

Name: _____ Date: _____

“The Ballad of John Henry” Quiz

Directions: Read “The Ballad of John Henry” in the April/May 2008 issue of *Storyworks*. Then fill in the circle next to the best answer for each question. For the last two questions, write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. What is the setting of “The Ballad of John Henry”?

- (A) Alabama in 1960
- (B) West Virginia in 1800
- (C) Ohio in 1865
- (D) the South after the Civil War

2. Given the time and place of the ballad, what have people concluded about John Henry?

- (A) He was 50 years old at the time of his contest.
- (B) He was born into slavery.
- (C) He was born in Alabama.
- (D) He worked for the civil rights movement.

3. The men who held the bits that John Henry hammered were scared that they might be hit with a nine-pound hammer. For this reason, they were called

- (A) turners
- (B) holders
- (C) blinkers
- (D) shakers

4. You can tell that the work that men did to build the railroads was

- (A) boring
- (B) simple
- (C) dangerous
- (D) cowardly

5. Why did John Henry want to defeat the steam drill?

- (A) He didn’t want to lose his well-paid job.
- (B) He was proud of the work he did.
- (C) both A and B
- (D) neither A nor B

6. What is one thing John Henry had that the machine didn’t have?

- (A) teamwork
- (B) a steel bit
- (C) a steam engine
- (D) solid rock to dig through

7. What caused John Henry to die in the end?

- (A) exhaustion
- (B) a broken heart
- (C) getting hit with a hammer
- (D) being run over by the steam drill

8. What is a ballad?

- (A) a happy song
- (B) a song that tells a story
- (C) a haiku
- (D) a rap song

9. What is one main lesson you could learn from “The Ballad of John Henry”?

10. Why does the play include the song lyrics and banjo music?