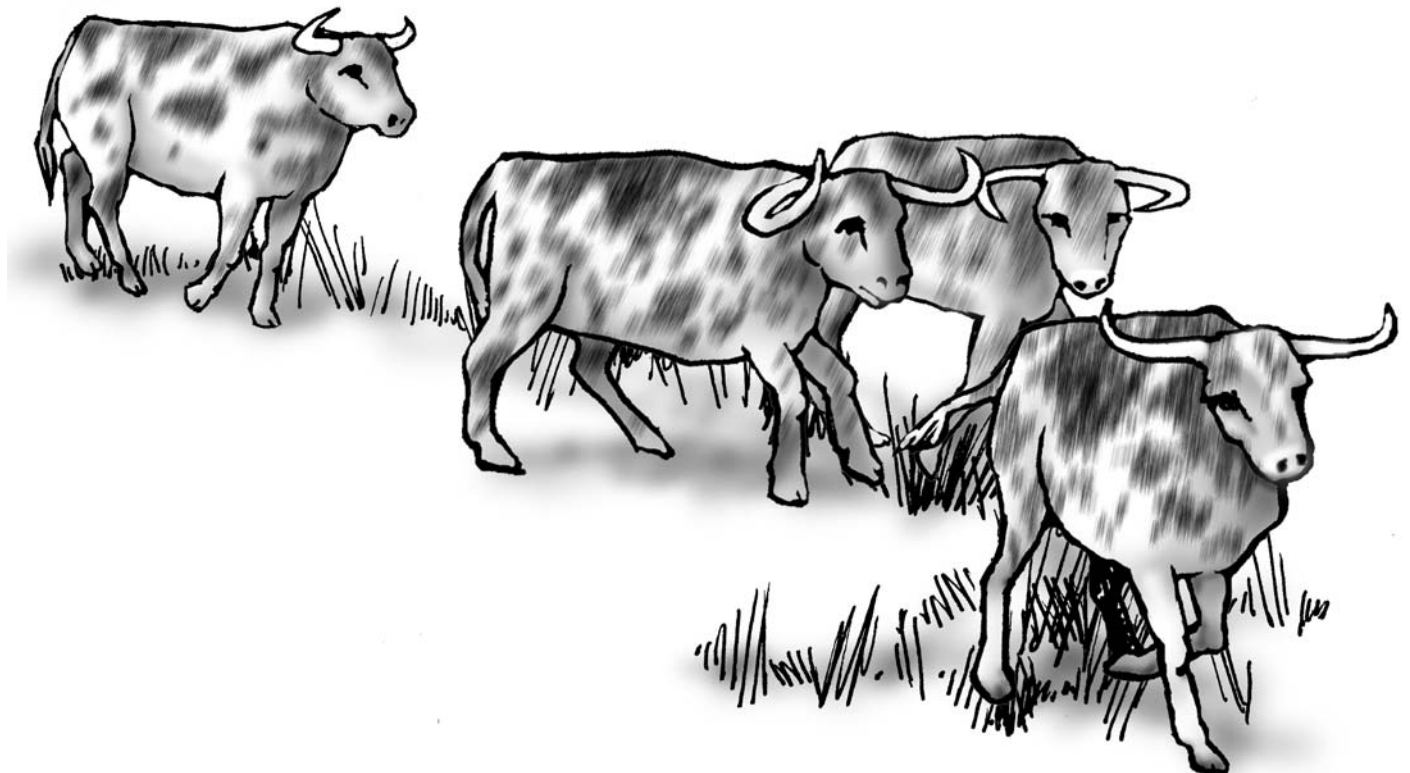


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# Cattle Drive

## How It All Began

In the 1500s Spaniards reintroduced horses and brought longhorn cattle to North America. They set up ranches in Mexico and regions from Texas to California and in time their animals multiplied and wandered freely across these regions.

The first settlers to North America were largely homesteaders who provided for themselves but by the 1800s things were changing. Settlers and new immigrants were beginning to congregate in cities like Boston, Chicago, New York, Toronto and Montreal where shipping and industry created work. The shift from homesteading to life in industrialized cities created housing problems and difficulties in obtaining food.

### Discussion

Where might city dwellers get their food? How is food transported today? What technology aids in the transport, storage and preserving of food today? In the 1800s there were no methods to refrigerate or move large amounts of food quickly to faraway locations.

## Beef to the People

In the 1800s many people saw the demand for beef in the east and the promise of free or inexpensive land in the west as an opportunity to prosper. Thousands of settlers headed west to the wild cattle and open ranges. Cowboys were hired to take live cattle from the range to the city markets where they were sold and processed into beef. Some cowboys drove cattle further west and north to establish ranches on the open range that would be profitable when the coming railways linked the west and east.

## Imagine the Open Range

The unsettled land of the west was an alluring new frontier. Wild and branded cattle wandered over great distances sharing grazing lands and water sources on the open range. It is estimated that there were once millions of cattle roaming the open ranges of North America.

### Materials

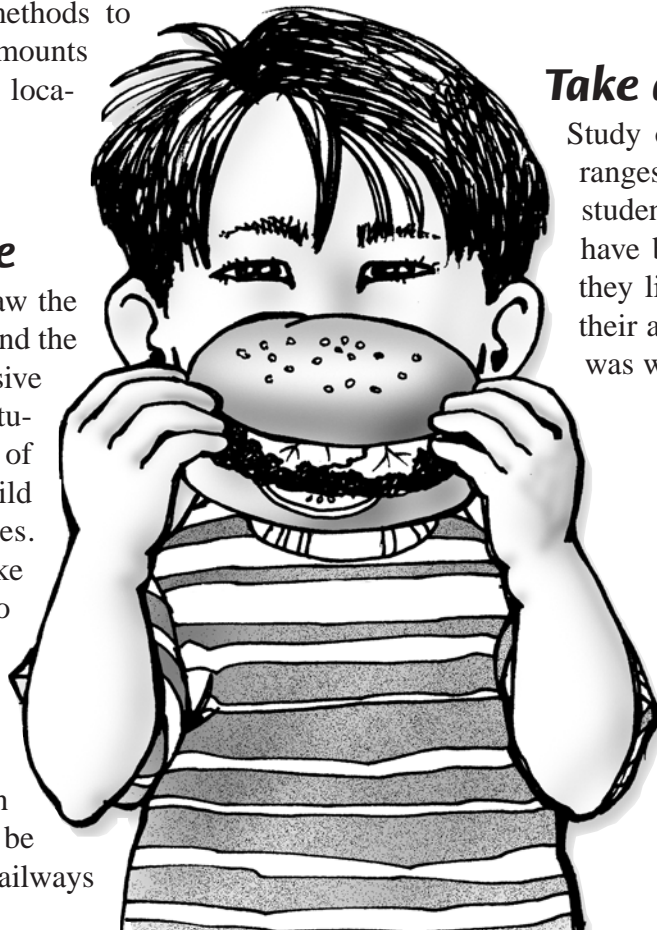
atlas or large map of the Western frontier  
historic photos of the open range of the 1800s

### What to Do

1. Use the atlas and photos to take a look at the areas discussed when it was a wide-open range.
2. Have students close their eyes and try to imagine what it would be like to see open range as far as the eye could see.
3. View pictures of these locations today. Discuss the changes.

## Take a Look

Study old photographs of the wide-open ranges from a time not so long ago. Ask students to think about what life would have been like. How would they feel if they lived in a place like that? How has their area changed from the time when it was wide-open territory?



# Cattle Drive

## The Roundup

Before cattle could be driven to a new place they had to be rounded up. Twice a year cowboys herded cattle together in what was called a roundup. They counted new calves, checked brands, branded young cattle and selected the biggest cattle for the drive to market.

## Longhorns

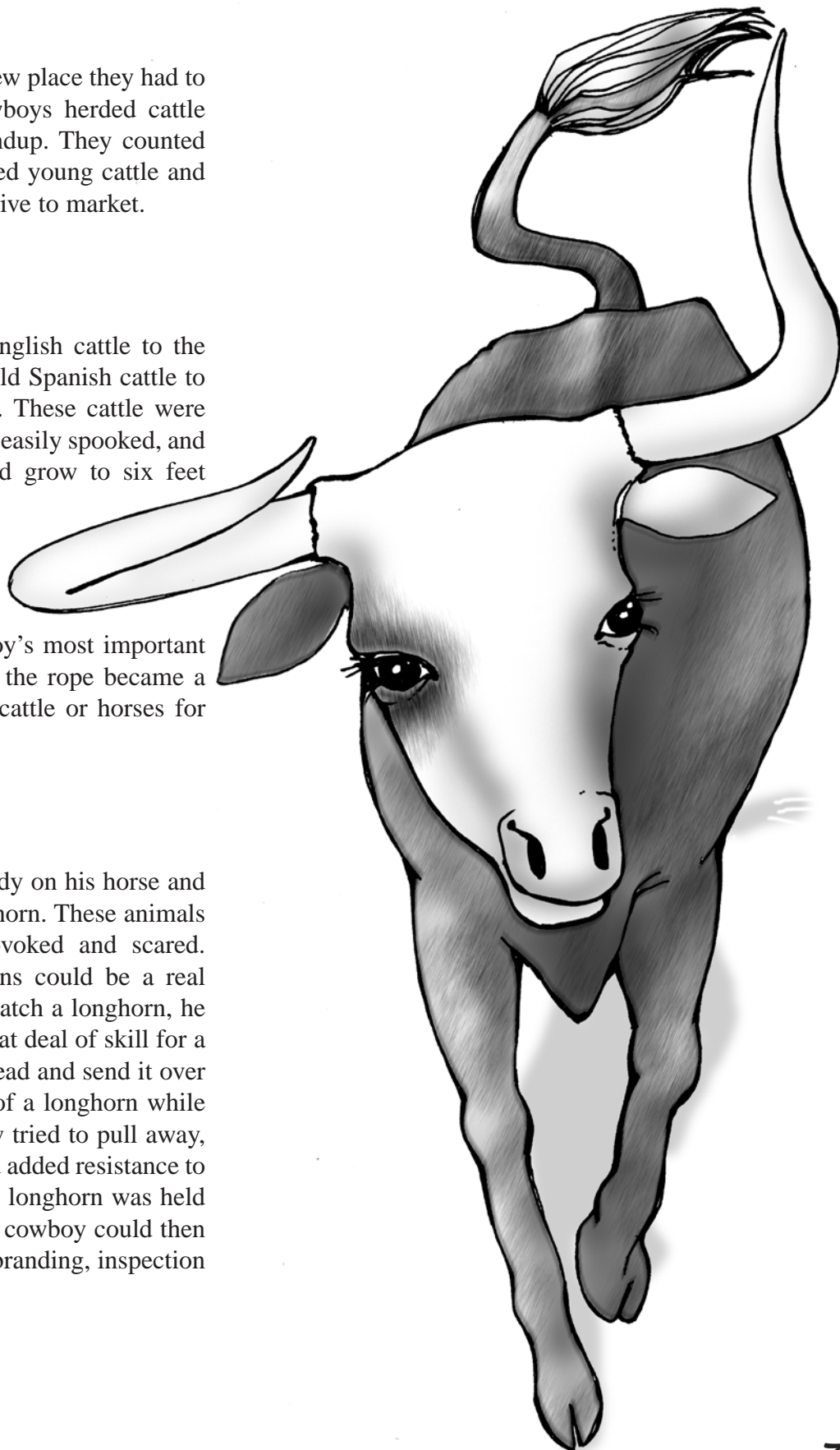
Colonists from the east brought English cattle to the continent. These mixed with the wild Spanish cattle to produce the hardy Texas longhorn. These cattle were lean, fast, strong, bad-tempered and easily spooked, and they had a set of horns that could grow to six feet across.

## Lariat

A coil of rope was one of a cowboy's most important tools. With a few twists and knots the rope became a lariat that could help rope calves, cattle or horses for branding, taming or herding.

## Lasso a Longhorn

A cowboy had to be quick and steady on his horse and good with a lariat to round up longhorn. These animals were known to charge when provoked and scared. Angry cattle with long, sharp horns could be a real threat. When a cowboy needed to catch a longhorn, he roped it with his lariat. It took a great deal of skill for a cowboy to twirl the rope over his head and send it over the horns or around the back legs of a longhorn while riding his horse. When a roped cow tried to pull away, the cowboy's horse braced itself and added resistance to the rope. As the loop tightened, the longhorn was held steady or pulled to the ground. The cowboy could then lead it or bring it to the ground for branding, inspection or to treat an injury.



# Cattle Drive

## Make Your Own Lariat

You can make a lariat and learn to toss it as the cowboys did. It's a bit tricky but can be done by children.

### Materials

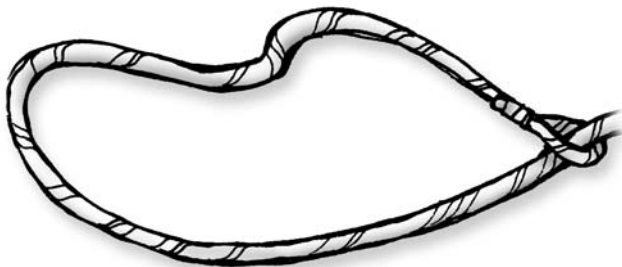
12-foot (3.6 m) length of  $\frac{3}{8}$ " (1 cm) thick manila cord (from hardware store) per lariat (adjust the length based on the height and arm length of each child)  
plastic electrical tape  
scissors

### What to Do

1. Fold one end of rope back about 3" (7.5 cm) to form an eye. Wrap electrical tape around the base of the doubled cord to hold it in place. This little loop is called the "honda." (You can make overhand knots in place of electrical tape if children are good with knots.)



2. Fold a section of the rope below the honda in half and thread it through the honda to create a loop or noose and you will have your lariat.



## Roping Station

Set up a "calf" using poles standing in buckets of hardened cement, plaster or sand. Mark a line about 6' (2 m) from the pole. Invite students to try their hand at roping the "pole-calf" using a lariat.

