

Unit 10: Cotton, Cattle, & Railroads

7th Grade Lesson Plan: Cattle and Cowboys

(45 – 60 minutes)

Objective	<p>In this one-day lesson, students take part in a stations activity to examine various topics related to cowboys and the cattle industry in Texas.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>We will</u> examine various topics related to cowboys and cattle including Texas Fever, cattle trails, mega ranches, innovations, and some challenges of life as a cowboy. 2. <u>I will</u> use the information provided at six stations to identify, analyze, and summarize key topics related to cowboys and cattle in Texas.
Key Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cattle industry in Texas changed dramatically before and after the Civil War because of the increase of the cattle population in Texas and the shortage of cattle in the North. • There were a number of significant cattle trails from Texas to railroad lines in Northern states including the Chisholm Trail, the Western Trail, the Goodnight-Loving Trail, and the Sedalia Trail. • A tick-borne disease called Texas Fever affected cattle populations in Northern states and resulted in trails being moved farther west to avoid the more populated areas North of Texas. • Life as a cowboy was challenging. Cowboys worked long hours doing difficult and often dangerous work for low pay. • The growth of the cattle industry in Texas attracted out-of-state investors who established large ranches in the Panhandle, closing the open range and largely ending cattle drives. • The windmill and barbed wire were two innovations that revolutionized farming and ranching during the era.
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the significance of topics in history. • Recognizing and explaining cause-and-effect relationships. • Geography and map skills. • Making a claim and providing supporting evidence.

Essential Question	What were some major topics, challenges, and developments that occurred during this era that affected cowboys in the cattle industry?
Assignment	<p>Warm-up</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students make observations about an image of cowboys taking a break on the trail to eat near their chuck wagon. Students make inferences based on the image to determine what is happening in the image. <p>Lesson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students use information provided in six stations to evaluate significant topics related to cattle and cowboys. Topics include: The rise of the beef industry; Cattle drive trails; Texas cattle fever; Life as a cowboy; Mega ranches; and Innovations. Students answer comprehension and analysis questions about each station. <p>Exit Ticket</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students read a primary source excerpt of one aspect of life as a cowboy during the late 19th century and identify how the information provided in the excerpt relates to the information they learned in class.
Materials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Slideshow (<i>Suggested use: present on the overhead; Upload to an educational platform like google classroom; print extra copies for note-taking assistance</i>) Warm-up / Exit Ticket (<i>Suggested printing: 1 per student. Assignment prints two copies per page.</i>) Stations (<i>Suggested printing: Divide class into groups of four or five students. Print four or five copies of each station so that every student at each station has a copy</i>) Assignment (<i>Suggested printing: 1 per student</i>) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Advanced Level work Grade Level work Foundations Level work
Differentiation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Scaffolding including classwork at three different levels of academic ability Visual representations of directions

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Chunking text information 4. Sentence stems and response options provided for short, constructed response questions. 5. Response options provided for short, constructed response questions. 6. Reduction in answer choices and some answers provided in sections that require more writing.
TEKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7.06(B) Identify significant individuals, events, and issues, including the development of the cattle industry from its Spanish beginnings and the cowboy way of life. • 7.06(D) Explain the political, economic, and social impact of the agricultural industry and the development of West Texas resulting from the close of the frontier. • 7.08(C) Analyze the effects of physical and human factors such as climate, weather, landforms, irrigation, transportation, and communication on major events in Texas. • 7.09(A) Identify ways in which Texans have adapted to and modified the environment and explain the positive and negative consequences of the modifications. • 7.19(C) Analyze the effects of various scientific discoveries and technological innovations on the development of Texas such as advancements in the agricultural industries. • 7.20(A) Differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources such as media and news services, biographies, interviews, and artifacts to acquire information about Texas. • 7.20(B): Analyze information by applying absolute and relative chronology through sequencing, categorizing relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and conclusions. • 7.20(C) Organize and interpret information from outlines, reports, databases, and visuals, including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps. • 7.21(A) Create and interpret thematic maps, graphs, and charts representing various aspects of Texas during the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries.

Teacher Guide: Cattle and Cowboys

Warm-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students make observations and inferences about an image of cowboys taking a break near their chuckwagon on a cattle drive. • Slides 2 and 3 restate the directions and provide sentence stems to guide student responses when sharing with the class. • Slides 4 and 5 provide the essential question and the “We will / I will” statements for the lesson.
Lesson	<p><u>Stations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are six stations presenting information about various topics related to cattle and cowboys: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The rise of the beef industry in Texas - Cattle drive trails - Texas cattle fever - Life as a cowboy - Mega ranches - Innovations • Students use the information provided in each station to complete their worksheet. • Slides 6 -11 provide the images from each station for larger viewing. <p><u>Student Worksheets</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Advanced</u>: Students complete a chart and answer short, constructed response questions summarizing the main idea, explaining the significance, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, using map skills, and analyzing key topics related to cowboys and cattle. • <u>Grade Level</u>: Students complete a chart and answer questions including short constructed response, multiple choice, and true or false. • <u>Foundations</u>: Students complete a chart with response options and some answers provided, and answer questions including short constructed response with sentence stems and response options, multiple choice with one answer option eliminated, and true or false.

Exit Ticket

- Students read a primary source excerpt from the point of a view of a cowboy on a cattle drive.
- Students answer a multiple-choice question to determine how the information in the excerpt supports the material they learned in the stations activity.
- Slides 12 and 13 restate the directions and provide sentence stems to guide student responses when sharing with the class.

Primary Sources and Other Resources Used

- Elvis E. Fleming. Sir Bredwell at C.C. Slaughter's Lazy "S" Ranch, photograph, 1900; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth43587/>; accessed November 4, 2025), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Cattle Raisers Museum.
- Historical map of cattle drives north from Texas. National Park Service. Accessed at Wikimedia Commons on 11/11/25.
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cattle-trails.jpg>
- United States Central map, 1900. Map of the United States in central North America from November 8, 1889, to November 11, 1889. Edited to show the Southwest and to include the approximate region afflicted by Texas Fever.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:United_States_Central_map_1889-11-08_to_1889-11-11.png
- Smith, Erwin E. [*Cowhands guiding a herd of cattle*]. ca. 1910. Photograph. University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History; crediting UNT Libraries Special Collections. <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc1151055/>.
- Texas Blank Map. Edited to include the locations of significant ranches during the age of Cotton, Cattle, and Railroads. This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license. Accessed 12/2/25.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Texas_blank_map.svg
- [Photograph of Windmill], photograph, [1900..1929]; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth866241/>; accessed November 5, 2025), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Howard Payne University Library.
- Clark, Joe. [A coil of barbed wire], photograph, [1939..1989]; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc489800/>; accessed November 13, 2025), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting UNT Libraries Special Collections.
- Siringo, Charles A. A Texas Cow Boy, or, Fifteen Years on the Hurricane Deck of a Spanish Pony. Chicago, IL: M. Umbdenstock & Company, publishers, 1885.