

What to Expect from the Program

Thank you for choosing to spend your day at Flint Hills Discovery Center. We are excited for your upcoming visit!

History, Government, and Social Studies Standards:

- HGSS 1.1 Recognize and evaluate significant choices made by individuals, communities, states, and nations that have impacted our lives and futures
- HGSS 1.2 Analyze the context under which choices are made and draw conclusions about the motivations and goals of the decision-makers
- HGSS 1.4 Use his/her understanding of choices and consequences to construct a decision-making process and to justify a decision

Learning Objectives:

- Students will identify factors that led to the cattle drives of the 1860s and 1870s
- Students will identify factors that impacted the varying outcomes for the cattle drives of the 1860s and 1870s

Activity Descriptions:

In this interactive classroom game, students will explore a variety of factors that led to the ranching economy of the Flint Hills, which also plays a major part in the preservation of this unique region today. Students will receive a brief introduction to the historical events that led to an influx of Longhorns in Texas as well as the subsequent cattle drives to get the cattle to more profitable markets. Students will explore how supply and demand impacted cattle prices across differing states. This knowledge will help students decide where to drive their own cattle through each of the four rounds of this game.

When the game begins, students will work in groups of three to four to decide where to first send Texas cattle: Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, or New Mexico. Then, students will decide if they will buy their cattle or if they will rustle (steal) their cattle. As the game moves along, students will understand how each of their choices impacts the outcome for their cattle. Throughout the game, students will do math to keep track of their income and losses each round. At the end of the game, we recommend collecting their math worksheets to use during the post-visit lesson plan. This game is approximately sixty minutes. It is designed for a minimum of 12 students and a maximum of 30 students per session.

Pre-Visit Lesson Plan

English/Language Arts Lesson Plan for 3rd through 5th graders

Common Core ELA Standards:

- RL.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text
- RL.2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas
- RL.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will apply textual evidence from “The Life of the Cowboy” and “Texas Longhorns” to explore a cowboy’s life on the trail
- Students will utilize context clues to understand unknown words in the text
- Students will summarize main ideas from “Texas Longhorns” excerpt
- Students will evaluate how historical texts can assist learning about the life of cowboys

Materials:

For Each Student:

- “The Life of a Cowboy” worksheet (optional)
- “Texas Longhorns” excerpt
- “Texas Longhorns” word bank
- “Texas Longhorns” guided reading questions
- “3-2-1” Exit Ticket

For the Teacher:

- Cowboy photo link: <http://bit.ly/2mJSj1z>
- “The Life of a Cowboy” worksheet
- “Texas Longhorns” word bank and key
- “Texas Longhorns” excerpt and answer key

Preparing to Teach:

- Read the “Background Information” and “What to Expect from the Program” before teaching.
- Display the photo of the cowboy and his horse (<http://bit.ly/2mJSj1z>).
- Decide if you will discuss questions about the cowboy and his horse as a whole group or if students will complete the worksheet individually.
- Decide the reading strategy that will best suite your class’s needs to read the “Texas Longhorns” excerpt (teacher read-aloud, round-

robin, groups, pairs, etc.).

- Make a copy of “The Life of a Cowboy” worksheet (optional), “Texas Longhorns” excerpt, word bank, guided reading questions, and “3-2-1” Exit Ticket for each student.
- Post the essential question: “What can we learn about the lives of cowboys by investigating historical texts?”

Exploring Prior Knowledge:

- Tell students that they will play the role of historian as they analyze a historical photo of a cowboy and his horse.
- Let the students look at the picture and read the caption on the worksheet aloud to them.
- Then, ask students the “Observations” questions or have students complete the questions individually
- We recommend writing their ideas on the board as they share answers to the whole group.

Pre-Visit Lesson Plan (cont.)

English/Language Arts Lesson Plan for 3rd through 5th graders

Developing New Knowledge:

- Explain to students that they will read an excerpt called “Texas Longhorns” from Laura Ingalls Wilder’s *Little House on the Prairie*; mention that Wilder wrote about her experience as a child growing up on the prairie.
- Once students have finished the excerpt, they should complete the word bank and then answer the guided reading questions independently or in small groups.
- After students have completed their worksheets, we recommend discussing the answers as a whole group to check for student understanding.
- Lastly, come back to the essential question posted on the board: “What can we learn about the lives of cowboys by investigating historical texts?” Have students discuss what they’ve learned about cowboy life through these two texts.

Measuring Student Knowledge:

- Tell students that they will complete a “3-2-1” exit ticket to showcase their new knowledge. Inform students that this knowledge will be helpful when they visit the Flint Hills Discovery Center.
- Collect student exit tickets and consider bringing them with you to the Flint Hills Discovery Center.
- The questions your students develop from this activity can be used during your visit!

Post-Visit Lesson Plan

English/Language Arts Lesson Plan for 3rd through 5th graders

Common Core ELA Standards:

- W.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will explain their choices in the Cowboys and Cattle Car games through a written letter
- Students will justify their reasoning in the game based on previous outcomes

Materials:

For Each Student:

- “The Life of a Cowboy” letter template (optional)
- “Cowboys and Cattle Cars” worksheet completed at FHDC

For the Teacher:

- “The Life of a Cowboy” letter example transparency

Preparing to Teach:

- Pre-teach or review proper letter writing format with students
- Print a copy of “The Life of a Cowboy” letter template for each student or use regular notebook paper
- Make a transparency of “The Life of a Cowboy” letter example

Exploring Prior Knowledge:

- Return students “Cowboys and Cattle Cars” worksheets completed during their time at the FHDC
- Review with students the general outcomes of the Cowboys and Cattle Cars game. Ask students which states brought the most profit for cattle and what factors impacted the profit.
- We recommend writing their ideas on the board as they share answers to the whole group.

Developing New Knowledge:

- Explain to students that they will play the role of the cowboy writing a letter to their cousin back East, attempting to persuade them to join their next cattle drive.
- Tell the students that the first paragraph should be a general greeting similar to the introduction included on the letter example. It should include a reason for why they are writing the letter to their cousin.
- The second paragraph should include at least two of the choices students made during the game, explaining the outcome of these choices. Tell students they should try to include one good choice they made as well as a bad choice they made while playing the game.
- The third paragraph should focus on persuading their cousin to join their next cattle drive. Students should explain where they will decide to go next as well as why that choice will be profitable for their cousin.
- The last paragraph should be a general closing restating students’ main points.

Measuring Student Knowledge:

- After students have completed their letter, we recommend collecting them and evaluating the letters for student understanding.