



Goal

Students will explore the cowboy's life in early Jackson Hole.

Outcomes

- Students will be introduced to the basic skills of journalism and writing articles about a specific subject.
- Using old photographs and artifacts in the Jackson Hole Museum (or Historical Society), students will gather information on the life of a cowboy.
- Students will write an article and create illustrations describing the life of a cowboy in Jackson Hole.
- Students will use skills including listening, speaking, observing, writing, drawing, researching information and using creativity and imagination.

Notes

1. For this unit, it is important to do all three activities. Students could do this project working alone as author and illustrator or could work in teams of two. Teachers need to decide this before the beginning of the unit. If students will be working in teams, teams should be selected before beginning the unit as well.
2. The museum visit for activity #2 could be moved to the Historical Society if necessary. Provide Historical Society staff with lists of what students want to include in their articles and illustrations so that helpful artifacts and photographs will be ready when the class arrives.
3. For activity #3, organize a special event for the students to add excitement to their projects and help them feel more like real journalists. Either invite a real-life cowboy or cowgirl to visit the classroom or take the students to a working ranch. Historical Society staff can suggest people or ranches.

Resources

Selected List of Children's Books on Cowboys Available at Teton County Library

What Does a Cowboy Do? by Wayne Hyde.

Cowboys by Leonard J. Matthews. Illustrated by Andrew Howat and others.

Various adult books about cowboys can be found at the Teton County Library as well.

The following resources are available for use at the Jackson Hole Historical Society and Museum.

Children's Books

Cowboy Slang by Edgar R. Potter. A guide to cowboy slang, cattle ear notching, how to read a brand, a rodeo dictionary and great pictures.

Adult books

and that's the Way it was in Jackson's Hole by Jack Huyler. Stories of people and events in the valley from 1926–1999.

The Early Days in Jackson Hole by Virginia Huidekoper. A selection of old photographs of the valley arranged by topics including photos by William Henry Jackson, the elk, settlers, communities, contending with nature, dudes, and early sportsmen.

Homesteading with the Elk: A Story of Frontier Life in Jackson Hole, Wyoming by Bertha Chambers Gillette

This Was Jackson's Hole: Incidents and Profiles from the Settlement of Jackson Hole by Fern Nelson

Vertical Files

These files include a wealth of newspaper and magazine articles and other information on Jackson Hole history. Topics include cattle and dude ranching, farming, early settlements, schools, rodeo, cowboys, clothing and numerous others.

Photograph Collection

This collection of over 15,000 cataloged images of early days in Jackson Hole documents communities, cattle and dude ranching, climbing, skiing, the elk herd, life in Jackson Hole, and more.

Artifact Collections

The museum has numerous items from the early days of Jackson Hole including spurs, saddles, cattle ranching gear, children's games and toys, dude ranch furniture, old newspaper printing equipment, blacksmith tools, gold mining artifacts, and many others.

Activity #1

The Life of a Cowboy

Approximate Time For Activity

- One hour

Materials Supplied by Museum

- Several copies of very old magazines to show examples of articles and illustrations used in the early days.
- Power point presentation

Materials Supplied by Teacher

- notebooks or paper for writing lists
- pencils

Assistants Needed

- None

CLASSROOM INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

Introducing the Project

1. You are going to learn about the life of a cowboy by pretending that you are a journalist.
 - Ask if anyone knows what a journalist is.
 - Journalists are writers who write for news publications such as a newspaper or magazine. You are also an excellent illustrator and draw your own illustrations for the articles you write.
 - It is the early 1900s. You live in New York City and write articles for the magazine "The Life and Times of America."
 - Your editor assigned you to do an article about Cowboys in Jackson Hole. In the summer you traveled from New York City by train to Idaho. Someone picked you up in their buggy and brought you to Jackson Hole. You are spending one month with a cowboy on a ranch. You spend every day with him, going along to learn about his life so that you can write an article that will tell the readers what life as a cowboy is like.
2. Try to find some old magazines that used mostly drawings and paintings as illustrations instead of photographs so students can see an example.
 3. Explain the process that journalists and illustrators use to do articles.
 - First, the journalist lists all the possible things about the subject that he or she could include. Then the journalist goes through the list and chooses what he/she thinks is most important to include to give the readers a good idea of the subject (cowboys).

- You want to give your readers an idea of the environment: what the land and the ranch look like. Brainstorm some things you could describe in the article or draw as an illustration. You write a brief list of their ideas on the board while they brainstorm. They write the list in their notebooks.
 - ❖ Tetons
 - ❖ Weather
 - ❖ A map of the ranch
 - ❖ Ranch buildings

- You want to give your readers a description of the cowboy and some basic things about him. As a group, brainstorm all the things that they could write about to describe the cowboy to readers. You write a brief list of their ideas on the board while they brainstorm. They write the list in their notebooks.
 - ❖ Clothing
 - ❖ Tools
 - ❖ Horse

- While you are at the ranch, you will get to go on several experiences with the cowboy. You can choose which ones. As a group, brainstorm different kinds of experiences they might have. You write a brief list of their ideas on the board while they brainstorm. They write the list in their notebooks.
 - ❖ Cowboy teaches them to saddle a horse, get on the horse and ride
 - ❖ Driving cattle for several days to summer pasture, camping overnight, singing around the campfire
 - ❖ Branding cattle
 - ❖ Building buck rail or barbed wire fences
 - ❖ Competing in the local rodeo

- You need a list of possible illustrations that will help readers better understand the cowboy's life. You write a brief list of their ideas on the board while they brainstorm. They write the list in their notebooks.
 - ❖ Clothing
 - ❖ Ranch
 - ❖ Horse saddled and ready to ride
 - ❖ Sketch of the cattle drive

Closings

1. Now, as a journalist, you are ready for your trip to the Jackson Hole Historical Society Museum. There you will be able to see photographs of cowboy life and see real, old items that cowboys used such as

2. Before you go to the museum, you need to look at the lists we made and decide what information you want to put in your articles and what subjects you want to draw or paint. You need to think carefully and not choose too much. You don't want to make your article too long for the readers, and you want to have plenty of time to write a good article. You also want to think about how many illustrations you want. Two or three is probably plenty.
 - When you go to the museum, you will need your lists of information you are looking for and for the list of illustrations you might do. When you are there, you will take notes and make sketches of the things you find most helpful.
 - You will also need a pencil and a note pad, notebook or pieces of paper for writing notes and sketching.
 - After the trip to the museum, you will do some more research, write the article, and do the illustrations.

Activity #2

The Life of a Cowboy

Approximate Time for Activity

- One hour

Materials Supplied by Museum

- If visit is in Historical Society – photographs and artifacts

Materials Supplied by Teacher

- notebooks, note pads or several pieces of paper for writing and sketching
- pencils
- students bring their lists of additional information they need on cowboys

Assistants Needed

- one preferred, not required

MUSEUM VISIT

Preparation Before Visit

Remind students to bring the following items to the museum:

- Pencils (extras, too)
- Note pads, notebooks, or several pieces of paper for writing and sketching.
- Student's lists of subjects about which they need information.

Investigating the Life of a Cowboy

1. Take students on a brief tour of the museum and point out all the displays, photographs, and art work pertaining to cowboys.
 - Tell them that you and the museum staff are available to help them if they need it.
 - They have 30 minutes or so to do their work, so they need to keep on task. This will be their only chance to see these items. Remind them not to spend too much time writing or drawing one thing. They should make brief notes, without concern for spelling, grammar or correct sentences structure. They should make simple sketches and use words on them to indicate what is there. When an artist sketches, he/she puts just enough on the paper to remind them of how something looks.
2. Set students to work. Adults should roam and make themselves available to help.
3. About ten minutes before departure, call the class together to discuss their experiences researching and take any questions they may have.

Activity #3

The Life of a Cowboy

Approximate Time For Activity

- Varies

Materials Supplied by Teacher: Depends on Activities Selected

- Notebooks or paper for writing lists
- Pencils
- Books on cowboy life
- Magazines such as National Geographic as examples.

Assistants Needed

- None

POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Visit from a Real-Life Cowboy

1. Invite someone who works today as a cowboy or cowgirl and who is familiar with cowboy life in the early 1900s to come to your class and be interviewed by your students. Historical Society staff can provide you with names of people who might be willing to visit.
2. Have students write a list of interview questions and decide who will ask them. This is their chance to find out from an experienced person about their work, clothing, horses, and other information.
3. Ask your guest to spend a few minutes describing his life and how it is similar and different to early cowboy life.
4. Students then ask their guest the interview questions and take notes on the answers.
5. After the visit:
 - Have students write a thank-you letter to their guest for taking the time to help you learn about the life of a cowboy.
 - Working in pairs, have the students talk about their interview notes with each other in case they missed writing something that they thought was important. They can ask each other for the information that they missed.

Field Trip: Visit a Working Ranch

Find a working ranch with a ranch hand that would be willing to take your students on a tour and let them see ranch activities in action. Be sure to find out what types of work you will be observing. Consider that some students might be disturbed by certain activities such as branding. Historical Society staff can provide you a list of working ranches.

Finishing the Articles

1. Provide students with magazines such as National Geographic to see how magazine articles are put together. Call attention to:
 - Article title
 - Author's name
 - Illustration placement
 - Illustration captions
 - Illustrator's credit by the illustration.
2. Provide specified times for students to work on the project. Students write their articles and do the illustrations.

Ideas for Presentation of Work

1. Create a special issue of "The Life and Times of America" with a focus on cowboys. Put all articles/illustrations together and have students volunteer to create the front cover, back cover, and table of contents. If possible, make a copy of the magazine for each student.
2. The website www.makingbooks.com has several ideas for how students can create books of their work.
3. Display the articles so that students can read each other's work. Invite Historical Society staff to visit for a presentation of the articles.
4. Arrange for students to go to other classes to read their articles.

Supplemental Idea

Field Trip to Jackson Hole Hat Company. Arrange with the hat makers for your students to make a short visit to tour their shop and learn how hats are made.