I Wonder Why

HOW TALL WAS MILTON?

By Lawrence F. Lowery
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The five books in this set of the *I Wonder Why* series focus on inquiry and various content topics: animal behavior, plant growth, physical characteristics of sound, animal adaptations, and mathematical measurement. Inquiry is a natural human attribute initiated by curiosity. When we don’t know something about an area of our interest, we try to find out about it. What we know is the content knowledge that accumulates over time as scientists continue to explore the universe in which we live. How we come to know science is the set of thinking and reasoning processes humans use to get answers to the questions and inquiries in which we are engaged. Scientists learn by observing, comparing, and organizing so do children. These thinking processes are among several inquiry behaviors that enable us to find out about our world and how it works. Observing, comparing, and organizing are fundamental to the more advanced processes of relating, experimenting, and inferring.

After students have completed a science activity, rereading or referring back to the book and talking about the connections with the activity is a deepening experience that stabilizes the learning as a long-term memory. The five books in the *I Wonder Why* series correlate to criteria set forth by national standards. Often the content is woven into each book so that its presence is subtle but powerful. The science activities in the Parent/Teacher Handbook section within each book enable students to carry out their own investigations that relate to the content of the book. The materials needed for these activities are easily obtained, and the activities have been tested with youngsters to be sure they are age appropriate. After students have completed a science activity, rereading or referring back to the book and talking about connections with the activity is a deepening experience that stabilizes the learning as a long-term memory.
Long, long ago in a make-believe kingdom, there lived a giant. He was a very tall giant indeed. No one knew just how tall he was.
The giant’s name was Milton. He was the tallest giant that anyone had ever seen. Milton had long legs and very long arms, too.

Milton the giant was very strong. He could pick up a horse with one hand. He could crush a rock with one hand, too.

You might think that everyone would be afraid of Milton. But Milton was a very kind and happy giant. No one was afraid of him.
In this funny fairy tale, it takes a village to figure out the height of Milton the friendly giant. The townspeople's attempts to gauge just how big he is will entertain young readers as they learn the importance of standard units of measurement. *How Tall Was Milton?* even accounts for the real-life origin of such silly-sounding units as feet.

*How Tall Was Milton?* is part of the *I Wonder Why* book series, written to ignite the curiosity of children in grades K–6 while encouraging them to become avid readers. These books explore the marvels of measurement, animals, plants, and other phenomena related to science and nature. Included in each volume is a Parent/Teacher Handbook with coordinating activities. The *I Wonder Why* series is written by an award-winning science educator and published by NSTA Kids, a division of NSTA Press.