

# Johnny Appleseed



## A Grammar Tall Tale

By: Reading Spotlight



## INTRODUCTION

The American frontier was both immense and harsh as it was developing in the nineteenth century. Tales of men and women who were bigger than life, and who triumphed over adversities, were a common form of entertainment for individuals and families as they sat by their firesides. Like the folk tales and myths of previous civilizations, some had a basis in truth, while others were entirely made up by the storytellers. Exaggerations were occasionally added as the stories were retold, blurring the original version and becoming somewhat humorous in the process. These pages are an effort to combine a bit of history, geography, and English grammar into an entertaining form of learning.

The stories were compiled from many sources, often Wikipedia, and a few myths were added in order to include a wider ethnic, gender, and geographic base. The pages are intended primarily as grammar practice for skills previously introduced and taught in class. Each story is approximately 25-30 sentences long. They all focus on the most common grammatical errors of students at the intermediate and middle school levels. They are easy to correct because there is only one grammatical error in each sentence. A tale should take approximately 10-20 minutes for students to complete—perfect for homework or seatwork. For the greatest benefit, the teacher (or tutor) and students should correct the work *together*; teachers should ask questions about each mistake and clarify the previously taught grammatical rule. These exercises are also ideal practice for state writing tests and for students studying English as a second language.

The major grammatical skills covered include:

1. Capitalization
2. Punctuation—commas in a series, compound sentences, introductory clauses.
3. Homophones
4. Irregular verbs
5. Plurals
6. Use of the apostrophe
7. Comparative Adjectives and Adverbs
8. Subject-predicate agreement
9. Run-on sentences/ sentence fragments
10. Changing “y” to “i” before adding endings

A corrected version of the story in paragraph form is included for those who prefer to introduce correct grammar before the challenge of correction. Grammar practice does not have to be boring! It is our sincere hope that students enjoy these tales while practicing English grammar skills.

Be sure to check out all four Sets of Tall Tales Grammar in the Reading Spotlight Store.

Grammar Sports Stories and Grammar Career Stories also follow the same format.

When students become familiar with the design, these stories make great homework or learning center assignments for grammar skill practice.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Before you begin, find the state of Indiana on a U.S. map. Johnny Appleseed spent the last 20 years of his life there.*

**Underline** the one mistake in each sentence. Write the correction on the line.



### JOHNNY APPLESEED

1. Appleseed's Johnny Appleseeds real name was Jonathan Chapman.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ His father was a Minuteman in the revolutionary War.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ That means that Mr. Chapman would be ready to fight the British soldiers on a minutes notice.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ As a boy in Massachusetts, Johnny loved to play with rabbits squirrels, birds, and insects in the forest near his home.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ He never ate meet because animals were his good friends.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ He wrestled with bears for fun and exercise, and he could talk his way out of trouble with the angriest of mountain lions.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ When he found an injured wolf cub he nursed it back to health.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ Like a faithful dog, this wolf cub became his pet, and traveled everywhere with him.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Johnny worked in his neighbor's apple orchard and he loved to eat apples.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Apples was an important food for the people in the American colonies.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ The colonists maid jelly, applesauce, cider, apple butter, vinegar, and apple pies from apples.
12. \_\_\_\_\_ The wood from apple trees were used for heat, tools, and furniture.
13. \_\_\_\_\_ Apples provided fresh fruit all year long because they didn't spoil easy.
14. \_\_\_\_\_ Johnny grew tall and thin, but he don't like wearing shoes.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ His feet were so tough that even the fangs of a huge rattlesnake couldn't brake through his skin.
16. \_\_\_\_\_ He weared a potato sack for his shirt and a metal pot for his hat.

17. \_\_\_\_\_ He said that the pot was very useful, because he could use it for cooking over a fire.
18. \_\_\_\_\_ It also kept rain off the top of his head.
19. \_\_\_\_\_ Johnny new that apples were very useful, so he decided to spread apple trees across the new country.
20. \_\_\_\_\_ He grew his first nursery near the Allegheny River in Western Pennsylvania.
21. \_\_\_\_\_ Many pioneers stopped their before heading to new western farmland and towns.
22. \_\_\_\_\_ Johnny collected apple seeds from cider mills when they through the seeds away after making cider.
23. \_\_\_\_\_ Johnny Appleseed spended most of his adult life wandering around Ohio and Indiana, selling apple tree seedlings, and scattering seeds.
24. \_\_\_\_\_ He liked to tell Bible storys to the children that he met.
25. \_\_\_\_\_ He made friends with many different Native American tribes and spoke there languages.
26. \_\_\_\_\_ Sometimes he warned the settlers when there wood be an Indian raid on their town.
27. \_\_\_\_\_ He was cot in a blizzard on a cold, winter day.
28. \_\_\_\_\_ He got sick and could'nt recover.
29. \_\_\_\_\_ While resting under an apple tree he died of pneumonia.
30. \_\_\_\_\_ Some people say that Johnny Appleseed was souly responsible for every apple tree in the United States.
31. \_\_\_\_\_ Others say that they can still sea him spreading apple seeds today in the western United States.
32. \_\_\_\_\_ Maybe won of the apples that you ate recently was from a seed that this man planted.
33. \_\_\_\_\_ There's many different types of apples.
34. \_\_\_\_\_ Do you know the name of the type of apple that you enjoy most.

*EXTRA CREDIT:* Describe your favorite food—how it looks, sounds, smells, tastes, and how it feels in your mouth. Tell why you like it, and how you would interest others in eating it.

## ANSWER KEY PLUS Johnny Appleseed

Before you begin, find the state of Indiana on a U.S. map. Johnny Appleseed spent the last 20 years of his life there.

**Underline** the one mistake in each sentence. Write the correction on the line.

### JOHNNY APPLESEED



1. Appleseed's Johnny Appleseeds real name was Jonathan Chapman.  
(*apostrophe + s for ownership*)
2. Revolutionary His father was a Minuteman in the revolutionary War.  
(*capitalize proper nouns—name of a particular war*)
3. minute's That means that Mr. Chapman would be ready to fight the British soldiers on a minutes notice.  
(*apostrophe + s for ownership*)
4. rabbits, squirrels, As a boy in Massachusetts, Johnny loved to play with rabbits squirrels, birds, and insects in the forest near his home.  
(*place a comma after items in a series, except the last one*)
5. meat He never ate meet because animals were his good friends.  
(*correct homophone*)
6. angriest He wrestled with bears for fun and exercise, and he could talk his way out of trouble with the angryest of mountain lions.  
(*change "y" to "i" before adding "est"*)
7. cub, he When he found an injured wolf cub he nursed it back to health.  
(*comma after introductory clause in a complex sentence*)
8. pet and Like a faithful dog, this wolf cub became his pet, and traveled everywhere with him.  
(*no comma needed here, just a simple sentence with a compound predicate—"traveled" does not have a separate subject, so not 2 complete thoughts*)
9. orchard, Johnny worked in his neighbor's apple orchard and he loved to eat apples.  
(*place a comma between two complete thoughts in a compound sentence*)
10. were Apples was an important food for the people in the American colonies.  
(*subject—verb agreement*)
11. made The colonists maid jelly, applesauce, cider, apple butter, vinegar, and apple pies from apples.  
(*correct homophone / irregular past tense of verb "make"*)

12. was The wood from apple trees **were** used for heat, tools, and furniture.  
(singular subject—verb agreement—“wood was used”)
13. easily Apples provided fresh fruit all year long because they didn’t spoil **easy**.  
(HOW they” didn’t spoil” requires an adverb)
14. didn’t Johnny grew tall and thin, but he **don’t** like wearing shoes.  
( subject—verb agreement + correct verb past tense)
15. break His feet were so tough that even the fangs of a huge rattlesnake couldn’t **brake** through his skin. (correct homophone)
16. wore He **wearied** a potato sack for his shirt and a metal pot for his hat.  
(correct irregular past tense of “wear”)
17. useful because He said that the pot was very **useful, because** he could use it for cooking over a fire.  
(no comma needed when the dependent clause beginning with because is the second part of the sentence.)
18. kept It also **keeped** rain off the top of his head.  
(correct irregular past tense of verb “keep”)
19. knew Johnny **new** that apples were very useful, so he decided to spread apple trees across the new country.  
(correct homophone / irregular past tense of “know”)
20. western He grew his first nursery near the Allegheny River in **Western** Pennsylvania.  
(no capital needed because it is not a proper noun, only “Pennsylvania” is the proper noun—“western” is not part of its official name)
21. there Many pioneers stopped **their** before heading to new western farmland and towns.  
(correct homophone—a place)
22. threw Johnny collected apple seeds from cider mills when they **through** the seeds away after making cider.  
(correct homophone / irregular past tense of verb “throw”)
23. spent Johnny Appleseed **spended** most of his adult life wandering around Ohio and Indiana, selling apple tree seedlings, and scattering seeds.  
(correct irregular past tense of verb “spend”)
24. stories He liked to tell Bible **storys** to the children that he met.  
(correct spelling of most plurals ending in “y”—change y to “i” and add “es”)
25. their He made friends with many different Native American tribes and spoke **there** languages.  
(correct homophone—ownership “their”)

26. would Sometimes he warned the settlers when there wood be an Indian raid on their town.  
(correct homophone)
27. caught He was cot in a blizzard on a cold, winter day.  
(correct homonym /irregular past tense of verb "catch")
28. couldn't He got sick and could'nt recover.  
(place the apostrophe where the letters are missing in a contraction)
29. tree, he While resting under an apple tree he died of pneumonia.  
(comma after introductory clause in a complex sentence)
29. solely Some people say that Johnny Appleseed was souly responsible for every apple tree  
in the United States. (correct homophone)
30. see Others say that they can still sea him spreading apple seeds today in the western  
United States.  
(correct homophone)
31. one Maybe won of the apples that you ate recently was from a seed that this man  
planted.  
(correct homophone)
33. There are There's many different types of apples.  
(plural subject-verb agreement)
32. most? Do you know the name of the type of apple that you enjoy most.  
(a question needs a question mark at the end)

*EXTRA CREDIT:* Describe your favorite food—how it looks, sounds, smells, tastes, and how it feels in your mouth. Tell why you like it and how you would interest others in eating it.

## TALL TALES GRMMAR STORY: Johnny Appleseed (Corrected Version in Paragraph Form)

Johnny Appleseed's real name was Jonathan Chapman. His father was a Minuteman in the Revolutionary War. That means that Mr. Chapman would be ready to fight the British soldiers on a minute's notice. As a boy in Massachusetts, Johnny loved to play with rabbits, squirrels, birds, and insects in the forest near his home. He never ate meat because animals were his good friends. He wrestled with bears for fun and exercise, and he could talk his way out of trouble with the angriest of mountain lions. When he found an injured wolf cub, he nursed it back to health. Like a faithful dog, this wolf cub became his pet and traveled everywhere with him.

Johnny worked in his neighbor's apple orchard, and he loved to eat apples. Apples were an important food for the people in the American colonies. The colonists made jelly, applesauce, cider, apple butter, vinegar, and apple pies from apples. The wood from apple trees was used for heat, tools, and furniture. Apples provided fresh fruit all year long because they didn't spoil easily.

Johnny grew tall and thin, but he didn't like wearing shoes. His feet were so tough that even the fangs of a huge rattlesnake couldn't break through his skin. He wore a potato sack for his shirt and a metal pot for his hat. He said that the pot was very useful because he could use it for cooking over a fire. It also kept rain off the top of his head.

Johnny knew that apples were very useful, so he decided to spread apple trees across the new country. He grew his first nursery near the Allegheny River in western Pennsylvania. Many pioneers stopped there before heading to new western farmland and towns. Johnny collected apple seeds from cider mills when they threw the seeds away after making cider.

Johnny Appleseed spent most of his adult life wandering around Ohio and Indiana, selling apple tree seedlings and scattering seeds. He liked to tell Bible stories to the children that he met. He made friends with many different Native American tribes and spoke their languages. Sometimes he warned the settlers when there would be an Indian raid on their town. He was caught in a blizzard on a cold, winter day. He got sick and couldn't recover. While resting under an apple tree, he died of pneumonia.

Some people say that Johnny Appleseed was solely responsible for every apple tree in the United States. Others say that they can still see him spreading apple seeds today in the western United States. Maybe one of the apples that you ate recently was from a seed that this man planted. There are many different types of apples. Do you know the name of the type of apple that you enjoy most?