

The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County

Read Mark Twain's short story The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County and answer the following questions. Think about each question carefully and answer thoroughly to receive full credit. Remember to use complete sentences.

text: <http://www.classicshorts.com/stories/frog.html>

1. What is a tall tale? What are examples of tall tales that we have heard as children?
2. What are some elements of this story that make it a tall tale?
3. What is colloquial language? How is it used in this text?
4. Why do you think Wheeler is so interested in getting people to listen to his tall tales? Does he just like to hear himself talk, or does he think they can learn something from him?
5. Why do you think Wheeler tells about the mare and the bullpup first, before focusing on the frog?
6. Why is it significant that Smiley's animals all seem to have no use or value until Smiley finds one? What conclusions can you draw from the fact that despite clear limitations, they almost always win?
7. What amazing things can Smiley's frog do? What personality traits does Wheeler attribute to the frog?
8. What's the deal with Smiley's constant gambling? Is he an addict? If not, what satisfaction does it give him? Why do we tend to associate gambling with westerners?
9. What can you infer about the narrator's attitude toward Wheeler? Provide examples.