

# Tall Tales: Letting Your Imagination Go Wild!

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For the last three posts, we've been going over an example of a tall tale. (If you haven't read that yet, go check it out!

Here are the links for your reading pleasure 😊 : [Part 1](#) [Part 2](#) [Part 3](#)). But what exactly are tall tales? According to Wikipedia, "A tall tale is a story with unbelievable elements, related as if it were true and factual."

When I asked some adults around me if they had come across tall tales, they replied, "Oh, certainly! We came across them when we were in school (remember, how sometimes those darn

dogs 🐕 would get hungry and eat your homework?) , and we still hear them now: at work and at home...all the time!" 🏃

In folklore, popular tall tales include stories of giant lumberjack Paul Bunyan and his blue cow Babe, the cow Pecos Bill, and Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind Crockett. In this context, tall tales are a part of American folklore.

In Toastmasters, a tall tale speech is a type of speech that a club can choose to have a contest for, and it's told in a way similar to tall tales of folklore. Tall Tale Speech Contests are one type of optional speech contest. Here are the

## requirements for a Toastmasters Tall Tale Speech:

- 3-7 minutes long
- Topic of your choice
- Story with a theme/plot
- Must be exaggerated/improbable, but has realistic elements

Like all speeches, it may require a bit of inspiration to come up with a good Tall Tale Speech. A great way to create a story in general is to just go off your experiences. Here are some questions I like to ask myself to create a tall tale speech:

1. **What's something normal that has really happened to you in real life?** In the last few blog posts, I told the story of the Muitaps, an alien species. The story began at a beach because I was pulling from my memories of days at the beach!
2. **What is something mildly interesting (but still normal) about that experience?** Well, when I was writing the tall tale, I remembered how we had seen some interesting crabs during some of our beach visits. I put in the details about seeing a hermit crab.
3. **How could you "spice it up" or "take it up a notch"?** Seeing a hermit crab at the beach is pretty cool, but it isn't exactly a foreign concept to most people. To make the story start to develop, I made the hermit crab speak, and then reveal that it was an alien!! From there, the story begins to become less and less realistic.
4. **Keep going! Let your imagination go wild!!** – Using what you have so far as a prompt, keep going! What happened next?? Make sure to include lots of funny and interesting details! (For example, you can include commonly known references, jokes, puns, and just details!)

Have fun making your Tall Tale Speech!!

More explanations and examples of Tall Tales:

- [Toastmasters International – True Lies – The Tall Tales Contest](#) This article is from the Toastmasters website, and describes the rules of the Tall Tales Contest, as well as gives you some examples and comments.
- [Linda Evans, “The Ravages of Raw Food”](#) This speech is a great example of a Tall Tale story! It includes many references to *The Wizard of Oz*. The audience loves it!
- [Tall Tales Speech Contest, Speech #1](#) This is yet another example of a Tall Tale speech. It is told from the perspective of an alien observing Earth.
- [What is a Tall Tale? | Reading Genre Lesson](#) This video teaches you about the tall tales of folklore, but it can also help you with understanding tall tale speeches!
- [Walt Disney’s “Paul Bunyan” 1958](#) This video just shows you the story of Paul Bunyan. I included it for anyone who is interested ☐

Tall Tales are indeed a great way to exercise your exaggeration muscles and go wild with your imagination. I have had a lot of fun doing it, and now, it’s your turn!