John Henry

Fastest Steel Drivin' Man around



Why hello there. My name is John Henry! I am the fastest steel drivin' man around! I work on the railroads hammering the rails down into the ground. Folks like to say I was born with a hammer in my hands. I knew early on that all I wanted to do was work with a hammer and drive steel on the railroads. I went to work on the rails in West Virginia and boy did my boss love me! He used to keep a bucket of ice water to cool down my hammer in between driving the nails in. When one of the other steel drivers was sick, I did my work plus theirs! I'd go down the rails with a hammer in each hand! One day a man came to my boss with a new invention-a steam drill! We all laughed because we didn't need that steam drill! But, he told my boss that if I beat the drill, he would let him keep it for free! The next day everyone stood around and watched the contest between that machine and me! Back and forth we went. I'd be in the lead, then the drill, then me, then the drill again. Eventually, I won that contest!

LIVEWORKSHEETS

John Henry



reading checkup

Name

1. Why did John say his boss loved him?

2. Why was John Henry famous?

3. Describe John Henry's problem in the story.

4. What do you think happened after the contest?

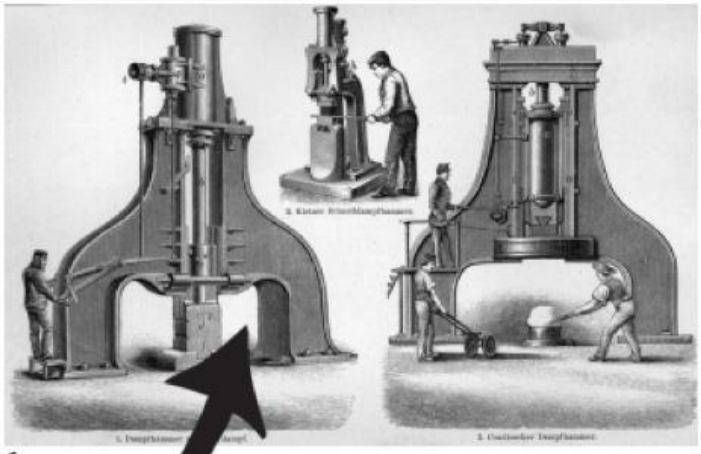
LIVEWORKSHEETS

The Amazing John Henry

No one is sure if John Henry was a real man or just a folk hero. What do you think?



He worked as a "steel-driver"-a man that hammers a steel drill into rock to make holes for explosives to blast the rock away.



A steam hammer



John Henry died with a hammer in his hand!



John worked on the railroads in West Virginia.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Fact or fiction

Name _____



A statue of John Henry.



The Great Bend Tunnel in West Virginia where John Henry is said to have worked. Do you think he was a real person?

What was one event from the story that is an exaggeration?

1

Which event is most likely a fact?

2

Explain your thinking!

3

LIVEWORKSHEETS