

Real Cowboys

Date: ___/___/20___

Student Name: _____

Teacher Name: _____ Per. _____

Use the word bank to fill in the blanks below:

dangerous	lariat	saddle
independent	million	stockyards
Kansas	open range	

Cowboys – true American folk heroes – were hardworking cowhands who rode the _____ during a brief period following the Civil War. They were mostly young men, putting forth the stamina required. They endured hours in the _____, months on the trail, bad food and meager pay.

Cowboys were responsible for moving herds of cattle from Texas farther north to the plains, where the cattle would feed. The cowboys continued to herd the cattle to areas closer to railroad depots, usually in the state of _____, where they were sent to _____ to be slaughtered and shipped east. In only two decades, almost 10 _____ cattle were moved across the grassy unfenced ranges of the West.



Although by 1890 the open range was gone, the myth of the cowboy as a romantic, _____ figure on horseback was here to stay. It was greatly exaggerated in popular magazines and dime novels or by groups such as Buffalo Bill Cody’s “Wild West Show.”

The figure of legend was always white, but in fact many cowboys were Black or Mexican. Many of the words that we associate with cowboys are Spanish in origin, as, for example, _____, the rawhide rope, from *la reata*. The traditional clothing – chaps and leather vests and hats – was useful rather than fashionable. And true cowboys rarely carried guns, which were considered too _____ to have while working cattle.

Questions ~

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. During what years did “cowboys” ride the open range? 2. According to the text above, does the description of cowboys exclude women? 3. Why would rail depots be more common in Kansas than in Texas? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Which states would you include in the “unfenced ranges of the West”? 5. Can you describe a “dime novel”? 6. Who was Buffalo Bill? 7. What other words, besides lariat, can you think of with a Spanish origin that are associated with cowboys? |
|---|---|