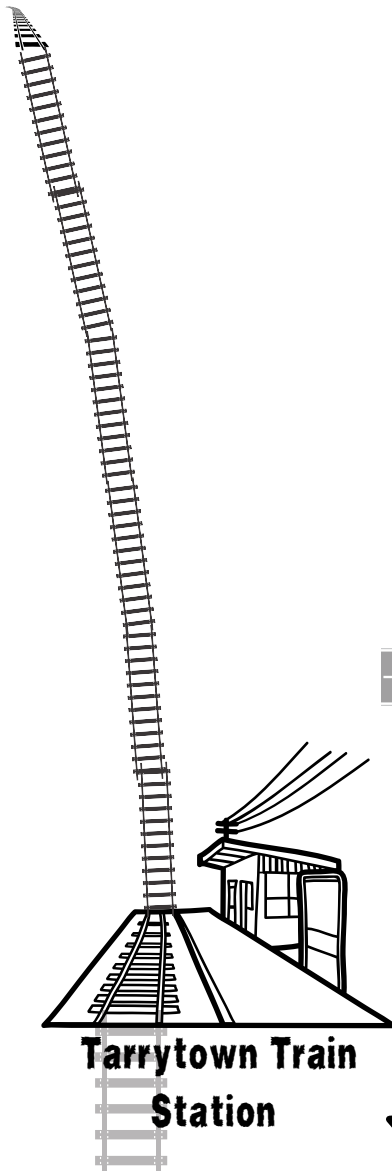
**Sleepy Hollow
Middle School**



Patriots Park

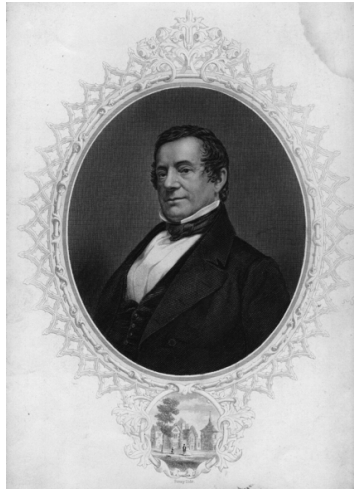
Main Street

Tarrytown



**Tarrytown Train
Station**

↓ New York City



Fun Facts About Washington Irving

1. He Created the Headless Horseman

Irving wrote *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* in 1820. The story introduced readers to Ichabod Crane and the Headless Horseman, one of the most famous ghosts in American literature.

2. He Also Created Rip Van Winkle

Many people know Irving for another famous tale, *Rip Van Winkle*, about a man who falls asleep for 20 years and wakes up after the American Revolution.

3. He Was Named After George Washington

Irving was born in 1783, the same year the American Revolution ended. His parents admired George Washington so much that they named their son Washington.

4. He Actually Met George Washington

When Irving was a child, a family friend introduced him to George Washington. Irving later recalled the meeting with pride. Altogether, met and/or befriended five United States presidents.

5. He Was America's First International Literary Celebrity

Before Irving, few American writers were famous overseas. His books became popular in both the United States and Europe, making him one of America's first internationally recognized authors.

6. He Lived in Europe for Many Years

Irving spent nearly two decades in Europe, living in places such as London and Madrid. He wrote many of his most famous works while abroad.

7. He Helped Make Christmas More Popular

Irving wrote warmly about Christmas celebrations at a time when many Americans did not celebrate the holiday as widely as they do today. His writings helped revive interest in Christmas traditions.

8. He Was a Diplomat

Later in life, Irving served as the U.S. ambassador to Spain. Not many famous authors have also been ambassadors.

9. He Loved the Hudson Valley

Many of his stories were inspired by the scenery and folklore along New York's Hudson River. The villages of Sleepy Hollow and Tarrytown are still closely associated with his work. The town and Amtrak train stop, Irvington, is named after Washington Irving.

10. His Home Still Exists

Irving's home, Sunnyside, still stands along the Hudson River and is open to visitors. The cottage looks like something from one of his stories.

11. He Popularized the Nickname "Gotham"

Long before Batman's Gotham City existed, Irving used "Gotham" as a humorous nickname for New York City. The comic-book city later borrowed the name.

12. He Invented the Name "Knickerbocker"

Irving created the fictional historian Diedrich Knickerbocker. The name became associated with old New York families and even **inspired the nickname "Knicks" for the New York Knicks.**

13. He Never Married

Irving was engaged to a woman named Matilda Hoffman, but she died young. He never married and remained devoted to his writing and family.

14. He Was One of America's First Professional Writers

At a time when most authors had other jobs, Irving earned much of his living from writing, helping pave the way for future American authors.

15. He Is Buried in Sleepy Hollow

Today, Washington Irving is buried in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, not far from the setting of his most famous ghost story.

Fun Classroom Discussion Question

If Washington Irving could visit modern Sleepy Hollow today, what do you think would surprise him most: the tourists, the Halloween celebrations, or the fact that people are still reading his stories more than 200 years later?

Washington Irving Research Activity

Meet the Author Behind the Horseman

Consider these potential enrichment activities for your entire class or for advanced readers/writers.

Research Washington Irving and answer the following questions:

1. When and where was Washington Irving born?
2. Which famous American president was he named after?
3. What are his two most famous stories?
4. What famous New York City nickname did Irving help popularize?
5. Where is he buried?
6. What was the name of his home along the Hudson River?
7. Why is Washington Irving considered one of America's most important authors?

Extension Question

Washington Irving lived more than 200 years ago.

If Washington Irving could visit modern Sleepy Hollow today, what do you think would surprise him most:

- the tourists,
- the Halloween celebrations,
- or the fact that people are still reading his stories?

Support your answer with details from your research.

Final Writing Activity

Letter to Washington Irving

Write a one-page letter to Washington Irving.

Your letter should:

- Explain what you enjoyed about *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*.
- Tell him whether you think the Headless Horseman was real or imaginary.
- Describe one scene from *Escape from Sleepy Hollow* that you think he would enjoy.
- Ask him at least one question about his life or writing.

Recommended Reading

By Washington Irving

- The Legend of Sleepy Hollow
- Rip Van Winkle
- Tales of the Alhambra

Biography

For middle school, high school, and adult readers alike, one of the most respected modern biographies is:

- Washington Irving: An American Original

Teachers may also find excerpts useful for classroom research projects.

Related Classic Literature

- A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens
- The Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain
- The Wonderful Wizard of Oz by L. Frank Baum
- Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson

Modern Companion Reading

- The Legend of Decimus Croome: A Halloween Carol by K. L. Purdy
- Escape from Sleepy Hollow: Headless in New York by K. L. Purdy

Just for Fun

Students who enjoy spooky adventures may also want to explore:

- Goosebumps
- Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark
- Coraline

Cross-Curricular Extension

History + Literature

Create a timeline showing:

- Washington Irving's life
- Publication of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*
- Publication of *A Christmas Carol*
- Major events in American history during Irving's lifetime

Students can then discuss how historical events may have influenced the stories authors chose to tell.