

Jack and the Fire Dragon

Activities for Each Chapter



Chapter One

This story opens with a reference to another familiar story about Jack, a time when the young Jack climbed the magic bean tree. Who is Jack? What do you learn about him in this chapter? Visit www.ncpress.com, click on NIE, then click on Jack, and print the sheet “Who is Jack?” After each chapter, write something that you learn about him. Also, write about other people you meet in the newspaper.

What words and phrases in the story represent “mountain talk” or dialect? Visit www.ncpress.com, click on NIE and then click on Jack. Print the “word quilt” and use it to record words and phrases highlighted in the story. Refer to the glossary of terms also posted on the Jack site if you need help defining the terms. Do any of the words and phrases you hear family members and friends use tell something about the different places they’ve lived? Can you find examples of dialect or “coined words” in the newspaper? Make other word quilts with those words and phrases.

Jack collects the dry clothes from the line. What do modern families use instead of a clothesline? What are other ways that modern life differs from the life that Jack and his family led? Visit www.ncpress.com, click on NIE, and then click on Jack. Print the sheet “A Way of Life” and use it to record what you learn about Jack’s way of life and ways it differs from modern life. Search the newspaper for examples.

The State Library’s summer reading theme is Dragons, Dreams and Daring Deeds. As you read each chapter, think about the ways this story relates to the theme and ways the theme relates to today’s dreams and daring deeds.

Chapter Two

What helpful advice does Miz Amelia give Jack? Based on what she says, what do you think is going to happen to Jack and his brothers? Make a prediction based on something in the newspaper.

Miz Amelia is introduced in this chapter. Maw was introduced in Chapter One. Three sisters, Annabelle, Marie and Jenny, will be introduced in later chapters. Locate the activity sheet, “Wise Women” on the Web site, www.ncpress.com. Click on NIE, then Jack and then click on and print “Wise Women.” On the activity sheet, describe the positive attitudes and actions of the five women and explain the ways they help stop the dragon.

Chapter Three

From the mention of lemon meringue pie in the first chapter, the story tells a lot about what Jack’s family eats. What is the recipe for “hoppin’ John” given in this chapter? Using foods from the grocery ads, make up a recipe and give it an interesting name, such as hoppin’ John.

In this story, Jack keeps thinking about his conversation with Miz Amelia. She warned him, “There is nothing so fear-some as fear.” What do you think she meant for him to do? How is the advice affecting Jack? Has anyone ever given you advice that you thought about over and over? Find examples of people asking for advice in the newspaper.

Chapter Four

While he waited for the giant, Jack whistled to keep up his courage. What do you do when you feel frightened? In other stories, imaginary or real, like the ones in the newspaper, can you find examples of people coping with fears?

In the story, Jack and the Bean Tree, Jack goes into the sky. Many myths and legends including the popular Star Wars series deal with adventures in the sky. In this story, Jack goes underground. Can you think of any stories, myths or legends in which a character has an adventure underground? (Ask a librarian!)

Chapter Five

Jack’s and his brothers’ motives differ. Why did the brothers want Jack to seek out the giant? Why did Jack agree to go into the hole? Can you find any individuals or groups in the newspaper who go looking for adventure? Any who seek treasure or money? Any who seek revenge?

The sight of the giant’s castle filled Jack with excitement and drew him closer. Write a descriptive house for sale ad in ways that will attract attention.

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Activities for Each Chapter (continued)



Chapter Six

This story involves three brothers and now three sisters. Find other references to the number three in the chapter. Can you think of other folk and fairy tales that involve the number three?

After being trapped in the hole by his brothers, Jack decided, “I may not make it out of here, but I’ll make sure Old Fire Dragaman won’t get up above to go ravaging the countryside ever again.” What does this tell you about Jack’s character? Find quotes in newspaper stories that tell something about the character of a person.

Chapter Seven

Why was the Fire Dragaman afraid for the first time? What was the source of Jack’s strength? Describe both his mental and physical courage. Find examples of mental and physical courage in other fictional tales and in real life stories told in newspapers.

The end of this chapter suggests a fairytale ending, living “happily ever after.” Why do you think the brothers will find it more difficult than Jack to live happily ever after? Is there a lesson in that for us?

Chapter Eight

Rewrite some part of this story as a straight news story. Answer the who, what, when and where questions in your opening paragraph and then write your headline, such as Jenny arms Jack.

Discussions about fairy tales often focus on the traditional roles assigned to women. Describe the women and their impact on this story – Maw, Miz Amelia and Jenny and her sisters. Retell the story from the perspective of one of the women. Pay attention to the roles of women in other stories, both fact and fiction.

Fairy tale lovers enjoy reading, writing and viewing “fractured” fairy tales, created by altering the stories, adding a twist or making them more contemporary. The *Shrek* films offer one example. Write your own ending to this Jack Tale or write another chapter. How might the story be changed to make it more contemporary? Rewrite the ending to a comic strip or other story you read.

Make-believe stories often attempt to explain natural occurrences. Scientists have not been able to figure out what causes the Brown’s Mountain Lights. Several legends offer explanations. According to this story, what causes the Brown’s Mountain Lights?

Folk tales come from oral storytelling, and when written become a literary tale. Gail Haley heard the story, *Jack and the Fire Dragon*, from a mountain man and master storyteller, Ray Hicks. Pass it along by retelling it to someone. Share other favorite stories. Talk about the fiction and non-fiction you read and discuss how they are alike and different.