

THE THINKING MAN, JOHN HENRY

New words and new music arr. by
Bob Gibson
and Bob Camp

Brightly

When John Hen-ry was a lit-tle ba-by, He was
sit-tin' on his mom-my's knee. He picked up a slide rule and a
book on math-e-mat-ics say-in', "think-ings gon-na be the job for
me," Said, "think-ings gon-na be the job for me." Yes sir,
Bbb (Talking blues style)
Though John Hen-ry was just a lit-tle bit-ty, bit-ty, bit-ty ba-by,
(Just a lit-tle think-er) He de-cid-ed that when he grew up he was
gon-na be a think-in' man (with a fil-ter) Yes sir, so he
went to school for it, Stud-ied all a-bout al-ge-bra and
think-in', Ge-om-e-try and think-in', Trig-o-nom-e-try and
think-in', Cal-cu-lus and think-in', ac-count-ant.
Bbb
Had a lit-tle trou-ble with Eng-lish though
Bbb I tell you Greek kind-a threw him there, too,
Gram-mer's gon-na be the death of me, Lord, Lord,
Ho-mer's gon-na be the death of me, Lord, Lord,

Gram-mar's gon-na be the death of me.
Ho-mer's gon-na be the death of me. (Jethro, too)

Continue talking blues style

Bbb (repeat until ready)

Yes sir, that's what old John Henry did
went to school and became a very, very competent thinker
which is unusual.
Went out into the business world where they do a lot of heavy thinkin'
And got a job as a thinkin' man.
For a while he was with the Chicago Tribune
Thinkin' up a thought for the day.
Then for a time he had a job workin' with the weather bureau
Thinkin' up girls names for hurricanes;
He was thinkin' up a storm, I'll tell you.
For a while he had a job with the atomic energy commission
Thinkin' up bombs;
And for a while he had a job writing our comedy material
Makin' up bombs.
You know, for a while he was with the federal government
Thinkin' up excuses
It was a big job, I tell you.
Well one day they bring an efficiency expert around on the job
And he figured out John Henry's fringe benefits
And he hollered out:

(Repeat 3 times)

1. Well the ex-pert said to John Hen-ry, "I'm goin' to
bring me a com-puter down, I'm gon-na bring me a com-
puter and an I. B. M. mach-ine, Cy-ber-net-ics gon-na put the an-swer
down Com-puters help to keep the pay-roll down.

2. Well, now the man who invented the computer
 Was from a place called M.I.T.
 He punched out cards and tapes by the yards
 Hummin' nearer my God to Thee,
 Hummin' nearer my God to Thee.

3. Well, John Henry said to the inventor (what did he say)
 He said, "Your tubes don't mean a damn,
 All your wires and your circuits on the integer of two,
 Are never gonna beat a thinkin' man,
 Are never gonna beat a thinkin' man."

Bb (Repeat until ready)

(Continue in talking blues style)

So it was proposed that John Henry and the computer had a race
 The inventor punched out a card for the computer
 John Henry stepped into the isolation booth
 Ralph Edwards read him his question.

Very fast

John — Hen-ry start-ed in-to think-in' 'Til his
 head was cher-ry red. There was smoke from his
 ears and his eyes poured tears And he thunk 'til his brain dropped
 dead, (think, thank, thunk) Thunk 'til his brain dropped dead.

Chord markings: Bb, F7, Bb, Bb?, Eb, Edim, Bb, F7, Bb.

Slower

Bb (repeat until ready)

(Continue in talking blues style)

"THE THINKING MAN, JOHN HENRY"

(talking blues)

And that's the sad and awful fate of John Henry
Pitiful, pitiful couldn't stop thinking
Twisted him all up.

Moderately

The musical score is written on four staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (Bb), and a common time signature (C). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The lyrics are: "They took John Hen-ry to the bug-house ——— But". A chord symbol "Bb" is written above the first measure. The second staff continues the melody with lyrics: "still the leg-end ——— grows ——— Now". A chord symbol "F7" is written above the second measure. The third staff has lyrics: "no one's ev-er heard John Hen-ry say a word, He's just". Chord symbols "Bb (Gradually slower)", "Bb7", "Eb", and "Eb7" are written above the staves. The fourth staff has lyrics: "sit-tin' there smil-in' like he knows. ———". A chord symbol "Bb" is written above the first measure, and "G" is written above the final measure. The score concludes with a double bar line.

Below the first four staves, there are ten additional empty musical staves, each consisting of a five-line staff with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (Bb).