

Who was Johnny Appleseed?

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1 min read

It may surprise you that one of the most notable entrepreneurs of the American frontier didn't wear a jacket, tip his hat and shine his shoes, but rather dressed in a coffee sack, donned a tin hat and traveled barefoot. John Chapman, better known as Johnny Appleseed, was a 19th-century horticulturist who made great contributions to the westward expansion of the United States. Though he may not have traveled down the Allegheny River on a block of ice like his folk-hero persona, Chapman paved the way for countless frontiersmen to settle new land around his orchards.

Chapman, the son of a farmer, was born on September 26, 1774 in Leominster, Massachusetts. He moved to Ohio at the beginning of the 19th century, bringing seeds from Pennsylvania cider presses with him and planting them along the way. Though his legend may paint a picture of Johnny Appleseed planting at random and selflessly handing out seeds to needy settlers, in reality Chapman's path followed a strategic business plan. Children's books about Appleseed have, of course, removed the element of alcohol from the story, but Chapman's success was centered not around fresh apples but rather the cider they could create. Cider was an essential at the American dinner table at the time, so most homes had their own small orchard. Chapman planted orchards along the pioneers' routes, staying ahead of other orchardist competition since his nomadic, unmarried lifestyle allowed him to cover more ground. He would then trade his seedlings with new settlers in the area so that they could grow apples for their new homes.

By Mairiel Dynan

It wasn't all just business for him, though. Chapman did show kindness to these struggling pioneers and would sometimes grant them the seedlings for free; this benevolent nature earned him the nickname "Johnny Appleseed" from grateful frontiersmen. He was also a missionary for the New Church, spreading its religious ideals along with his apple seeds, and did his part to maintain peaceful relationships between Native Americans and new settlers. He also practiced vegetarianism and advocated for animal rights. In 1871, W.D. Haley wrote a colorful chronicle of Chapman's life for "Harper's Weekly," propelling the legend of Johnny Appleseed into American popular culture. He has since been an iconic subject in American literature, music and film as both a real and fictional representation of the American pioneer spirit.



The Story of Johnny Appleseed

Read the story of Johnny Appleseed and answer the questions at the end. All the answers can be found in the story! Good Luck!

One of America's legends is that of Johnny Appleseed, an apple farmer in the 1800's. There really was a Johnny Appleseed and his real name was John Chapman. He was born in Leominster, Massachusetts in 1774. His dream was to produce so many apples that no one would ever go hungry. Although legend says that Johnny was walking through the country and planting apple seeds on the way, the truth is that he was an organized businessman who bought land and planted thousands of apple trees.



His adventure began in 1792, when John was eighteen years old. He and his eleven-year-old half brother, Nathaniel, went to the west of the USA but years later he began traveling alone. Legend says started in the east in Pennsylvania and each year he planted an apple seed on his way to the west. He had apple seeds in a leather bag. The truth is that Johnny created numerous nurseries with fences around the fields and later sold his apple trees. He did not want money but traded for food or clothing. He wanted many more people to plant apple trees. Soon people called him the "apple seed man" and later he became known as "Johnny Appleseed". He was friends with the Indians and he only ate food from the nature.

Legend says Johnny rarely wore shoes even in the winter and he liked to sleep outside in the forest and on the ground. In 1842 after walking through the country for 50 years, Johnny moved into the home of Nathaniel. On March 18 1845, he died of pneumonia at the age of seventy-one.

Questions

1. What is Johnny Appleseed's real name?

2. Why did Johnny plant apple trees?

3. What did Johnny want to get when he sold apple trees instead of money?

4. Is it true that Johnny walked around and planted seeds everywhere he went?



Name _____

Date _____

Directions: Color the picture using the code

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| 9 - green | 7 - orange |
| 5 - blue | 6 - gray |
| 2 - red | 1 - beige |
| 4 - brown | 3 - yellow |
| 8 - violet | |



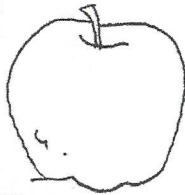


The Tall Tale of Johnny Appleseed

In 1774, a baby named Jonathan Chapman was born who would grow up to be none other than Johnny Appleseed himself. That day a rainbow filled the sky and the beautiful colors lit up the apple blossoms in the orchards. When he grew up, Johnny resolved to spread apple trees across the nation. For almost fifty years he roamed the American wilderness planting apple seeds. He created apple orchards in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois and Indiana. Johnny dreamed of a land covered with blossoming apple trees, a land where apples were plentiful and no one went hungry.

Johnny lived outdoors, sleeping under the stars. His feet were so tough he could walk on pine cones. He made his clothes from sacks and wore his tin cooking pot for a hat. Settlers were amazed at his toughness. He could go weeks without a meal. Wild animals were instantly tamed when they met Johnny Appleseed. A timber wolf traveled with him, gentle as a puppy. Some say he walked as far south as Tennessee and as far west as the Rocky Mountains, planting apple seeds all the way.

He died in 1845, resting peacefully under an apple tree. If you visit an apple orchard at night, you'll see his ghost looking after the apples.



QUESTIONS:

What was Johnny Appleseed's real name?

What was in the sky when Johnny Appleseed was born?

- a. Apple blossoms
- b. A bird
- c. A rainbow
- d. The orchard

What did Johnny do with the apple seeds?

What did Johnny Appleseed use for a hat?

Why were the settlers amazed at his toughness?

- a. He walked many miles.
- b. He could tame wild animals.
- c. He never got hungry.
- d. All of the above.

Write down three words you would choose to describe Johnny Appleseed.

On the back of this page, draw your own picture of Johnny Appleseed. Then, write a short description of Johnny Appleseed (be sure to include your three words). Write it as if you were introducing him to your classmates.



Can you remember?

1. Johnny planted apple seeds
(a) only in his hometown (b) wherever he went (c) where people asked him to
2. When he left home he traveled
(a) east (b) west (c) south
3. Johnny met
(a) Native Americans (b) Pilgrims (c) British
4. His real name was
(a) Johnny Appleseed (b) John Smith (c) John Chapman
5. He was born in
(a) New England (b) the wilderness (c) a Native American camp.

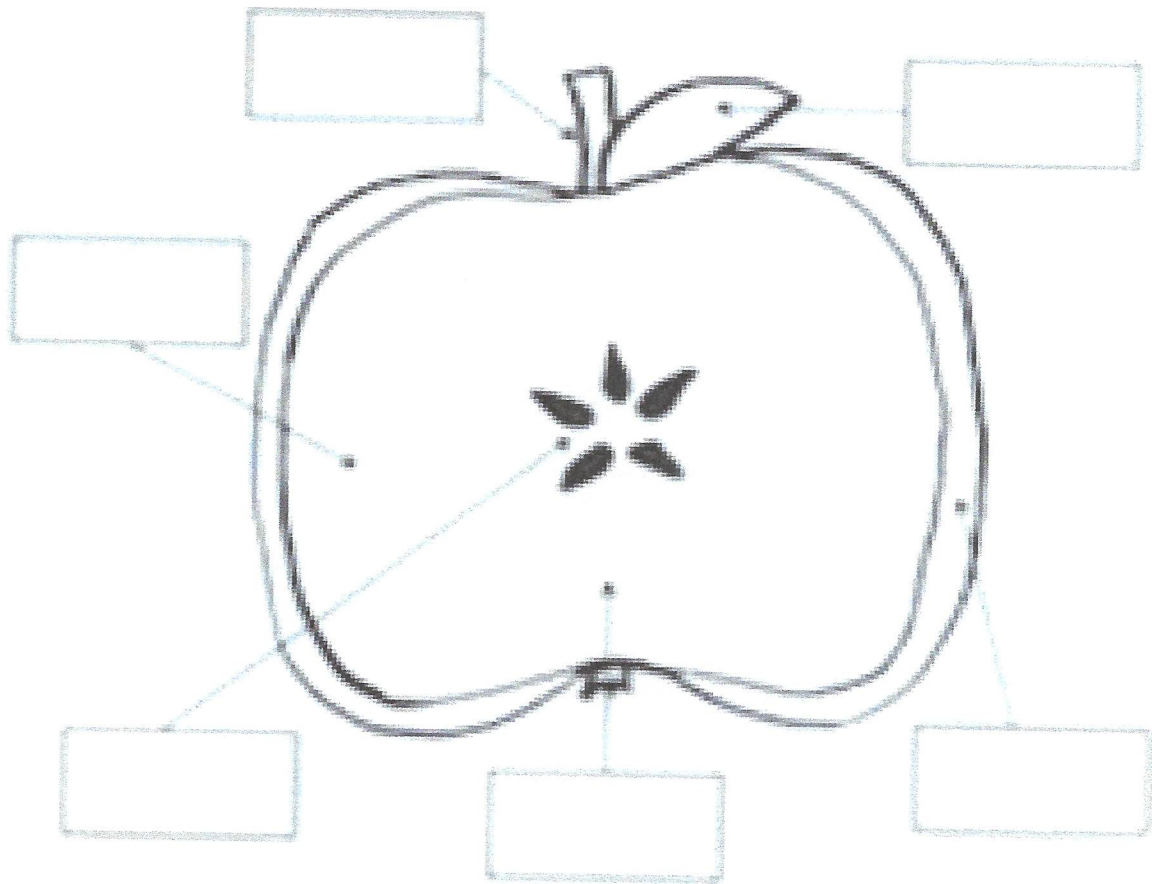
Put the sentences in the correct order.

- _____ 1. He was known as a kind, brave man.
- _____ 2. Johnny Appleseed was his nickname.
- _____ 3. He left his hometown.
- _____ 4. He met lots of wild animals.

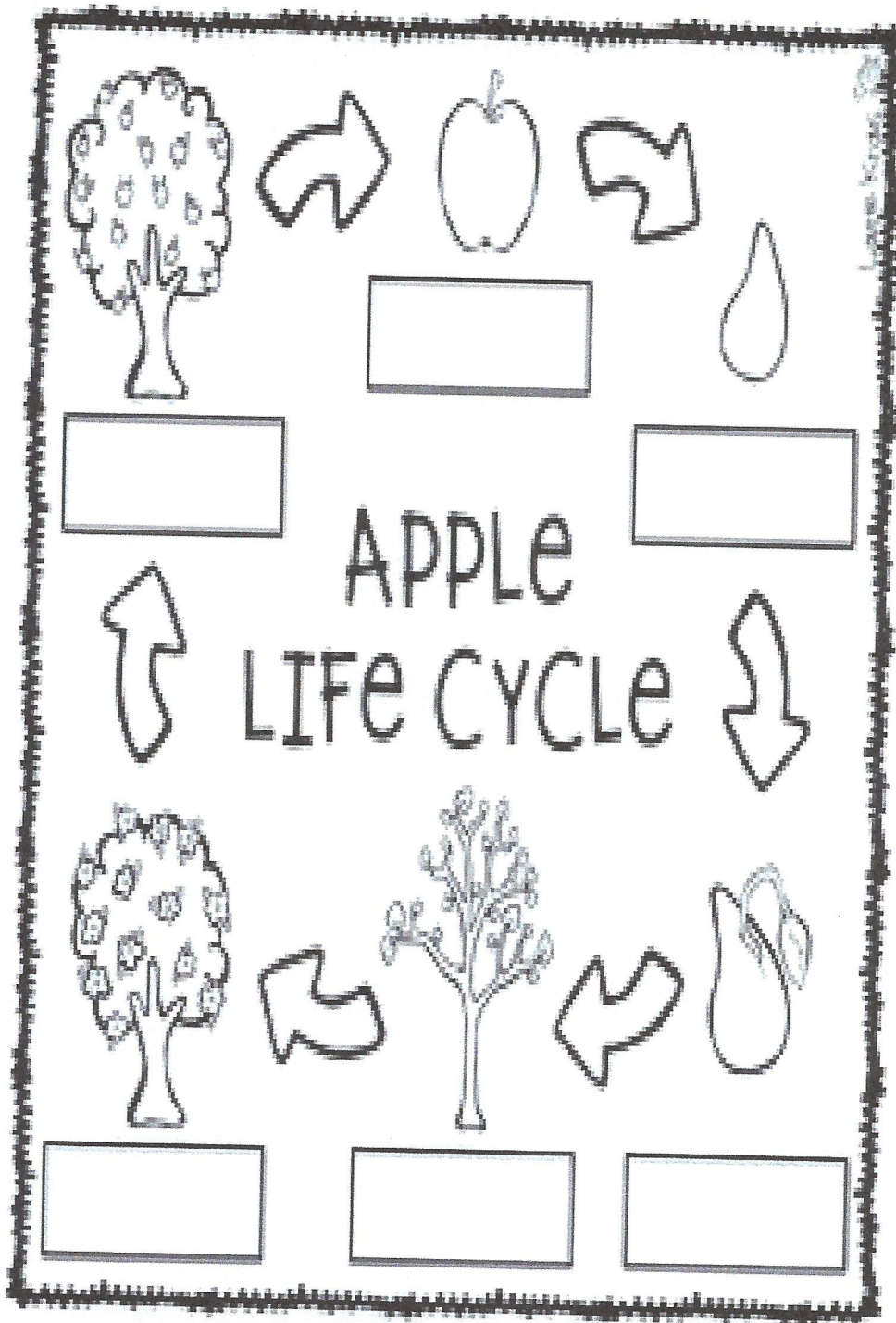
Match the words with their meanings.

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| _____ 1. travel | (a) strong; doing something, even if afraid |
| _____ 2. nickname | (b) not like other things or people |
| _____ 3. brave | (c) to go on a trip |
| _____ 4. unusual | (d) not a real name |

Label The Apple



leaf	seeds	stem
core	skin	flesh



Directions: Cut and glue the words onto the apple life cycle.



apple

apple tree

blossom tree

sapling

seed

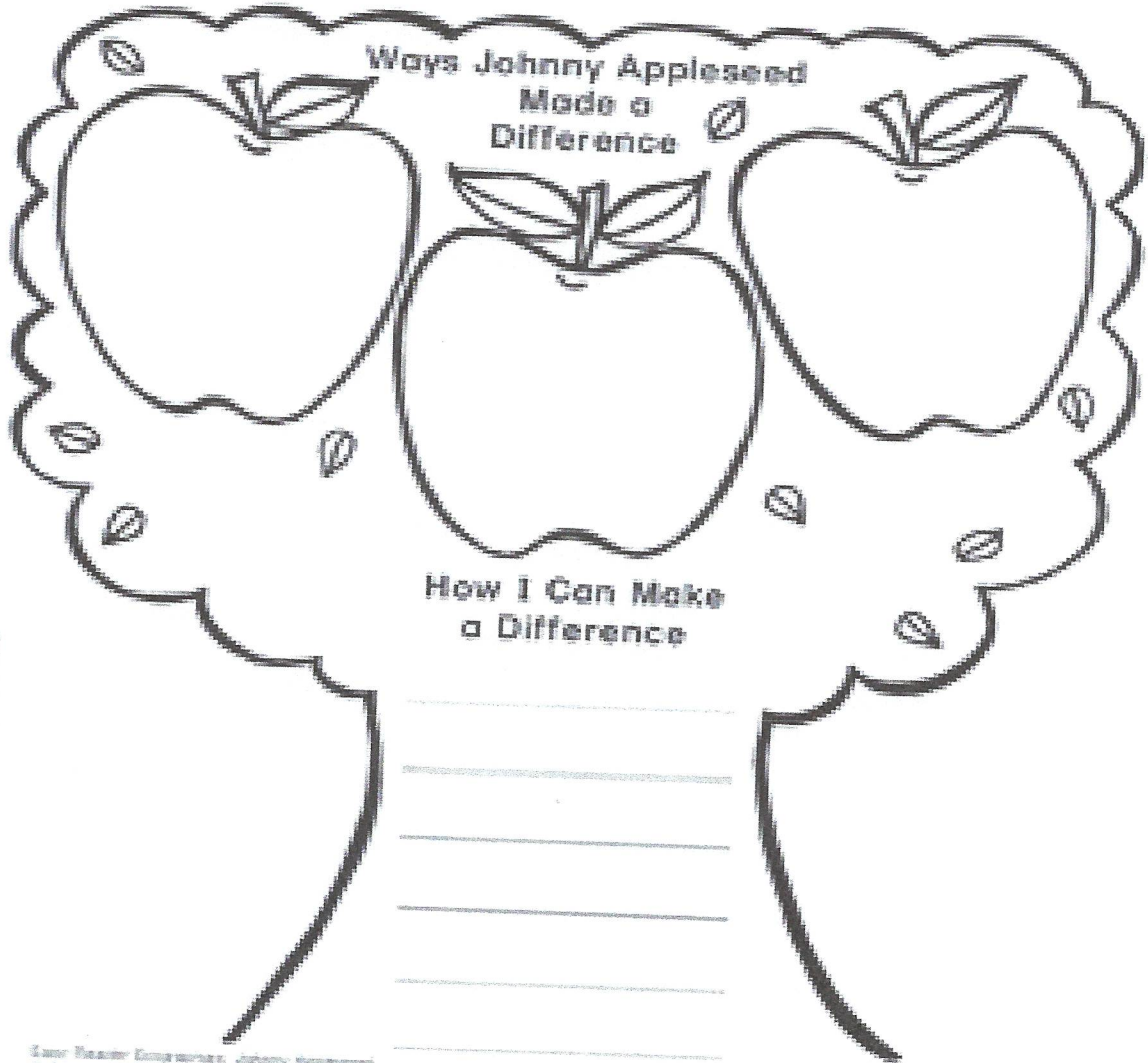
sprout

Name _____

Date _____

Johnny Appleseed's Tree

Johnny was a friend to Earth. He made a difference to plants, animals, and people. In each apple, write one thing Johnny did for our planet. On the trunk, write one thing you can do for Earth.



Make A Difference Day

Plant an Apple Tree

Why plant an apple tree?

Planting Apple Trees is good for the Environment.

Apple trees remove carbon dioxide from the air when making their food. They release oxygen into the air.

Apple trees clean the air. In the process of taking in air, other impurities in the air are removed.

Apple trees planted on the South and West of the house provide shade in the summer. **A healthy, young tree has the same net cooling effect as 10 room-size air conditioners operating 20 hours a day.**

Trees properly spaced around a building can reduce air conditioning needs by 30 percent.

Apples are a **renewable resource**. Plants are renewable resources, because they produce seeds. When we plant the seeds we get more plants. Seeds can be harvested from the apples. When planted, they will sprout and grow into apple trees. When a tree dies or is removed and replaced with a new tree of the same type that is **sustainable agriculture**.

Apple tree blossoms smell wonderful. The blossoms produce nectar and pollen. Honey bees visit the blossoms to collect nectar and pollen. They use it to produce Apple Blossom Honey!

Honey Bees are pollinators too. They feed on the nectar as they carry the pollen from flower to flower. The pollen is necessary to produce apples.

Be sure to look at the PowerPoints to learn the rest of the story.

Help us Make a Difference. Plant an Apple Tree.

This project is brought to you by the Orangeburg County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Orangeburg County North Branch Library.

Check out the Orangeburg County Soil and Water Conservation District website at Orangeburgswcd.com.

