Name: _____ Date: _____

Gus Harrow's Turnip and the Closed Road

Circle group

People in Turnip Gulch say that Gus Harrow grew the biggest turnip in the world. People in Turnip Gulch never make a story smaller.

It began as a plain seed. Gus watered it each evening with a leaky bucket. That bucket must have been magic. By June the turnip was taller than the fence. By July it was taller than the barn. By August its leaves made so much shade that the rooster crowed at noon. He thought it was sunset.

Then the turnip sat down across Main Road. It was so wide that wagons had to go around it. The trip took three days. The mail came late. The mayor missed her own birthday party. A salesman got stuck on the wrong side. He sold all his umbrellas to a family of frogs just to pass the time.

Gus tried many things. He tied a rope to the turnip and hitched twelve horses to it. They pulled so hard that their hats fell off. The turnip did not wiggle. He asked it nicely. That did not work on a vegetable.

At last Gus's grandmother tapped the turnip with her spoon. She was smaller than a mailbox and wiser than a library. "Well," she said, "it is dinner time."

The whole town came with pots, bowls, and one huge ladle. They made turnip soup. It fed everybody for a month, and some was left to heat the school all winter. The road opened on the first of September. The turnip skin made a fine roof for the new bakery.

Questions

1. What made Gus Harrow's turnip so big?

_____

_____

2. Where did the turnip sit that caused trouble?

_____

_____

3. What is one problem the closed road caused?

_____

_____

4. Why could the horses not move the turnip?

_____

_____

5. How did Gus's grandmother solve the problem?

_____

_____

6. Which detail is an exaggeration that makes this a tall tale?

_____

_____

Words to know

salesman: a person who travels around selling goods
hitched: fastened to something so it can pull
ladle: a large deep spoon used for serving soup

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Gus Harrow's Turnip and the Closed Road

Triangle group

Folks in Turnip Gulch will tell you that Gus Harrow grew the biggest turnip the world has ever seen, and folks in Turnip Gulch have never been known to shrink a story.

It started as an ordinary seed, but Gus watered it with a leaky bucket every evening, and that bucket must have been enchanted. By June the turnip had pushed up past the fence. By July it was taller than the barn. By August its leaves cast so much shade that the rooster crowed at noon, convinced it was sunset.

The trouble came when the turnip sat down right across Main Road. It was so wide that wagons had to drive around it, and the detour took three days. The mail arrived late. The mayor missed her own birthday party. A traveling salesman, trapped on the wrong side, sold his entire stock of umbrellas to a family of frogs just to pass the time.

Gus tried everything. He tied a rope around the turnip and hitched twelve horses to the other end. The horses pulled until their hats fell off, and the turnip never wiggled. He tried asking politely. Politeness did not work on vegetables.

At last Gus's grandmother, who was smaller than a mailbox and wiser than a library, tapped the turnip with her spoon and said, "Well, it is dinner time." The whole town came with pots, bowls, and one very large ladle. They made turnip soup, and it fed everybody for a month, with enough left over to heat the school all winter. The road opened on the first of September, and the turnip skin made a very fine roof for the gulch's new bakery.

Questions

1. What made Gus Harrow's turnip grow so large?

_____

_____

2. Where did the turnip sit that caused trouble?

_____

_____

3. What is one problem the closed road caused?

_____

_____

4. Why did the horses fail to move the turnip?

_____

_____

5. How did Gus's grandmother solve the problem?

_____

_____

6. Which detail in the story is an exaggeration that makes it a tall tale?

_____

_____

Words to know

enchanted: under a magic spell
detour: a longer way around something that blocks the road
salesman: a person who travels around selling goods
hitched: fastened to something so it can pull
ladle: a large deep spoon used for serving soup

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Gus Harrow's Turnip and the Closed Road

Square group

Folks in Turnip Gulch will assure you that Gus Harrow grew the largest turnip the world has ever witnessed, and folks in Turnip Gulch have never been known to shrink a story.

It began as an ordinary seed, but Gus watered it every evening from a leaky bucket, and that bucket must have been enchanted. By June the turnip had pushed up past the fence. By July it towered over the barn. By August its enormous leaves cast so much shade that the rooster crowed at noon, fully convinced that the sun was setting.

The trouble came when the turnip settled itself squarely across Main Road. It was so wide that wagons were forced to take a detour lasting three whole days. The mail arrived late. The mayor missed her own birthday party. A traveling salesman, stranded on the wrong side, sold his entire stock of umbrellas to a family of frogs simply to pass the time.

Gus attempted every remedy he could imagine. He knotted a rope around the turnip and hitched twelve horses to the opposite end. The horses strained until their hats fell off, and the turnip never so much as wiggled. He tried asking politely. Politeness, it turned out, had no effect whatsoever on vegetables.

At last Gus's grandmother, who was smaller than a mailbox and wiser than a library, tapped the turnip with her wooden spoon and remarked, "Well, it is nearly dinner time." The entire town arrived carrying pots, bowls, and one tremendous ladle. They cooked turnip soup that fed every resident for a month, with plenty left over to heat the school throughout the winter. The road reopened on the first of September, and the turnip's thick skin made a very fine roof for the gulch's new bakery.

Questions

1. What caused Gus Harrow's turnip to grow so enormous?

_____

_____

2. Where did the turnip settle that caused so much trouble?

_____

_____

3. What is one problem that the blocked road caused for the town?

_____

4. Why did the twelve horses fail to move the turnip?

5. How did Gus's grandmother solve the problem?

6. Which detail in the story is an exaggeration that makes it a tall tale?

Words to know

enchanted: under a magic spell
detour: a longer way around something that blocks the road
salesman: a person who travels around selling goods
hitched: fastened to something so it can pull
ladle: a large deep spoon used for serving soup

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Gus Harrow's Turnip and the Closed Road

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Gus Harrow's Turnip and the Closed Road

Easier · 259 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 2.9

1. Gus watered it with a leaky bucket that must have been magic.
2. Across Main Road.
3. The mail came late, the mayor missed her party, or the salesman got stuck.
4. It was too big and heavy, so it did not wiggle.
5. The town made the turnip into soup and ate it.
6. The turnip was taller than the barn, or the soup lasted a month.

Triangle: Gus Harrow's Turnip and the Closed Road

This passage · 279 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 6

1. Gus watered it with a leaky bucket that must have been enchanted.
2. Right across Main Road.
3. The mail came late, the mayor missed her birthday party, or the salesman got stuck.
4. It was far too big and heavy, so it never wiggled.
5. She had the town turn the turnip into soup and eat it.
6. The turnip was taller than the barn, or the soup lasted a month and heated the school.

Square: Gus Harrow's Turnip and the Closed Road

Harder · 295 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.3

1. Gus watered it each evening from a leaky bucket that must have been enchanted.
2. Squarely across Main Road.
3. The mail arrived late, the mayor missed her birthday party, or the salesman was stranded.
4. It was far too huge and heavy, and it never so much as wiggled.
5. She got the whole town to cook the turnip into soup and eat it.
6. The turnip towered over the barn, or the soup fed everyone for a month and heated the school.