

Grade 4 PASS: Unit 4 Using Information Resources

In this test, you are asked to look at some reference materials and then use the materials to answer some questions.

Research Topic: The Wild West

Suppose you wanted to write a report about the Wild West. You would want to learn more about cowboys, ghost towns, and the history of the West. Five different sources of information about the Wild West are given in this section of the test. The information sources are listed below.

Skim all of the resources and become familiar with the information they contain. Remember that these are reference sources, so you do not need to read every word in each source. Once you have skimmed the sources, answer the questions that follow.

Use the information sources to help you answer the questions. As you work through the questions, go back and read the sources that will give you the information you need.

1. Article: "The Great American Cowboy"
2. Web Page: TickTockHistoryClock
3. Chapter from Book: *A History of the American West*
4. Glossary from Book: *How the Saddle Won the West*
5. Online Resources: Western Ghost Towns

1. Article: “The Great American Cowboy”

The Great American Cowboy

No other figure in American history has had such a hold on the American imagination as the cowboy. Call them *caballeros*¹, *vaqueros*², or cowpokes, cowboys are the subject of books, movies, and legends. Even show-business cowboys like the Lone Ranger and Roy Rogers (and cowgirls like Annie Oakley and Dale Evans), make us dream about hard-riding days and nights spent gazing at the stars from a warm spot by the camp fire. When you take a closer look at the real riders of the range, you can see why cowboys became heroes with staying power.

Cowboys of the Old West were proud of their dangerous job, so proud that to be a cowboy was to join the cowboy culture, a culture with its own customs and uniform. The cowboy culture included special language, campfire songs, and a code of honor. Cowboys could easily identify cowboys who were the real McCoy. They could also spot a “tenderfoot” a mile away—even if he was “gussied up” in cowboy gear.

A dangerous job, exciting work, and a dashing reputation were only some of the reasons men went west to hop onto a saddle. Cowboys were also very well-paid, especially when you consider the low cost of living on the range and in cow towns. Cowboys usually were given room and board by ranchers, who lodged cowboys in bunkhouses. Average pay for a cowhand was about a dollar a day. Cowboys were not usually known for their book-learning, but a cowboy’s lack of formal education was no drawback on the prairie.

Most cowboys were white, although there were many cowboys who came north from the Mexican territories. There were also quite a few Native American and African American cowboys. A former slave named 80 John Wallace is one cowboy who even ended up with his own ranch and herd of six hundred cattle.

While cowboys came from different parts of North America, they all were similar in some ways. A cowboy had to be lean and strong. Although they needed strong muscles for riding and roping, cowboys also needed to keep their weight low in order to ride easy in the saddle. A horse would not be able to carry a

Cowboy Slang

If you do decide to go in for some cattle-wrangling, these definitions of cowboy slang terms may come in cow-handly.

amble, mosey along—to go slowly, in a leisurely manner: “There’s no hurry today. Why don’t we **mosey along** by the creek?”

duds—clothes

horn in—to get involved in someone else’s business

round-up, rodeo—held weekly, the original purpose of the round-up was to cut out cattle to be used for the next week’s food supply. Afterward, cowboys celebrated by competing in contests and races that showed off their cowpunching and horseback-riding skills.

git, git along—to go quickly; also used as a command: “**Git along**, little doggy.”

going on a tear, smoking up the town—having a spree; used to describe the cowboy’s wild behavior when visiting town on a day off

¹ *caballero*—Spanish for a man who is skilled on horseback

² *vaquero*—Mexican word for cowboy

1. Article: “The Great American Cowboy”

heavy man the long distances that cowboys rode in their daily rounds.

Cow-Wrangling Duds

The basic gear of a cowboy included denim or canvas trousers (made by Levi Strauss, like the jeans we wear today) under chaps, along with a cotton collarless shirt and a vest. In cold weather, cowboys wore long johns under their clothes. Boots protected the cowboy’s feet from snakebites, sharp rocks, and animal hooves, and a hat protected his head from the hot sun and cold rain. Leather gloves and cuffs kept cowboys from getting rope burns. All cowboys wore spurs, sharp metal discs that attached to their boots; the cowboy would press his heels—and the spurs—into the sides of the horse to make it “git along.”

Cowboy Creed

Cowboys lived by a strict code of honor. A cowboy was honest and always paid his debts. Cowboys looked after their own. There were no “lone rangers;” cowboys had to depend on each other for survival out on the range. Cowboys were swift to hand out justice when necessary, and had no mercy for cattle rustlers.

Privacy was important to cowboys, who were easily annoyed by strangers “horning in” or meddling in their private affairs. It was common for cowboys to be known only by their nicknames, names like Slim, Curly, or Tex. Cowboys might ride herd together for years and never know each other’s real names.

If You’d Like to Be a Cowboy or Cowgirl

There are fewer cowboys today than there were 150 years ago, but modern cowboys share the same cowboy culture of the great cowpunchers of the past. If you would like to try the life of a cowboy, there are dude ranches that offer tenderfoots (tenderfeet?) the chance to take a *vaquero* vacation. At a dude ranch, you can learn to wrangle cattle, hog-tie a calf, ride on horseback, and other cowboy skills. It probably won’t be as relaxing as a week at the seashore, but it will be much more exciting.

gravel in the gizzard—a comrade; someone with “**gravel in the gizzard**” would come to the aid of a friend in need, no matter how dangerous the circumstances or how terrible the consequences: “Some fellows don’t trust Squirrel-Eating Joe, but he’s got **gravel in the gizzard**, all right. Last winter he saved me from a stampede.”

light out, burn the earth, hit the breeze—to leave very quickly; to “**vamoose**”: “The sheriff is still mad about the way I **smoked up the town** yesterday. He told me that if I don’t **vamoose** before sundown, he’ll run me out of town himself.”

mule-ears—the flaps at the tops of boots. Because cowboy boots had no zippers, laces, or buttons, cowboys had to pull them on.

tenderfoot—a scornful term used to describe city folk and townspeople who had no knowledge of cattle and no skills on horseback: “He calls himself Dead-Eye Jack, but I could tell he’s a **tenderfoot** from back east. Why, this morning he fell off his horse!”

1. Article: “The Great American Cowboy”

Works Consulted

Beacher, A.L. *Ride'em Cowboy!* San Francisco: Golden State Publications, 2001.

Edmark, Nathaniel, ed. *An Encyclopedia of the American West*. Chicago: Mill & Lamson, 1998.

Marrin, Albert. *Cowboys, Indians, and Gunfighters: The Story of the Cattle Kingdom*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993.

Murdoch, David Hamilton. *Cowboy*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993.

The bigger the mouth, the better it looks when shut—A saying that sums up the cowboy’s dislike of people who talked too much.

two whoops and a holler away—some distance away

vamoose—from the Spanish word *vamos*, meaning “let’s go”: “I better **vamoose** before sundown.”

well-heeled—a term used to describe a cowboy with so much money that he could afford to wear expensive spurs: “That Slim is a **well-heeled** fellow. Did you get a look at those silver spurs?”

2. Web Page: TicTockHistoryClock.org

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Your Search: Schools in the Wild West

To begin a new search, type the keyword(s) into the search box and click on the **GO!** Button.

SEARCH

GO!

[The Move West—Schools](#)

Schools of the Western Frontier

If you were a child of the frontier before 1849, you attended a one-room schoolhouse, where students of all ages learned together. You probably attended school from first grade up until the eighth grade, when you most likely left school, with your parents' blessing, in order to help with the work at home or to begin an apprenticeship and start working. You had one teacher, most likely a man who was considered well-educated because he knew Latin or Greek. Few people attended college, and your teacher may or may not have been a college graduate.

Once the [gold rush](#) began in [California](#) in 1849, many able-bodied men, including teachers, went west to seek gold and make their fortunes. With few men available to teach, Western and mid-Western towns and cities started to hire women teachers. In those days, few women worked outside the home after they married. This meant that teachers were usually single young women, sometimes only a few years older than their students, who would quit teaching upon marrying.

2. Web Page: TicTockHistoryClock.org

Schools for Native American Children

By the mid- to late 1800s, nearly all [Native American tribes](#) had been forced onto reservations as a result of the [Indian Removal Act](#), which had been passed in 1830. When more Americans moved west to seek gold or simply to seek a new life in the western lands of North America, some Americans felt that Native Americans needed to become more like Americans of European descent. Schools for Native American children were built. By the end of the century, there were nearly 250 such schools, about a third of which were boarding schools. Some of the boarding schools were in the eastern United States, such as the United States Indian Training and Industrial School in Pennsylvania, a school built by a group called the "[Friends of the Indian](#)." Although the people who wanted to help the Native American children get an education meant well, there were many problems. Children as young as five years old were taken from their families and sent to boarding schools, sometimes even without their parents' permission. The schools were strict. There were even rules against speaking [Native American languages](#), and the Native American children were given new names to replace their own.

More topics about the Wild West!

Click on one of the links below for information about:

[Cowboys, Cowgirls](#)

[The Gold Rush](#)

[Famous Lawmen of the Wild West](#)

[Ghost Towns](#)

[The Horse: Hero of the West](#)

[Life on the Trail](#)

[The Pony Express](#)

[The Unsung Cowhands](#)

[Where the Buffalo Roamed](#)

2. Web Page: TicTockHistoryClock.org

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Go to History Clock!

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3. Chapter from a Book, *A History of the American West*

Chapter 3: The Short-Lived Dream of the Pony Express

WANTED

Brave, able-bodied young men to deliver the mail. Must be quick-witted, quick-moving, and good on horseback.

*See the wilderness! Ride the range! Experience adventure!
Riders must be at least thirteen years old and weigh as little as possible. Payment includes room and board, and a salary of \$25.00-\$35.00 a week.*

No experience necessary.

Not a job for the timid.

This is not a real advertisement for pony express riders, although it could have been. The real advertisement, placed by William H. Russell in March 1860 read: "Wanted: Young, skinny, wiry fellows not over 18. Must be expert riders willing to risk death daily. Orphans preferred."

Eighty men and boys were hired by the Pony Express to undertake the dangerous and exciting duty of delivering mail to the wilderness of the North American frontier.

As settlers moved west, they went farther and farther from their hometowns. Many settlers left behind families—parents, brothers, sisters, and other relatives. Letters from back east were more precious than gold. Settlers were eager for news from families and friends. Today we would send an email or an instant message, or we might call on one of our many phones. We could even send a fax. Pioneers had no way to communicate with the folks back home but the old-fashioned way: a plain old letter.

Although a federal postal service had been in place since 1775, when Benjamin Franklin served as the first Postmaster General, mail delivery to the frontier was not always reliable. Stagecoaches were used for land travel, and steamships for waterways. The travel was slow going. It might take a letter many weeks or several months to get from New York to California. Letters were supposed to arrive within four weeks, but that goal was nearly impossible to reach. As a result, the "news" in a letter

3. Chapter from a Book, *A History of the American West*

a settler received from back home was never new. In fact, coast-to-coast communications were so slow that many Californians did not learn that California had become a state until a month and a half after the fact.

After trying for years to interest the United States postal service in an express mail service to the west, William Russell gave up on the government. Instead, he joined with two partners and founded the Pony Express in April of 1860. The real name of the Pony Express was the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company. They built relay stations and bought the strongest horses they could find.

Of the eighty young men entered the service of the Pony Express, most were in their late teens. The youngest rider was only thirteen years old. One rider went on to become famous: William "Buffalo Bill" Cody, who later became an army scout. Buffalo Bill became famous as a great hunter and for his traveling Wild West shows. There was even a weekly magazine called *The Buffalo Bill Stories*.

To get the mail delivered as quickly as possible, the Pony Express relied mainly on land travel. Pony Express riders had to be skilled horsemen because they had to ride across the country at top speed. Riders sometimes covered as many as 100 miles in one day. Frontier-riding required bravery bordering on foolhardiness. Riders carried pistols, and had to be on the alert for attacks by Indians and robbers. At their stops, riders would pick up mail and trade tired horses for fresh horses that were saddled and waiting. Then they galloped onward to the dangers of rushing rivers, grizzly bears, and steep, winding mountain trails.

As successful as it was, the Pony Express lasted only a year and a half. It was killed by the invention of the telegraph. Not even the fastest, most daring rider could beat the speed of a machine that could deliver news in only a few minutes.

4. Glossary from a Book, *How the Saddle Won the West*

caballo: Spanish word for horse

caballero: Spanish word for a horseman; can also mean “gentleman”

cattle rustlers: thieves who risked their lives to steal livestock

cavalry: horseback army troops who were posted at 100 U.S. forts. The forts were scattered across the territories from the Mexican border all the way to Canada. Cavalry soldiers, many of whom had served in the Civil War, patrolled the western regions and fought wars with Native American tribes.

chaps: a garment resembling leather flaps attached to a belt that a cowboy strapped on over his denim or canvas trousers to protect him from thorns, stickers, sharp branches, and other underbrush dangers of the trail. Chaps also helped keep cowboys warm in cold weather.

chow: food

chuck wagon: The chuck wagon carried kitchen and food supplies for cooking outdoor meals. It was invented by Charles Goodnight in 1866.

Colt, Samuel: inventor of the six-shooter

Columbus: early explorer of the New World. Columbus and other Spanish settlers brought cattle and horses to the Americas. Although there were herds of wild buffalo, there were no horses and cattle in the New World before the Spaniards arrived.

corrida de toro: the “running of the bull”; Spanish bullfight

cowboy: Cowhands were called “cowboys,” although there were some “cowgirls,” women who were famous for their daring riding and cattle-wrangling skills. “Cattle Annie” McDougal and Jennie “Little Britches” Stevens were two famous cowgirls.

cowboy justice: Because the frontiers did not have the organized criminal justice systems of the eastern United States, cowboys were known taking matters into their own hands. The only judges served on “circuit courts.” The judges traveled from town to town to hear trials. It might take a judge a whole year to ride his circuit. Often, westerners would not wait for the judge, but would make decisions about justice themselves. Horse thieves and cattle rustlers could expect to receive harsh punishment if captured by cowhands.

cowhide: leather, a staple of the Old West

cowpunching: herding cattle

4. Glossary from a Book, *How the Saddle Won the West*

cow towns: western towns, such as Abilene and Dodge City that were on the routes of cattle drives. Cow towns both welcomed and were ruled by cowhands, who made a lot of money and liked to spend it in town when they had a day off.

Cupid's cramp: A cowboy suffering from Cupid's cramp is one who is thinking about getting married or "hitched."

cutting cattle: taking one animal out of the herd. Performed on horseback, cutting cattle was a job that took all of a cowboy's skill and strategy—as well as the strength and skill of his horse. A horse with good cutting skills was greatly prized. Cowboys frequently had to "cut out" animals for to brand or sell them, or in order to give medical care.

Dodge City: Known as the "Queen of Cow Towns," Dodge City was located on the route of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad and was crossed by the Western Trail.

5. Online Resources: Western Ghost Towns

Western Ghost Towns

Pull on your mule-eared boots and get ready to kick some tumbleweeds. Then choose a destination. You can use these links to find a ghost town. If you don't have time for a real vacation, just take one of the virtual tours!

Ghost Towns of Arizona

This site offers online tours of ghost towns.

<http://www.swlink.net/~pjcat/ghost.html>

GhostTownGallery.com

Here you can see photographs, look up ghost towns in an index, see maps of ghost towns, and read about the history of ghost towns.

<http://www.ghosttowngallery.com/>

Ghost Town Museum

This site provides a map and directions to the Ghost Town Museum in Pikes Peak County, Colorado.

<http://www.ghosttownmuseum.com/default.asp>

New Mexico Wanderings

This site shows a map of ghost towns near Faywood and Dyer, both towns in New Mexico.

<http://htg-is.vianet.net/~artpike/faywood8.htm>

Calico Ghost Town

This is the site for a town billed as "an Old West Mining Adventure." There is a map of the town, information about the history of this historic mining camp, and information about local tourist attractions.

<http://www.calicotown.com/>

Ghost Town Trail and Tombstone Territory Map, Cochise, Arizona

This site lists ghost towns in the area, and provides a map with trails, along with links to other sites of interest in the county.

<http://www.ghosttowntrails.com/ghosttownsmap.html>

Ghost Town Trail—Indiana County Parks

This site offers historical information about the mining camps, maps of trails, and other information about county park facilities.

<http://www.indianacountyparks.org/parks/gtt/gtt.html>

Welcome to Independence Ghost Town

This site gives a virtual tour of Independence, a history of the area, maps, historical information about Aspen, Colorado, information about current attractions and coming events, a gift catalog, and more.

<http://www.aspenhistory.org/indep.html>

5. Online Resources: Western Ghost Towns

Ghost Towns

Here you can find it all: history, maps, trail locations, facts about mining, interesting sites, weather information, and recommendations for lodging, as well as links to sites about specific ghost towns.

<http://digital-desert.com/ghost-towns/>