

# THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY HOLLOW

Script, lyrics & music  
 © 1996 & 2006 by  
 Paul Deiss; based  
 on the story by  
 Washington Irving

## Teacher Resources



### In the Classroom

Virginia Rep's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* and the Study Guide are produced in support of the teaching of states' standards, as well as national standards set forth by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). *Activities provided support curriculum in grades K-5*



### On the Web

Audio recording of the story:  
<http://www.audiobooktr easury.com/legend-of-sleepy-hollow/>

Sleepy Hollow:  
<https://www.encycloped ia.com/literature-and-arts/literature-english/american-literature/sleepy-hollow>



*The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* by Douglass Crockwell

## Play Synopsis

Based on the original story by Washington Irving, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* takes place in a town filled with superstitious people. This means that they believe in ghost stories and bad luck. Superstition makes people scared of ordinary things like shadows on the wall and the wind howling at night. Sleepy Hollow is said to be haunted by many ghosts and legends, including the Headless Horseman.

*The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* is about a schoolteacher named Ichabod Crane. Ichabod moves to the town of Sleepy Hollow and falls in love with a woman named Katrina, the prettiest girl in the whole town. One night at a party, Brom, the town bully, tells the horrible tale of the Headless Horseman to scare Ichabod.

After Brom's story, Ichabod is so scared! On his way home, he hears the deep laughter of the Headless Horseman and the chase begins! The people of Sleepy Hollow wake up the next morning and can't find Ichabod. In fact, they don't ever find anything but his hat. What happened to Ichabod Crane?



### Did You Know?

For more than 200 years, the exciting story of Ichabod Crane and the headless horseman has thrilled readers of all ages.

The Sleepy Hollow legend was made popular by Washington Irving. However, the legend may be based on a German folktale written by Karl Musaus (1735 – 1787). Musaus introduced the image of the headless horseman who has since been written about in numerous children's books, cartoons, television shows, videos, and puppet shows.



What other characters are legendary? Can you think of three?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## Legend Has It...

**Legend:** A story that has been handed down from generation to generation and usually includes information about the past. Most cultures have legends.

### Discussion:

Brainstorm different types of stories that might be legends (i.e., ghost stories, fables, family stories, or stories about the past).

What stories are most well-known? (Some examples may include tall tales such as Paul Bunyan or fairy tales such as Cinderella).

### Questions:

1. In what forms do we experience legends? (For example, a book is one form).
2. Why do you think legends are important to a culture?
3. Do legends teach us anything about people or the past?

### Read Aloud:

Choose a legend to read aloud to your class, such as Rip Van Winkle (also by Washington Irving) or Johnny Appleseed. Then, ask students to answer the following:

1. How does the legend make you feel?
2. What does the legend tell you about America?
3. Which characters in the story were most important? Most familiar?
4. What makes this story interesting to many people?

### TRY THIS!

As legends are told and re-told, the stories sometimes change. Try this in class by playing "telephone." Have your teacher begin by whispering a short couple of sentences to a classmate. Continue whispering around the circle until each student has had a turn listening and "repeating" what the teacher said. Did the message stay the same, or did it change?

## A Mystery: Ichabod's Final Moment

### Think about what may have happened to Ichabod:

1. "Some suspect he was the victim of a cruel prank, and blame his disappearance on Brom Van Brunt."
2. "Some say he left on his own accord, too embarrassed to face his beloved Katrina."
3. "It would not surprise me if he had been spirited away by some...headless ghost."
4. "His horse was found grazing in a field. His hat was found trampled in the path. And splattered by the footbridge were the slimy remains...of a pumpkin."



### What is your conclusion about the fate of Ichabod? Why?

### Easy Activity

Pretend that you met the Headless Horseman. Think of five questions you would ask him to find out more about who he was.

### Challenge

You are a detective with the Tarry Town Police Department. One night on patrol you pull over the Headless Horseman and bring him in for questioning. Think of five questions you would ask him to help you find out what truly happened the night Ichabod Crane disappeared. Explain how these questions would help you get the truth.

### Extra Challenge

You are a detective investigating the disappearance of Ichabod Crane. You are planning an interview with the Headless Horseman, and with Brom Van Brunt. What questions would you ask each of these suspects? What would the suspects say?

### Try This:

What do you think Ichabod's grave stone would have said? Write an **epitaph** for Ichabod Crane.

*Definition:* an **epitaph** is an inscription on a tombstone in memory of the person buried there.

### Extend it:

Washington Irving is buried in Sleepy Hollow. What do you think his epitaph says? Research it and find out.

## 10 Fascinating Facts about Washington Irving



114 West Broad St.  
Richmond, VA 23220  
1.800.235.8687  
[www.varep.org](http://www.varep.org)

**Amber Martinez**

Arts in Education  
Manager

**Gordon Bass**

Tour Manager

**Eric Williams**

Director of Tour  
Operations

**Phil Whiteway**

Managing Director

**Nathaniel Shaw**

Artistic Director

This study guide is property of Virginia Repertory Theatre. Photocopying of the study guide is permitted. Any other use of the contents must be accompanied by the phrase, "Text used with permission from Virginia Repertory Theatre- Richmond VA"

©Virginia Repertory  
Theatre 2018

1. Washington Irving was born at the end of the Revolutionary War on April 3, 1783. He died on the eve of the Civil War, on November 28, 1859.
2. Irving's parents, Scottish-English immigrants, were great admirers of General George Washington, and named their son after their hero.
3. The fictional Sleepy Hollow is actually the lower Hudson Valley area near Tarrytown, N.Y.
4. The legend featured in the story is that of The Headless Horseman, the ghost of a soldier who lost his head to a cannonball during "some nameless battle" of the American Revolutionary War and who "rides forth to the scene of battle in nightly quest of his head."
5. "Brom" is short for Abraham.
6. With Irving's companion piece *Rip Van Winkle*, *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* is the earliest American work of fiction to still be read widely today.
7. In 1842, American President Tyler appointed Irving Minister to Spain – a position we would now call ambassador. This meant he traveled throughout Europe as a diplomatic representative of the United States. (*I wonder if he told the other Ministers scary stories?*)
8. Sleepy Hollow is a village in Westchester County, New York, United States. Known as North Tarrytown from 1874 through 1997, it was officially renamed in March 1997. From the end of the American Revolution to incorporation in 1874, the hamlet was called Beekmantown.
9. Washington Irving is actually buried in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery.
10. *Knickerbocker* (from Irving's pen name) came to mean someone from New York. The basketball team, the New York Knicks (*Knickerbockers*) still uses it today