

Teacher Guide

Grades 7–8

# Rip Van Winkle and Other Stories

Washington Irving

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# RIP VAN WINKLE AND OTHER STORIES

by  
Washington Irving

## Teacher Guide

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### Note

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**Please note:** Please assess the appropriateness of this book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading and discussing it with them.

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## Skills and Strategies

### Thinking

Research, identifying attributes,  
compare/contrast, evaluation

### Vocabulary

Glossary, definitions, part of  
speech, synonym/antonym,  
context

### Listening/Speaking

Interview preparation,  
discussion, oral report

### Comprehension

Analysis, prediction,  
cause/effect, summarization

### Writing

Interview, newspaper article,  
eulogy, descriptive writing,  
ghost story, blog review, essay

### Literary Elements

Characterization, setting, theme,  
point of view, symbolism,  
figurative language, genre,  
conflict

### Across the Curriculum

Geography—Catskill Mountains;  
History—Revolutionary War, May  
Day, early-American politics;  
Art—sculpture, painting,  
caricature, cartoon, sketch

7. How does Harry's father react to his son's deep feelings? How does this affect Harry? (*His father jokes about Harry falling in love with a footprint as being more ridiculous than falling in love with the woman who was old enough to be his mother. While the family promises not to mock him, Harry senses their hidden ridicule and is mortified to have his affections treated with such disdain. Harry is embarrassed, and he keeps away from the family as much as possible thereafter, spending time alone in the woods.*)
8. **Prediction:** What will happen to Harry after the storm overtakes his boat? How will he find the glove's owner?

### Supplementary Activities

1. Figurative Language: Continue adding to your figurative language chart. Examples: **Simile**—“scampering like frightened deer” (p. 110); **Personification**—“I drank in the very light of day...my soul seemed to dance with ecstasy in the deep blue of the summer sky” (p. 120)
2. Painting: Paint a picture of the imaginative world of flowers and insects on the family estate, as described by the narrator.

### “Mounds of Joy,” pp. 142–175

Vocabulary			
modulation	abandon	abode	affable
flaxen	balance	covered	susceptible
mincing	ardour	imposed	benefactor
prescribed			

Challenge Words			
compunction	replication	flageolet	profusion
damask	confidence	adroitness	expatiating
limpid	scrupulous	uncertain	aliment
augur	descanting	aspiduch	

Harry awakens in an unknown place to the sound of a beautiful voice. He discovers the female who owns the footprint and glove is a Somerville. He attempts to impress her with his knowledge of poetry and, finding her unenthusiastic, attempts to become her teacher. He is surprised to find she is well-educated and is repeatedly, though gently, rebuffed by both Julia and her father.

7. What are Mr. Somerville's hopes for Julia? What do you think about Julia's education thus far? (*Mr. Somerville hopes his daughter will glide through life peaceably. He does not expect her to change society nor venture into intellectual territory outside her ability. He is content for her to know enough to be intellectually stimulated in accordance with her own tastes and talents. He will not push Julia to be a scholar or one who compares her knowledge base to that of others. Answers will vary. Some students may see Julia's father as limiting her capacity for learning, while others may find him admirable, as he allows Julia to pursue what she enjoys.*)
8. Describe Mr. Somerville's manner when discussing Harry's own educational pursuits. Who do you think is the wiser of the two? Why? (*Mr. Somerville, after listening to Harry's suggestions, asks Harry about his own mode of study. He does so at an appropriate time and after properly dignifying his guest. As Harry's elder, he warns Harry about the dangers of avoiding structure in the course of study. He also shows himself to be a master of studies that Harry thought him ignorant of, adding to Mr. Somerville's credibility in the conversation. Mr. Somerville gently and kindly takes on the role of a mentor, sharing his knowledge about common mistakes made by the younger generation and suggesting practical things Harry can do to improve his learning. Answers will vary. It seems clear that Mr. Somerville is the wiser of the two, even though Harry has, up to this point, believed himself to be the wiser. Mr. Somerville is content to listen to Harry for several days and ask Harry pointed questions before formulating an opinion or offering Harry advice.*)
9. Why do you think the author chose to tell his story in the first-person as the character reflecting upon his life? How does this affect the story? (*Because the narrator remembers how he felt when he was younger, readers experience his intense feelings, his pride, his devotion for Julia, and his embarrassment at being humbled. A proud Harry builds defenses that are crushed numerous times and finally destroyed completely. The reflective Harry acknowledges that he has grown more humble because of his experiences, he shows that Mr. Somerville's "advice about adopting a system of study is very judicious" [p. 165]. The story is a character study of an incurable romantic—a civilized gentleman whose unbridled imagination is exposed using a underlying humor of wit.*)
10. **Prediction:** What will happen to Harry? Will he actually become a cattle builder, or is this simply a metaphor describing his fanciful imagination as a young man?

### Supplementary Activities

1. **Figurative Language:** Continue adding to your figurative language chart. Examples: **Similes**—"That glance, however, went like a sunbeam to my heart" (p. 151); "I came out like a student who had failed in his examination..." (p. 169); **Metaphor**—"her mind, which appeared as all sunshine" (p. 168); **Personification**—"This same genius...a wild quality that hurled away with our most promising young men" (p. 171)
2. **Creative Writing:** Mr. Somerville has a clear idea of the type of education he wishes for Julia. Write a short essay from Julia's point of view that expresses what you believe to be her own educational desires.

## Characters With Character

**Directions:** A person's **character** is evaluated by his or her actions, statements, and by the way he or she treats others. For each of the attributes listed in the center of the page, write the name of one character from the novel who has this trait and the name of a character who does **not** have this trait. After each character's name, give an example of an action or statement which proves you have properly evaluated the character.

Has This Trait		Doesn't Have This Trait
	tells the truth	
	keeps promises	
	considers consequences of actions	
	sacrifices for others	
	listens to others without pre-judging them	
	is a good person	
	is kind and caring	

## Character Web

**Directions:** Complete the attribute web below by filling in information specific to a character in the book.

A central circle labeled "Name" is connected to six surrounding circles. Each surrounding circle contains a label and several horizontal lines for writing.

- Top circle: His/her statements
- Top-right circle: His/her behavior
- Right circle: Others' behavior toward him/her
- Bottom circle: Others' statements to him/her
- Bottom-left circle: Others' statements about him/her
- Left circle: His/her thoughts