



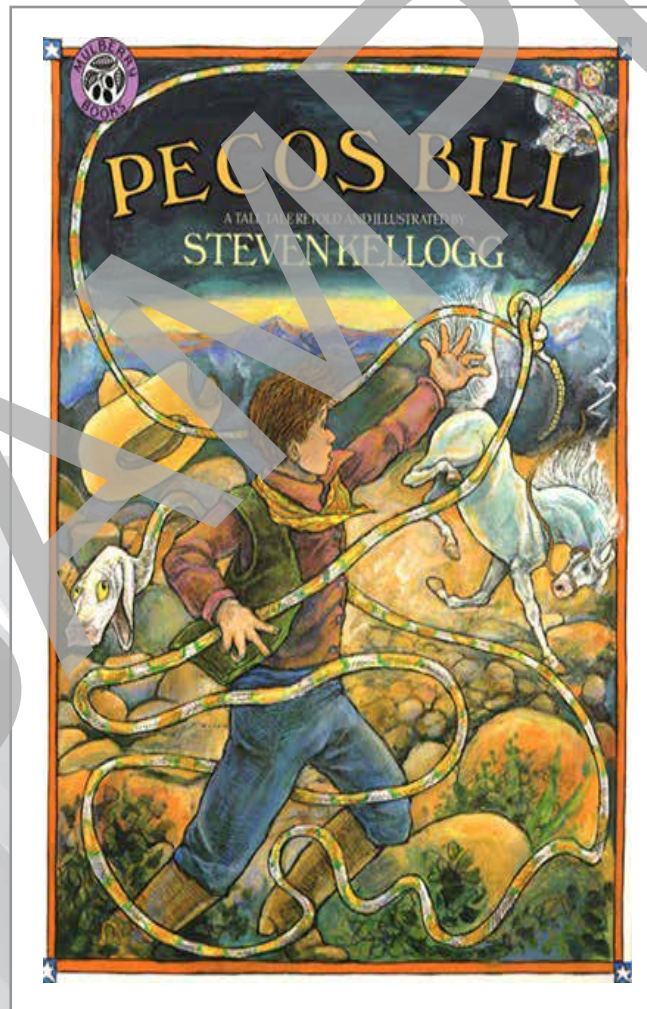
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES 3-5**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# Pecos Bill

Steven Kellogg



**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

# Pecos Bill

Steven Kellogg

## TEACHER GUIDE

**NOTE:**

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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## Skills and Strategies

### Literary Elements

Character, setting, plot, tall  
tale, colloquial dialect

### Vocabulary

Synonyms/antonyms,  
suffixes/prefixes, root words

### Listening/Speaking

Role play, pantomime,  
participation in discussion

### Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing

### Writing

Poetry, sentences, narrative

### Thinking

Brainstorming, classifying  
and categorizing, evaluating,  
comparing and contrasting

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### **Summary of Pecos Bill:**

Raised in the Texas wilderness by a coyote, Bill grew up to become the first cattle rancher. However, he first had to subdue a giant rattlesnake, wrestle a monstrous critter, and turn the dangerous Hell's Gulch Gang into respectable ranch hands. There wasn't anything Bill couldn't handle until he met a horse called Lightning and a woman named Slewfoot Sue. Life then changed for Pecos Bill and for all of Texas.



### **About the Author:**

Steven Kellogg was born in Norwalk, Connecticut on October 26, 1941. He graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design, receiving a B.F.A. in 1963. He did graduate study at the American University. He married Helen Hill in 1967.

Kellogg is an author and illustrator of children's books, an artist, and has taught etching, printmaking and painting. He has loved picture books since a child, and has always found animal stories irresistible. He was an enthusiastic young artist, and in preschool formulated plans to make drawing the center of a lifetime career. He drew his way through elementary school, and his determination to be an artist increased in junior high school and high school.

Kellogg feels that his family has greatly enriched his life and work, and has said, "I am very appreciative for all that we have shared."

Of his work, Kellogg has said, "The picture book is an art form that is designed specifically for children, but I feel that it can be appreciated and enjoyed by all ages. The special thing about the picture book is that it's a combination of both words and pictures, and the two of them work together to tell the story. I write with the illustration and with the words as well, and try to make the two of them dance together to tell the story."

### **Initiating Activity:**

1. What is a tall tale? (A story with exaggerated characters and events, usually told for fun.) What would you expect in a cowboy tall tale?

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## Pages 27-28

### Vocabulary:

unattended

securely

### Vocabulary Activity:

Root words or base words are important. We add prefixes and suffixes and change the meaning of the words. Identify the prefixes and suffixes and discuss the change in meaning.

### Discussion Questions and Activities:

1. What help could the prairie dogs give to Bill as he was fencing in the mountain?
2. What was wrong with Bill's Perpetual Motion Ranch on Pinnacle Peak? (*The mountain was so steep that the steers fell off.*)
3. How did Bill solve that problem? (*by inventing steers with short legs on one side*) Explain how short legs on one side of the steer would help.
4. Change an animal for a different situation/place.

## Pages 29-30

### Vocabulary:

hollered

bustle

proposal

ceremony

conditions

### Vocabulary Activity:

Use each word in a sentence.

### Discussion Questions and Activities:

1. Why did the cowboys on Bill's ranch have free time? (*because they no longer had to do the fall and spring roundups*) Do you think that the cowboys would have gone swimming if they had free time? (*Water was not that plentiful; they did not have swimming pools; they certainly did not have pool-side tables with umbrellas.*) What kind of swimming might cowboys have done? (*They might have gone swimming when they had to cross the rivers on the cattle drive.*)
2. How big is a catfish? (*There are about 45 species of catfish that are native to North America. They include the flathead catfish, channel catfish, bullheads, and madtoms. The flatheads and channels may weigh over 70 pounds each. Most bullheads and madtoms weigh less than one pound. The largest species is the European Catfish. It may grow to more than ten feet in length, and may weigh as much as 400 pounds!*)

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3. What kind of creature might Slewfoot Sue be if she is riding a fish? (*a mermaid*)
  4. Where do you think Slewfoot Sue got her name? (*Slew, sometimes spelled slue, means to turn, veer, or skid.*)
  5. Sue had two conditions for marrying Bill. Which one do you think will be hardest for Bill to meet? (*riding Lightning*)
  6. Design wedding outfits for Sue and Bill.

## Pages 31-32

### Vocabulary:

galloped

blasted

### Vocabulary Activity:

Complete the synonym chains below.

gallop—gait

blast—explode, burst

### Discussion Questions and Activities:

1. Why do you think Lightning reacted as he did to Slewfoot Sue?
2. Do you think Lightning would have acted differently if Slewfoot Sue dressed like a cowgirl? Why? Why not?

## Pages 33-36

### Vocabulary:

soared

descent

squarely

tornado

careening

### Vocabulary Activity:

Complete each sentence with a word from the vocabulary list.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ (*careening*) car rolled into the ditch.
2. Bill's kite \_\_\_\_\_ (*soared*) into the clouds.
3. The girls \_\_\_\_\_ (*squarely*) faced the problem of the broken window.
4. The damage from the \_\_\_\_\_ (*tornado*) was over a million dollars.
5. The mountain climber slowly made the \_\_\_\_\_ (*descent*).