

The Story of Rip Van Winkle

Teacher's Notes **A2**

This A2 activity is based on a short presentation of Washington Irving's short story *Rip Van Winkle*, which was first published in 1819, two hundred years ago. It was inspired by a German traditional story. Added to the simplified story is a recording of a possible conversation between Rip and his angry wife, which can be used as an example for your students to act out an argument between husband and wife. Depending on their ability to transfer reading into speaking, you can also ask them to play the scene with the little people in the park, his arrival in the village after his long absence, or the reunion with his daughter.

Vocabulary and grammar.

- Farm related vocabulary.
- Hunting related vocabulary.
- Characterisation (*hardworking, lazy, angry, strange, bizarre...*)
- *Argue, argument, complain, shout.*
- *Not...any more.*
- Present simple vs simple past in story telling.
- *Stop + ing*

Pronunciation.

- Stress in *independent, independence, colonies, hardworking, complaining...*
- <h> (*home, hungry, high, hunting, hurt, happen, happily...*)

Reading, speaking and writing.

- We suggest starting by a short presentation of Washington Irving, first in writing, then orally in pairs or in front of (half) the class if they feel confident enough to do so early on in the unit. Make sure your pupils don't read, the first stage is there only to help the more apprehensive to speak. Pay particular attention to their

rhythm and intonation, as a preparation for the final activity. Then move on to the proper reading activities. In **Activity B**, pupils have to take notes before speaking to the class, again from notes in words rather than sentences to avoid reading the information on the website aloud. This activity will help them understand the chronology of RVW's story as related to the history of his country. Before moving on to **Activity C**, you could have your pupils recap what they know about the hero. After completing **Activities C-D**, ask them what they think is going to happen, so that after **Activity E** they can compare their ideas with the real story. For the final activity, go from one pair to the other and provide help according to the pupils' needs.

Going Further

- We've provided a painting inspired by the story, of the scene when Rip Van Winkle returns to the village after 20 years. You could project it and use it for formative assessment, asking pupils to explain what is happening.

Transcript

Rip Van Winkle: An American Story

Rip Van Winkle is an old story by American writer Washington Irving. Can you act it out? Rip Van Winkle is having a beer in a tavern. When his wife finds him, they have an argument.

Mrs Van Winkle: Rip, come home and work! The cows are hungry, and the corn is high in the fields, and I can't do everything myself!

Rip: Cows, cows, cows... that's women's work, Dame Van Winkle! Don't bother me with your cows!

Mrs Van Winkle: Rip Van Winkle! I milk the cows every morning and every night! I make butter from their milk. And I cook your breakfast, lunch and dinner every day. But I can't feed the cows, too!

Rip: Stop complaining, woman! Can't you see I'm talking to my friends here?

Mrs Van Winkle: Talk, talk, talk! That's all you do all day! Can't you see that all your friends are old men? They have earned their rest... and their beer! Not like you! You have young children to support. You must work!

Rip: Work, work, work! That's the only word I ever hear from your mouth.

Mrs Van Winkle: If you don't come home and cut the corn today, your children won't have anything to eat this winter!

Rip: And if you don't stop shouting at me, you'll never see me again!

Mrs Van Winkle: Good!

SOLUTIONS

A. Washington Irving was an American writer. He was born in New York City on April the third seventeen eighty-three. He died in eighteen fifty-nine. He wrote *Rip Van Winkle* in eighteen nineteen and *The Legend of*

Sleepy Hollow in eighteen twenty. They are his most famous short stories.

B. 1.

War Britain vs the 13 British colonies in America.

George Washington's army =victory

British Empire=defeat

Colonies → independent

2. The story starts before the War of Independence.

C. 1. Rip Van Winkle is English, he lives in America, he is lazy, a generous neighbour.

2. His family is very poor because he never works.

D.1. Rip's favourite place in the village: the tavern

His favourite friends: old men

Rip's wife is angry. She wants Rip to help her. So Rip goes hunting for food in the mountains.

2.

5-He drinks from a barrel

3-He goes to a park

6-He falls asleep

2-He helps a man

4-He sees a lot of little people

1-He meets a man

E.1.a. Rip Van Winkle wakes up 20 years later.

b. The drink in the barrel was a magic potion.

c. So now Rip is an old man.

2. His body: his back and his knees hurt.

His rifle: it's rusty.

His dog: it's dead / disappeared / not there

His walking: He walks slowly.

His village: the people are new to him. The village is full of strangers.

People's clothes: he thinks they are bizarre

because the fashion has changed.

3. Mr Vedder: he died 18 years ago, 2 years after RVW disappeared from the village.

Rip's wife: she's dead

Rip's daughter: she is an adult. She has a baby.

4. The country is not a British colony any more. It's independent.

Champions: RVW says he is loyal to George III because he doesn't know that Washington's army has won the War of Independence and that his country is not a British colony now. But the people in the village don't know that he was asleep for 20 years, so they think he is a traitor or a British spy.

F.

RIP'S WIFE Come home and work! The cows are hungry. The corn is high in the fields. I can't do everything myself. I milk the cows. I cook. I make butter → I can't feed the cows. Your friends are old. Your children are young. → You must work.	RIP Cows=women's work Stop complaining! I'm talking with my friends. Stop shouting at me! You'll never see me again.
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