

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade 4: Lesson 6** Describe the setting of Sleep Hollow.

**Washington Irving's The Legend of Sleepy Hollow**

**as retold by Kim T. Griswell**

Tarry Town nestles in the crook of a cove along the eastern shore of the Hudson River. Just beyond the village, hidden between high rolling hills, lies a valley so silent it stills the hearts of all who enter. Locals call it Sleepy Hollow.

In daylight, the hollow sleeps in peace. Quails whistle lullabies, while a brook whispers dreams as it winds between the trees. Sometimes woodpeckers hammer bugs from the bark of birch trees. But those who dare these woods at night are haunted by shadows that flit at the edge of vision. Hoofbeats echo through the hills. And with every step, the pounding beats get closer and closer and closer.

According to native legends, in the year of the Half Moon, white men came from a faraway land. They called themselves Netherlanders, though others called them Dutch. The natives welcomed them until one-eyed wise man came to the People and delivered a warning. "These pale ones will swarm across the hills and valleys like ants. They will burn and chop and build. Soon the land of bear and fox and deer will be no more and the land will be cursed."

The wise man held a powwow at the center of the quiet valley. The People built a great bonfire and drummed and sang through the night. With their music, they enchanted the hollow so that its peace would always remain.

Years passed and the shadow of war, or revolution, fell across the hills and valleys of the Hudson. The settlers revolted against the British crown. But the wise man's spell was strong. Neither side could capture the sleepy hollow beyond Tarry Town, and it became neutral ground. British troops held one side while Revolutionary soldiers held the other.

One fateful night, battle cries ripped through the countryside. Gunfire peppered the trees. A lone soldier, a Hessian, galloped into the hollow. As he did, the spell made him slow down... and then stop. As he turned in his saddle, a cannon blasted apart the night. The great iron ball blew the soldier's head from his shoulders. For a moment, peace entered his heart. And in that moment the enchantment became... a curse.

The soldier's body was buried in the village churchyard, but his head was never found. Legend says the ghost of the headless soldier was doomed to roam the hollow and that every night since then, he has burst from his grave. Every night since then, he has galloped on a fiery-eyed stallion searching for the head he lost in battle.

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

**Task:** Write a paragraph describing the setting of Sleepy Hollow. Using details from the story think about how the author described the location, contrasted the town's days and nights, used the legend, and moved time forward ten years. Be sure to include an introduction, details from the text, transition words or phrases, and a conclusion.