

TALK LIKE A VAQUERO

The forerunner of the cowboy was the *vaquero*. Many words in our English vocabulary come from Spanish words that had to do with the *vaquero*, horses and cattle. Write the following list of Spanish words (in italics) on the board. Students guess each word's meaning and English equivalent.

Spanish Word:	Meaning	English Word
<i>La Reata</i>	Rope	Lariat
<i>Vaqueros</i>	Cowboy	Buckaroo
<i>Chaparreras</i>	Leather leg covering for a vaquero	Chaps
<i>Mesteño</i>	Wild horse	Mustang
<i>Cincha</i>	Girdle/girth for pack or saddle	Cincha
<i>Estampida</i>	Headlong rush of startled animals	Stampede
<i>Rodear</i>	To surround something, a cattle roundup	Rodeo

As a class, make a list of other words derived from Spanish in use today. Note that many of these words are from terms the *vaquero* used. Be sure to include ranch, corral, lasso, poncho, sombrero, desperado, hombre, Pecos, Rio Grande, mesa, chaparral and bonanza. Compile into class dictionary. Expand to other languages.

LANGUAGE DETECTIVES



Make a class list of all the words that students use when they talk about cowboys. Identify categories and group the words accordingly—for example, which words describe clothing, equipment, tools, shelter, etc? Repeat exercise with a modern occupation like astronaut, to demonstrate how language is living and changing.

YOU ARE THERE

Lead a class discussion about the causes leading up to the battle of the Alamo. Students identify and list people who were involved in the conflict, both Mexican and Texan. Select one student as a “You Are There” interviewer. The remaining students each choose a person they want to portray. Students research their historic characters and the part each played in the conflict.

Write a class script and produce a “You Are There at the Alamo” television program. Students roll play as their persona describing what they see, how they feel, what sounds they hear, what smells they smell, etc. Interviews by the newscaster should include events before and after the actual battle. Videotape the performance if possible and share with other classes and parents. Try selecting other historic Texas events.



GONE TO TEXAS

Discuss how immigrants coming to Texas needed to bring with them everything necessary for their survival and list suggestions of what to bring.

Divide the class into family units of four. Each unit is a family moving to Texas and must pack their wagon with the things they will need in their new home. Assign each unit member a family role—mother, father, brother, or sister. Role-playing as their family member, students list what they would pack in the wagon. Compare individual lists. How are they different, similar and why?

Compile a master list by family member on the board. Did all the mothers take similar items, why or why not? Repeat for each family member. Lead a class discussion about how the job of each family member would influence what he/she thought was important and necessary to take to a new home.

Pose the problem to the class that they are moving today and may only bring 10 items with them. Students list what they would bring. Compare lists. What are necessities, what are luxuries? How are their lists today different than those they made as immigrants?

TOTALLY TEXAN

As a library project make a class list of books about life in Texas from prehistoric Indians to oil fields and boomtowns. Students select books to read, create a scene from their book using the shoebox diorama format and give an oral presentation about their book to the class. Display the dioramas in the classroom or library. Invite other classes to view the dioramas and give “shoebox” tours of Texas history.

TRAIL HAND WANTED

Have students research cowhand jobs, select one of the jobs and write a cover letter to a ranch owner or trail boss requesting employment. Have them describe the work they do, including some of their daily activities. Include their level of experience, qualification, duties, and earnings. Students can also create a resume of their experience to attach with the letter.



COWBOY POETRY

Create a poem describing a cowboy. Have groups of students brainstorm everything they know about cowboys and create a list. Display the lists and discuss. Now construct an Add-a-Word Poem. Example:



A Cowboy
A bowlegged cowboy
A dirty, bowlegged cowboy
A tired, dirty, bowlegged cowboy
A singing, tired, dirty, bowlegged cowboy.
A dusty, singing, tired, dirty, bowlegged cowboy.
A Cowboy.

There are many cowboy poets. Baxter Black, Wally McRae, and Waddie Mitchell to name a few. Have your students look for their work in the library and on the internet.

Frequently, but not always, cowboy poems are written in four-line stanzas, with the last word in the second and fourth lines rhyming. List some cowboy rhyming words on the board and have the students write their own cowboy poem.

SOURDOUGH SCIENCE

The most important job the chuck wagon cook had to do before the trail drive was to prepare the sourdough starter for making bread. The starter is a water, yeast and flour mixture. Make some sourdough starter and discuss the science that is happening as the yeast grows. Then make some biscuits to enjoy!

Individual Sourdough Portions: Using baby food jars, fill the jar half way with lukewarm water and add 1/8 teaspoon yeast. Stir until yeast is dissolved. Slowly fill the rest of the jar with flour stirring constantly to prevent lumps. Stir mixture until it is smooth. Place a sheet of paper towel over the top and let sit in a warm place overnight.

Group Instructions: Mix 2 cups of flour, 2 cups of warm water and 1 package of dry yeast. Mix gently until smooth. Cover with a paper towel and let stand overnight in a warm place.

Sourdough Biscuits: Mix 1 cup of starter with 2 cups of flour to which has been blended 1 tsp of baking soda, 1 tsp salt and 1tbsp melted butter, bacon fat, or cooking oil. This should make a stiff dough, add more flour if too thin. Lightly knead, form biscuits, and drop them into a muffin tin. Let rise and bake at 400 degrees until golden brown.



POTATO BRANDS

After discussing brands, have students design their own brands. Remember that brands are read left to right, top to bottom and outside to inside. After the brand is complete, cut a potato in half and trace the brand into the cut surface. With a plastic knife carefully cut away about 1/2 inch of the potato around your brand. Use an inked stamp pad or tempera paint to ink the potato and stamp a brand.

BANDANA MANIA

The bandana is part of the official cowboy uniform. It was worn around the neck and knotted in the back. It protected the cowboy's neck from sunburn and in case of a dust storm, the bandana could be pulled up over the face. During cold weather, a cowhand could tie his bandana over his head to keep his ears warm. Have students brainstorm uses for the bandana and then play charades to guess the uses. Some uses are listed below to get you started:



sweat band
mask
ear muffs
bandage
pouch to hold something
washcloth

cloth to clean a gun, boots
sling
tourniquet hot pad
flag
handkerchief
fly swatter

strainer
hot pad
blindfold
towel

ORIGINAL TEXANS

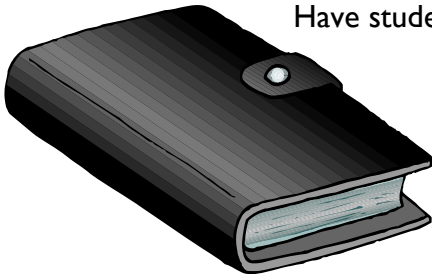
Divide the class into six teams. Assign each team one of the historic Indian groups in Texas—Caddos, Karankawas, Coahuiltecas, Comanches, Apaches and Jumanos. The six teams research information about their Indian group, and categorize their data using the following categories—food, shelter, clothing and tools.

Make a class chart using each team's data. Lead a discussion about the similarities and differences among the six Texas Indian groups. Students develop generalizations based on the class chart, for example—Indians that farm need different tools than Indians that hunt. Generate as many generalizations as possible to model the process of making inferences from data.

HISTORICAL DIARIES

Ask students to choose a historic figure from Texas history. Direct them to write several diary entries for that person. Have them include actual historical data from the character's life. Explain that the diary entries should also express the character's thoughts and feelings.

Have students share their diary entries with the class.



PETROLIUM SEARCH

For a hundred years, petroleum has been an important source of fuel. Petroleum use has grown along with the use of motor vehicles, because it is by far the easiest and cheapest fuel to use. Coal remained important for heating buildings and as a fuel for railroad locomotives until the mid-20th century. Now, however, petroleum is used to power locomotives. Oil and natural gas heat most buildings. Petroleum is also very important as a raw material for a great many manufactured goods such as plastics and synthetic fabrics. Have students research products made using petroleum and then go on a petroleum product scavenger hunt.



Common Products Made Using Petroleum

Artificial fibers in clothing	Synthetic rubber for tires
Asphalt	Plastic
Diesel fuel	Photographic film
Fertilizers	Pesticides
Gasoline	Paraffin wax for candles
Heating oil	Jet fuel
Paint	Propane
Pesticides	

Extension Activity:

Have students think about how they use petroleum. Write a short story about how a severe shortage of petroleum would affect their daily life?

WITTE WEB RESOURCE

Visit the Witte's TeleVentures web resource with sections for students and teachers. Teachers can find links to many curricula and on-line resources related to the topics. Students watch informational video clips, and practice their technology skills taking on-line quizzes. After completing each quiz, students can download and print additional games and activities as well as visit other related websites from the list of activity links.

TeleVentures subjects that compliment the *Wild and Vivid Land: Stories of South Texas* exhibit include:

- Vaquero Y Cowboy
- Powwow: An American Indian Get Together
- A River of History

To access this site, visit the main page of the Witte Museum (www.wittemuseum.org) and click on the TeleVentures icon.

