

# The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

A classic story about rivalry and superstition

## About the Story

**Lexile® Measure** 800L (captions only) For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

**Learning Objective:** to make an inference about the fate of Ichabod Crane

**Featured Skill:** inference

**Additional skills covered in this lesson plan:** mood, foreshadowing, character, literary devices, setting, figurative language

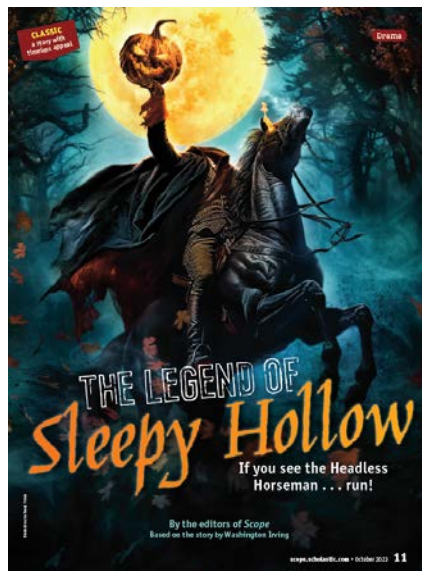
### Essential Questions:

- How do authors develop characters?
- How do legends reflect history?
- What makes ghost stories enjoyable?

### Standards:

The article and its suite of support materials support these Common Core Anchor Standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, SL.1, L.4, L.5, L.6

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



## Your Teaching Package

Find your full suite of support materials at [scope.scholastic.com](https://scope.scholastic.com).

### Audio:

- Text-to-speech
- Vocabulary

### Slideshow:

- Vocabulary

### Connected readings from the Scope archives:

- Special Collection: Stories for Halloween

### Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Vocabulary: Definitions
- Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions
- Featured Skill: Inference
- Choice Board
- Lesson Plan Slide Deck
- Quiz\*

\*Available on two levels

# Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

## 1. Prepare to Read (15 minutes)

### Do Now: Journal (5 minutes)

- Project the following journal prompt below your whiteboard:

What is a superstition? List as many examples of superstitions as you can think of. Where do you think superstitions come from? Are you superstitious?

- Invite students to share their responses. (*Sample response: A superstition is a belief that has no reasonable or scientific evidence of being true. Superstitions might result from ignorance, fear of the unknown, or trust in magic. Examples of superstitions include the belief that bad luck can be caused by walking under a ladder, having a black cat cross your path, or breaking a mirror. Answers to the final question will vary.*)

### Preview Vocabulary (10 minutes)

- Project the **Vocabulary Slideshow** on your whiteboard. Review the definitions and complete the activity as a class. The audio pronunciations of the words and a read-aloud of the definitions are embedded on the slides. Highlighted words: *brooding, gangly, laden, musket, rickety, tethered, thicket*.

## 2. Read and Discuss (45 minutes)

- Invite a volunteer to read the As You Read box on page 12 or at the top of the digital story page.
- Assign parts and read the play aloud as a class.
- Divide students into groups to discuss the following **Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions**, which are also located in the Resources tab.

## Close-Reading Questions

(25 minutes)

The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.

1. **Describe the mood of Scene 1. Which details help create this mood?** (mood) *The mood is spooky, eerie, etc. Details that help create the mood include the rickety bridge; ducks squawking; the silver sky; the phrase "hauntings and superstitions"; the title of Ichabod's book, A History of Witchcraft; and the comments about the Wailing Widow.*
  2. **At the end of Scene 1, why does Ichabod look up? How does this moment foreshadow what is to come?** (inference, foreshadowing) *Ida and Martha have just told Ichabod that the Wailing Widow shrieks when a storm is coming. You can infer that Ichabod looks up to see if a storm is indeed coming. It is: The sky is darkening. Ichabod shivers. This foreshadows that something bad is going to happen to Ichabod.*
  3. **Using details from the play, compare Ichabod's and Brom's appearances. What does the contrast in their appearances suggest about the differences in their personalities?** (character) *Ichabod is tall, thin, and awkward. In Scene 1, Knickerbocker describes him as "very tall, with long arms and hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves." In Scene 4, as Ichabod dances, "his long limbs fly around the room like an octopus in a tornado," which shows his awkwardness. Brom, on the other hand, is large and powerful. In Scene 3, Ichabod says, "Brom's neck is the size of my waist." In Scene 4, Brom is described as being "so broad-shouldered that he must turn sideways to fit through the door." These descriptions suggest that Brom is confident and unshakable, while Ichabod is weak and bumbling.*
  4. **In Scene 5, why does Yost tell the story about his encounter with the Headless Horseman?** (inference) *Yost likely wants to scare Ichabod. He may also be laying the groundwork for a trick that Brom plans to play on Ichabod later.*
  5. **Why are lines from Scene 5 repeated in Scene 6?** (literary devices) *Ichabod is hearing the offstage lines in his mind. He is remembering the ghost stories and warnings he heard at the party. The repetition of these lines adds drama to the scene, keeping these disturbing ideas fresh in the reader's mind.*
  6. **Consider the information in the text features about the American Revolution. How is this information reflected in the play?** (setting) *The text features and the play show that people in this time and place were deeply affected by the Revolutionary War. Many of Sleepy Hollow's ghost stories revolve around war tragedies: The Dutchman on the docks is shouting for a musket, the Headless Horseman is said to be a Hessian soldier whose head was blown off by a cannonball, Hans Van Ripper lends Ichabod his horse named Gunpowder, and the Wailing Widow's husband, readers can infer, was killed in battle.*
- As a class, discuss the following questions.

### Critical-Thinking Questions

(10 minutes)

*The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.*

1. **Is Ichabod a sympathetic character? That is, do you care about him? Do you like him?**  
*Some students may find little sympathy for Ichabod. They may point to the suggestion in the text that Ichabod was after Katrina for her wealth and may see him as foolish for falling for Brom's trick. Others may feel sorry for Ichabod and see him as the innocent victim of a bully (or of a ghost!).*
2. **What role does Katrina play in Ichabod's fate?** *Students who infer that Brom scared Ichabod away might say that Katrina helped bring this about by encouraging Brom and Ichabod to compete for her attention.*
3. **Why might people in 1790 have been more superstitious or more likely to believe in ghosts than people are today? Why do you think the villagers of Sleepy Hollow tell ghost stories?** *Answers will vary. Students may say that in 1790, people did not know as much about the natural world as we do today. People were left to draw their own conclusions about the way the world works. Also, the battles of the Revolutionary War were fresh in people's minds. The dead were lingering in memories; perhaps it was not a big leap to imagine them lingering as ghosts. The villagers of Sleepy Hollow tell ghost stories as a way of processing their feelings about the horrors of the recent war. They tell them as a way of keeping each other in line, such as when Martha says, "In these parts, Mr. Crane, you must take care to live a decent life. Those who don't are carried away by ghouls in the dead of night." The villagers also tell ghost stories for entertainment and perhaps to show off. In Brom Bones's case, he might tell ghost stories to set up Ichabod for a very mean stunt.*
4. **Write a paragraph describing Ichabod's final night in Sleepy Hollow from Brom's point of view.** *Responses will vary.*

### 3. Write About It: Inference

(45 minutes)

- Have students complete the **Featured Skill Activity: Inference**. This activity will prepare them to respond to the writing prompt on page 16 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story page:

***What do you think happened to Ichabod Crane? Answer this question in a well-organized paragraph. Support your ideas with details from the play.***

- Alternatively, have students choose a task from the **Choice Board**, a menu of culminating tasks. (Our Choice Board options include the writing prompt from the magazine, differentiated versions of the writing prompt, and additional creative ways for students to demonstrate their understanding of a story or article.)

## 4. Writing Spotlight: Figurative Language

(15 minutes)

- Project the **Writing Spotlight** activity, available in the Resources Tab, on your whiteboard for a mini-lesson on figurative language, using mentor sentences from the play. Read Slides 1-4 as a class.
- When you get to Slide 5, have students complete the Scavenger Hunt as a class. Possible answers include:
  - *"He's got dinner plates where his ears should be and shovels for feet."*
  - *"You sing like a lark!"*
  - *"As Ichabod dances, his long limbs fly around the room like an octopus in a tornado."*
  - *"Ichabod was very tall, with long arms and hands that dangled a mile out of his sleeves."*
  - *"On his way home that night, Ichabod, pale as a tombstone, trots along on Gunpowder."*
  - *"What is that gangly grasshopper doing here?"*
  - *"I can see why. Brom's neck is the size of my waist."*
  - *"He said if he caught me near Katrina, he'd flatten me like a pancake."*

### Connected readings from the Scope archives:

- [Special Collection: Stories for Halloween](#)