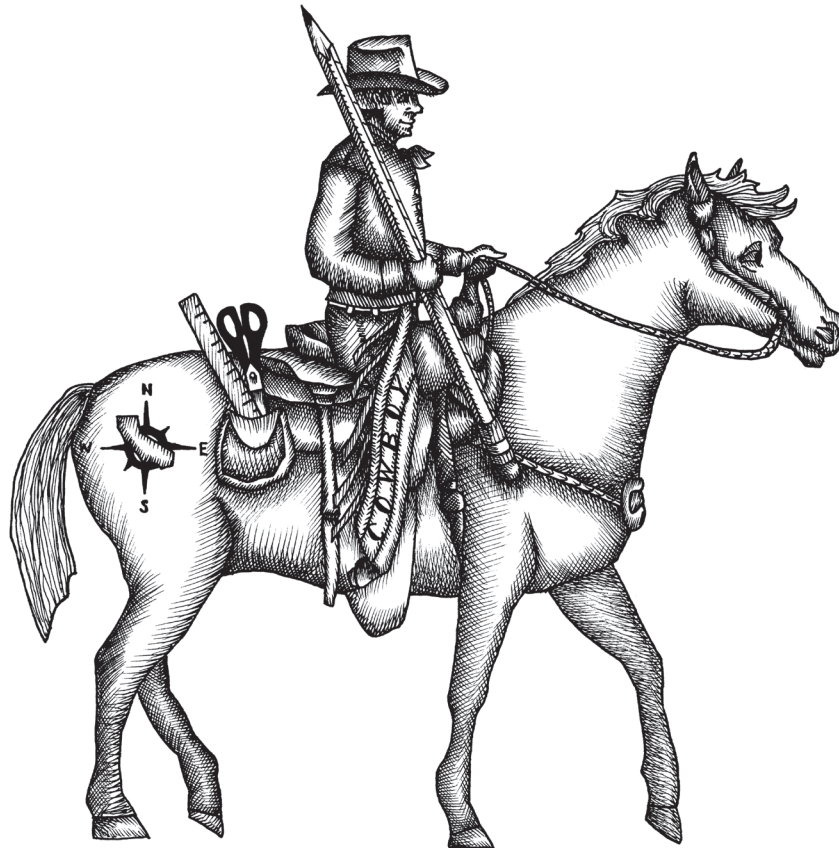


**YEE-HA!**  
**LET'S HAVE SOME RODEO FUN!**



## **Rodeo Activity Booklet**

### **Community Kids Day**

★ **9:00 - 11:30 a.m.** ★

Industry Hills Expo Center  
16200 Temple Avenue, City of Industry, CA 91744

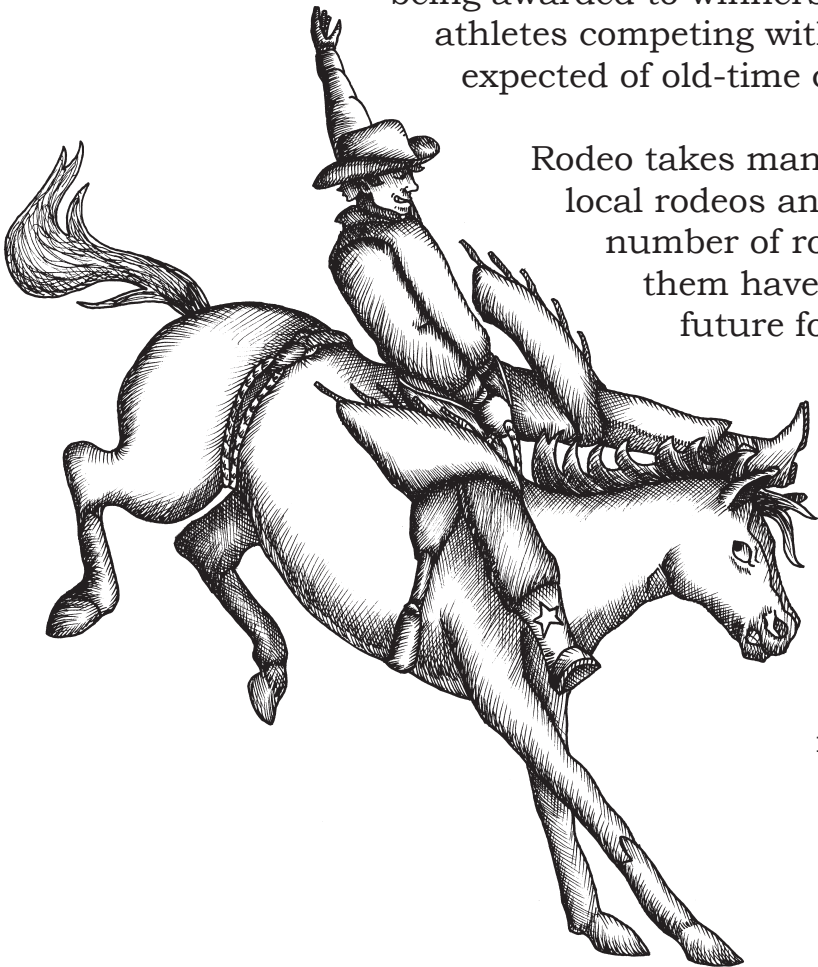


# How Did Rodeos Begin?

Today the rodeo is an important part of American culture. Whole families enjoy attending rodeos to watch men, women, and children perform. While a rodeo is a time for people to come together for fun, it is also a time to remember and respect the history of the Wild West.

Our word rodeo comes from a Spanish word meaning roundup, and today's rodeo events originated from the skills cowboys needed during roundups or for general ranch work. Every ranch had broncos (untamed horses, also known as broncs), and cowboys were forever bragging that they could ride anything with four legs! They often spent months out on the range or taking part in cattle drives. To relieve the boredom of long stretches of time between chores, cowboys cooked up games to show off skills they had perfected on the trail or range. In the 1800s, different cattle ranches sometimes challenged one another to bronc-riding contests, giving cowboys a chance to prove their boasts.

By the early twentieth century, the rodeo for many cowboys had become a substitute for ranching. Stunts like trick roping, along with practical skills like bronc riding, became regular events at rodeos. Motivated by the increasing size of cash prizes being awarded to winners, cowboys became professional athletes competing with speed and endurance never expected of old-time cowboys.



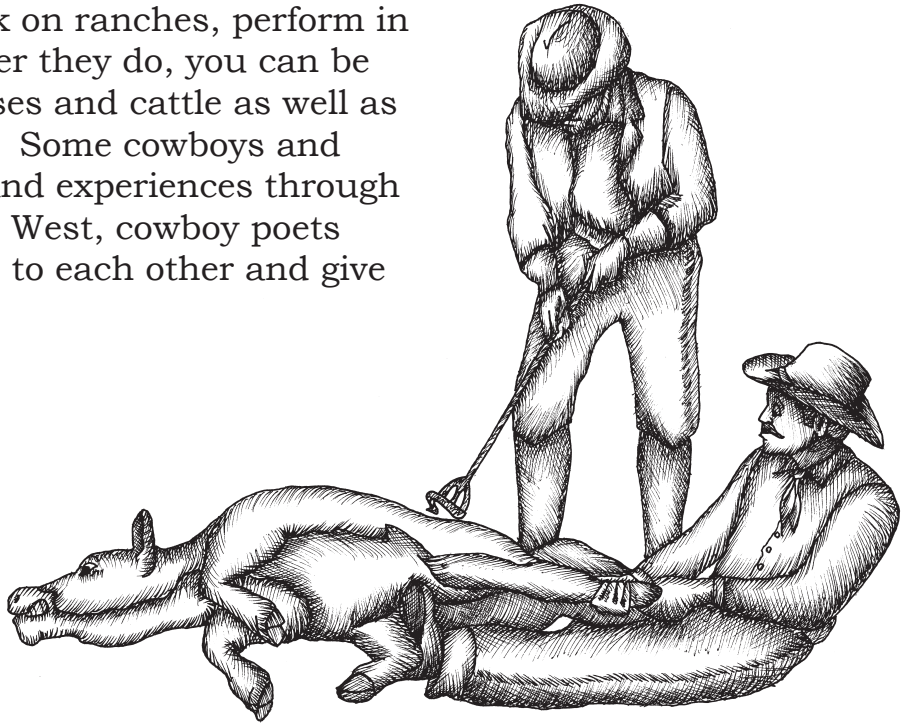
Rodeo takes many forms today. There are small, local rodeos and world-championship rodeos. The number of rodeos and the people involved with them have increased over time, assuring a future for the sport and keeping this chapter of our history alive.

The Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association has more than 9,000 members and sponsors over 600 pro-rodeos each year, including the Industry Hills Charity Pro Rodeo. This exciting, local rodeo attracts many contestants who rank in the top level of their events.

# What is Cowboy Poetry?

Cowboys and cowgirls may work on ranches, perform in rodeos, or do both. But whatever they do, you can be sure they think about their horses and cattle as well as activities like riding and roping. Some cowboys and cowgirls record their thoughts and experiences through cowboy poetry. Throughout the West, cowboy poets get together to read their poems to each other and give prizes for the best examples.

Read the following cowboy poems to your class or family, and then tell them what you think the poems mean.



## Open Range

*Prairie goes to the mountain.  
Mountain goes to the sky.  
The sky sweeps across to the distant hills  
And here. in the middle.  
Am I.*

*Hills crowd down to the river.  
River runs by the tree.  
Tree throws its shadow on sunburnt grass  
And here. in the shadow.  
Is me.*

*Shadows creep up the mountain.  
Mountain goes black on the sky.  
The sky bursts out with a million stars  
And here. by the campfire.  
Am I.*

## No More Bull

*Our bull went through the  
Barbed wire fence  
And wrecked our weekend fun  
If he should try that trick again  
He'll end up in a bun*

## Cowboy Poetry

*The roundups, brandings,  
The calvings are done,  
As ranchers sell out  
And move on one by one.*

*We must tell these stories,  
So memories live on,  
Past time when the tellers  
Themselves are long gone.*

# Meet the Mighty Vaquero

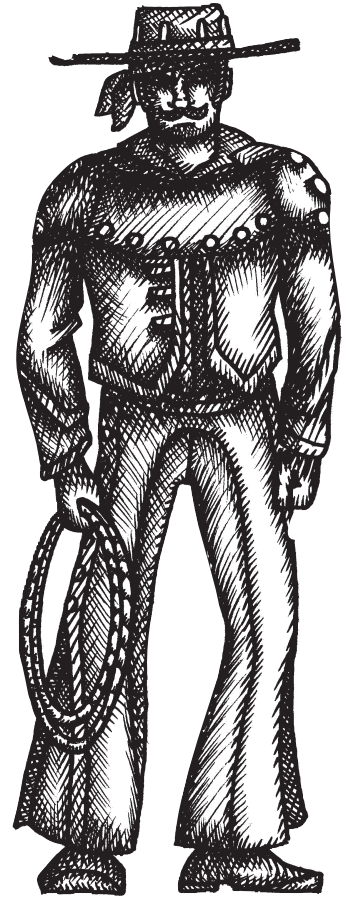
## California's Vaquero Heritage

During the late 1700s and early 1800s, Spain claimed much of the land that is now the American West, including California. When the missions were built, such as the Mission San Gabriel, the padres, or mission priests, focused on raising cattle. They soon needed skilled horsemen to manage the cattle herds.

Many of the padres who ran the missions were sons of wealthy Spanish families. They were trained in the important skills of horsemanship and roping practiced in Spain for centuries. They passed on these skills to their workers, most of whom were the local Indians who became known as vaqueros.

When mission lands became privately owned ranchos in the 1830s after Mexico took control of California, vaqueros found work with the new rancho owners. Vaqueros from neighboring ranchos sometimes joined together in a rodeo (from the Spanish word *rodear*, pronounced “ro-day'-oh,” meaning “to surround,” also known as a roundup). Each rancho sent a team of riders. A really big roundup might cover hundreds of square miles, last for weeks, and involve three or four hundred vaqueros along with tens of thousands of heads of cattle.

The roundup was always an occasion for a display of horsemanship and roping. When the branding and other chores were completed, these activities were usually followed by a spontaneous exhibition or contest of riding and roping skills by the vaqueros. It is from these pastimes that we derive our present rodeo as a sporting event.



## ACTIVITY

1. What people were trained to become vaqueros at the missions?

---

2. Which animal did the padres focus on raising at the Mission San Gabriel?

---

3. By the 1830s, which country had replaced Spain as the ruler of California?

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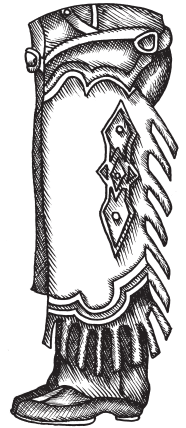
4. Following the roundup, or rodeo, how did the vaqueros entertain themselves?

---



# Rodeo Glossary

<b>Arena</b> (ə rē' nə)	The space where a rodeo competition is held. <i>Noun.</i>
<b>Bandana</b> (ban dan'ə)	A colorful, oversized handkerchief. <i>Noun.</i>
<b>Bareback</b> (bâr'bak')	Riding without a saddle. <i>Adjective, adverb.</i>
<b>Branding</b> (brand'ing)	Marking cattle or horses with a hot iron that imprints the symbol of the owner on the animal's hide. <i>Verb.</i>
<b>Bronco</b> (brong'kō)	A wild or unbroken horse; also known as a bronc. <i>Noun.</i>
<b>Buckaroo</b> (bək'kə rü')	Another word for a cowboy. <i>Noun.</i>
<b>Bull</b> (bŭl)	A term for fully grown male cattle. <i>Noun.</i>
<b>Cattle</b> (kat'əl)	A collective term for bulls, cows, and steers. <i>Noun.</i>
<b>Cattle drive</b> (kat'əl drīv)	The movement of a herd of cattle from ranches and grazing lands to railroad lines for shipment to meat-packing plants far away. <i>Noun.</i>
<b>Calf</b> (kaf)	A term for young cattle that are not fully grown. <i>Noun.</i>
<b>Chaps</b> (chaps)	A piece of clothing, often made of leather, worn over pants to protect a cowboy's legs. <i>Noun.</i>
<b>Charreada</b> (cha're a'da)	A style of rodeo developed by people in Mexico interested in keeping the traditions of the charro alive. <i>Noun.</i>
<b>Contestant</b> (kən tes'tənt)	A person who rides or competes in a rodeo competition. <i>Noun.</i>
<b>Corral</b> (kə ral')	A pen for holding livestock. <i>Noun.</i>
<b>Cow</b> (kou)	A term for fully grown female cattle. <i>Noun.</i>
<b>Cowboy/Cowgirl</b> (kou'boi' /kou'gŭrl')	1. Men/women who work on a cattle ranch herding cattle on a horse; 2. Men/women who compete in a rodeo. <i>Noun.</i>
<b>Lasso</b> (las'ō)	A long, braided rope with a loop at one end used to catch animals; also known as a lariat. <i>Noun.</i>
<b>Livestock</b> (līv'stok')	Animals used in a rodeo, such as horses and cattle. <i>Noun.</i>



chaps

**Longhorns** (lông'hôrnz')

A term for cattle with very long horns that originally ran wild in much of Texas and northern Mexico until rounded up by ranchers and cowboys for the great cattle drives of the Wild West. *Noun.*



longhorn

**Rancho** (ran'chō)

The Spanish word for a farm or cattle ranch in early California or Mexico. *Noun.*

**Rawhide** (rô'hîd')

A strip of leather or animal hide. *Noun.*

**Reins** (rānz)

Narrow straps used by a rider to guide and stop a moving horse. *Noun.*

**Rodeo** (rō dā'ō)

1. A competition where cowboys and cowgirls show off their roping and riding skills; 2. The Spanish word for a cattle roundup on an early California rancho. *Noun.*

**Rope** (rōp)

To catch an animal with a lasso or lariat. *Verb.*

**Roundup** (round'up')

The bringing together of a ranch's cattle for branding or to start a cattle drive. *Noun.*

**Saddle** (sad'əl)

A special leather seat placed on an animal's back to make riding easier. *Noun.*

**Spurs** (spûrz)

Spiky metal objects worn on the heel of a rider's boot and used to urge horses to move faster. *Noun.*



spurs

**Steer** (stîr)

A young bull raised to produce meat rather than to produce young. *Noun.*

**Vaquero** (vâ-kâr'ō)

The Spanish word for cowboy, used on early California Ranchos. *Noun.*

**Whoa** (hwō)

A word used as a command to stop a moving horse. *Interjection.*

**Wrangler** (rāng'glər)

A person who takes care of animals used in a rodeo. *Noun.*

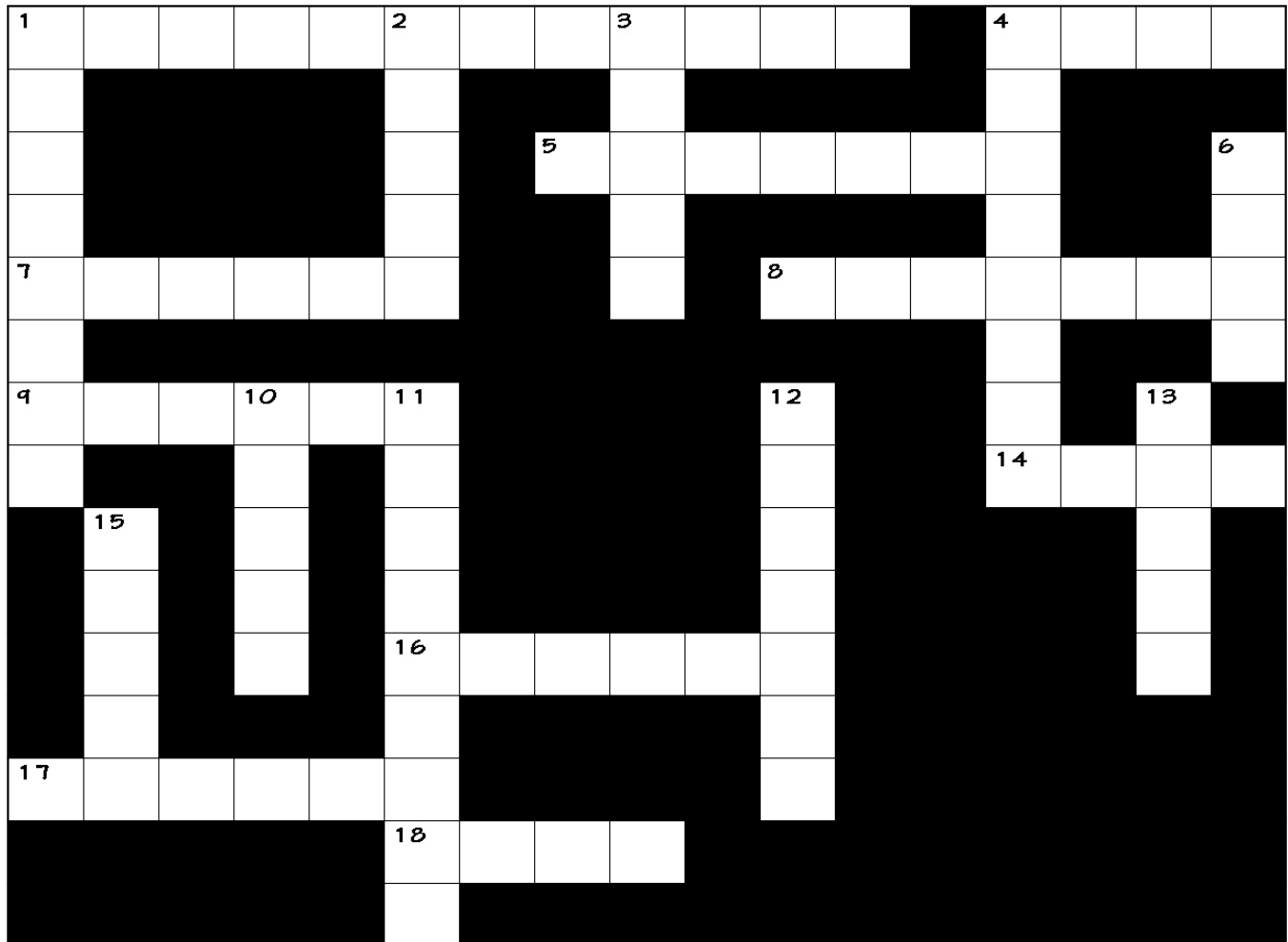
### **Pronunciation Key:**

at	āpe	fär	câre	end	mē	it	īce
pîerce	hot	ōld	fôrk	out	rûle	pûll	tûrn
chin	sing	hw in white					

The symbol <sup>ə</sup> stands for the unstressed vowel sound in **a**bout, taken, pencil, lemon, and circus

# Cowboy Crossword Puzzle

Use your glossary and rodeo event descriptions to help you with this activity.



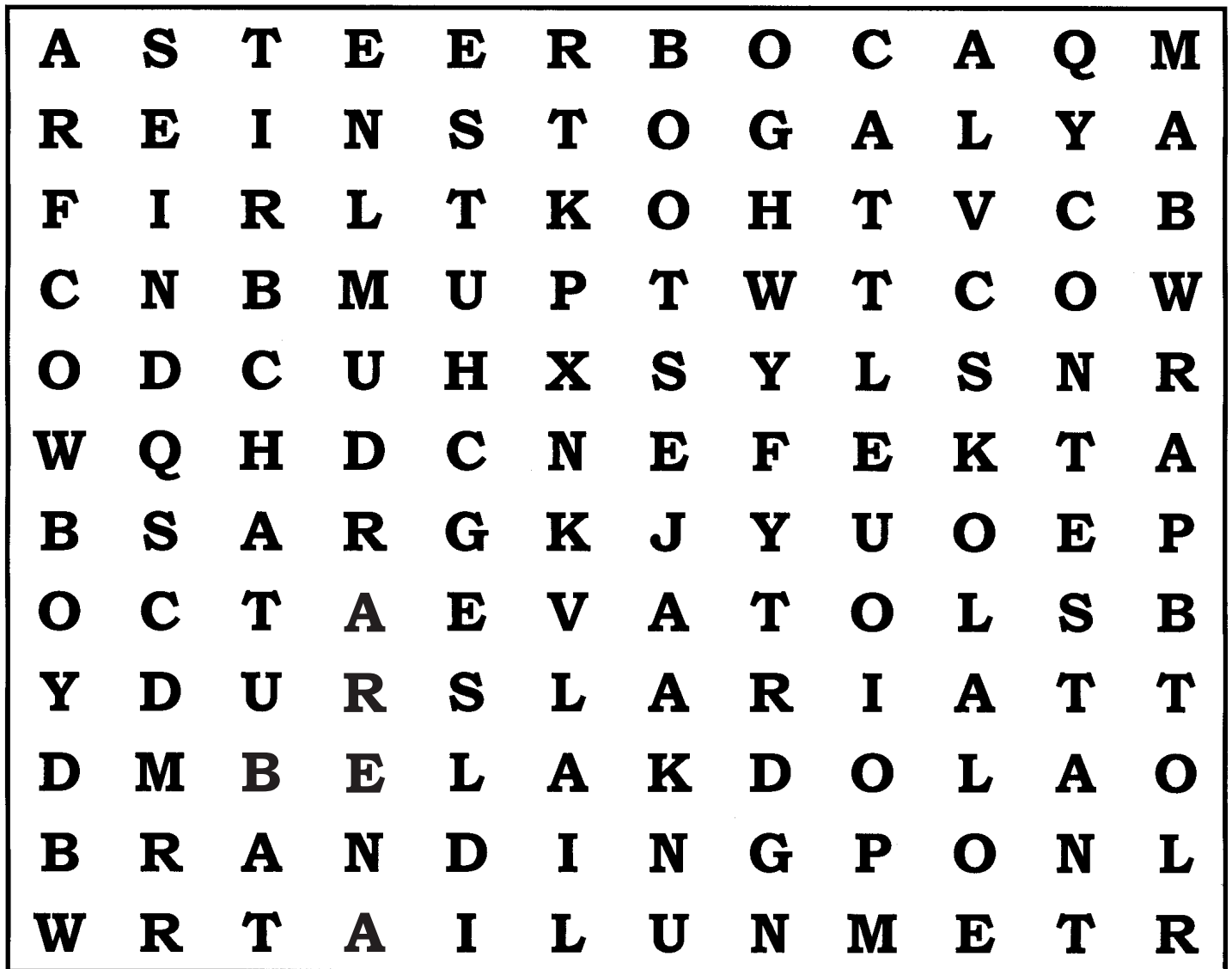
## ACROSS

1. a popular rodeo event for cowgirls
4. a cowboy says this to make his horse stop
5. a large brightly colored handkerchief
7. a wild, unbroken horse
8. a female rodeo contestant
9. a fenced area for holding horses and other animals
14. catching a horse or calf with a lasso
16. a leather seat put on a horse's back
17. a ranch or farm in early California or Mexico
18. a young cow or bull

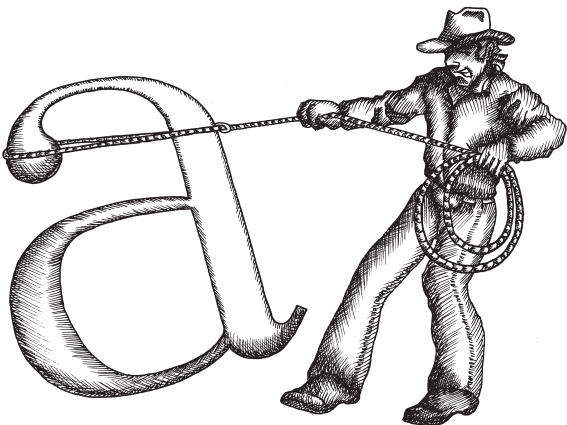
## DOWN

1. riding without a saddle
2. a long rope used to catch livestock
3. leather pants worn over jeans to protect a cowboy's legs
4. a person who takes care of rodeo livestock
6. instead of his horse, a cowboy may ride one of these during the rodeo
10. a cowboy competition featuring horse riding and cattle roping
11. animals used in the rodeo
12. the Spanish word for cowboy
13. these objects are used to urge horses forward
15. the building or location where a rodeo is held

# Wrangler Word Search



**Try to find these words in the above puzzle.**



Arena

Cattle

Hat

Boots

Contestant

Lariat

Branding

Cow

Reins

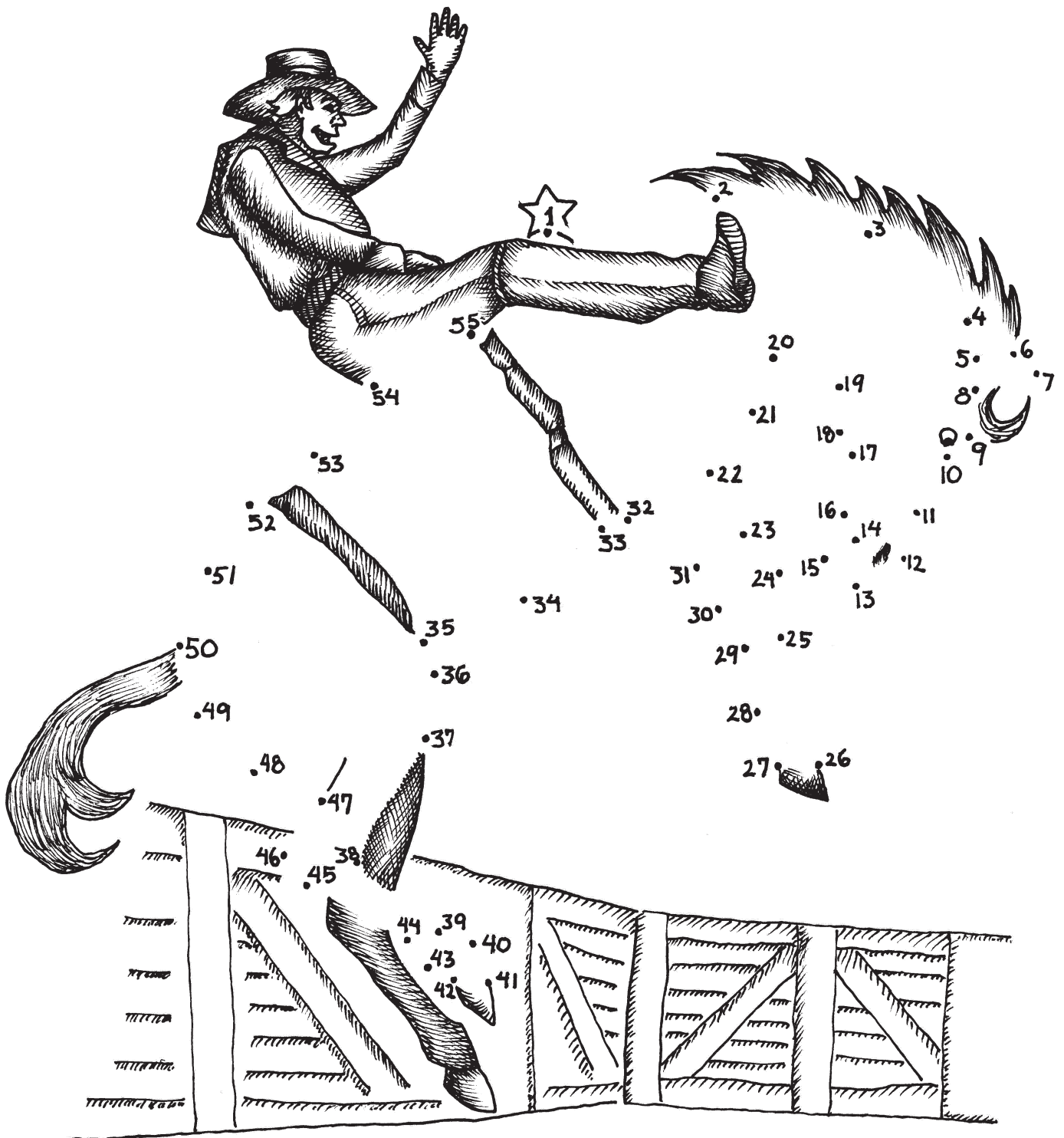
Buckaroo

Cowboy

Steer



# Connect • the • Dots



Saddle Bronc Riding is a feature event in rodeos. A bronc is an unbroken horse that tries to pitch its rider.

# Watch for These Events at the Rodeo

## Bareback Riding

Bareback riding means just that—a wild eight-second ride on a powerful bucking horse without the benefit of saddle, reins, or stirrups. A riding handle is attached to a strap placed around a 1,200-pound bucking horse's middle just behind its shoulders. Bareback riders hold onto this handle with a single hand covered by a specially-designed leather glove.

Bareback riders must stay on the horse for eight seconds to make a qualified ride. Touching his clothes, the saddle, or the horse with his free hand will disqualify a bareback rider and leave him with no score for his efforts.

## Steer Wrestling

In this event, a contestant drops from the back of a running horse onto the back of a running steer and attempts to wrestle the steer to the ground in a race against the clock.

The cowboy and his “hazer,” an assistant who rides on the opposite side of the steer, start from behind a barrier that allows the animal a head start. If the cowboy breaks through the barrier before the steer is all the way out, ten seconds are added to his riding time.

## Saddle Bronc Riding

Saddle bronc riding matches a specially bred bucking horse and a carefully balanced cowboy who must stay on the horse for eight seconds to make a qualified ride. The cowboy uses a rodeo-approved saddle with stirrups and a six-foot braided rein that he holds with one hand only. Saddle bronc riders are disqualified if they touch their clothing, the horse, or saddle with their free hand.



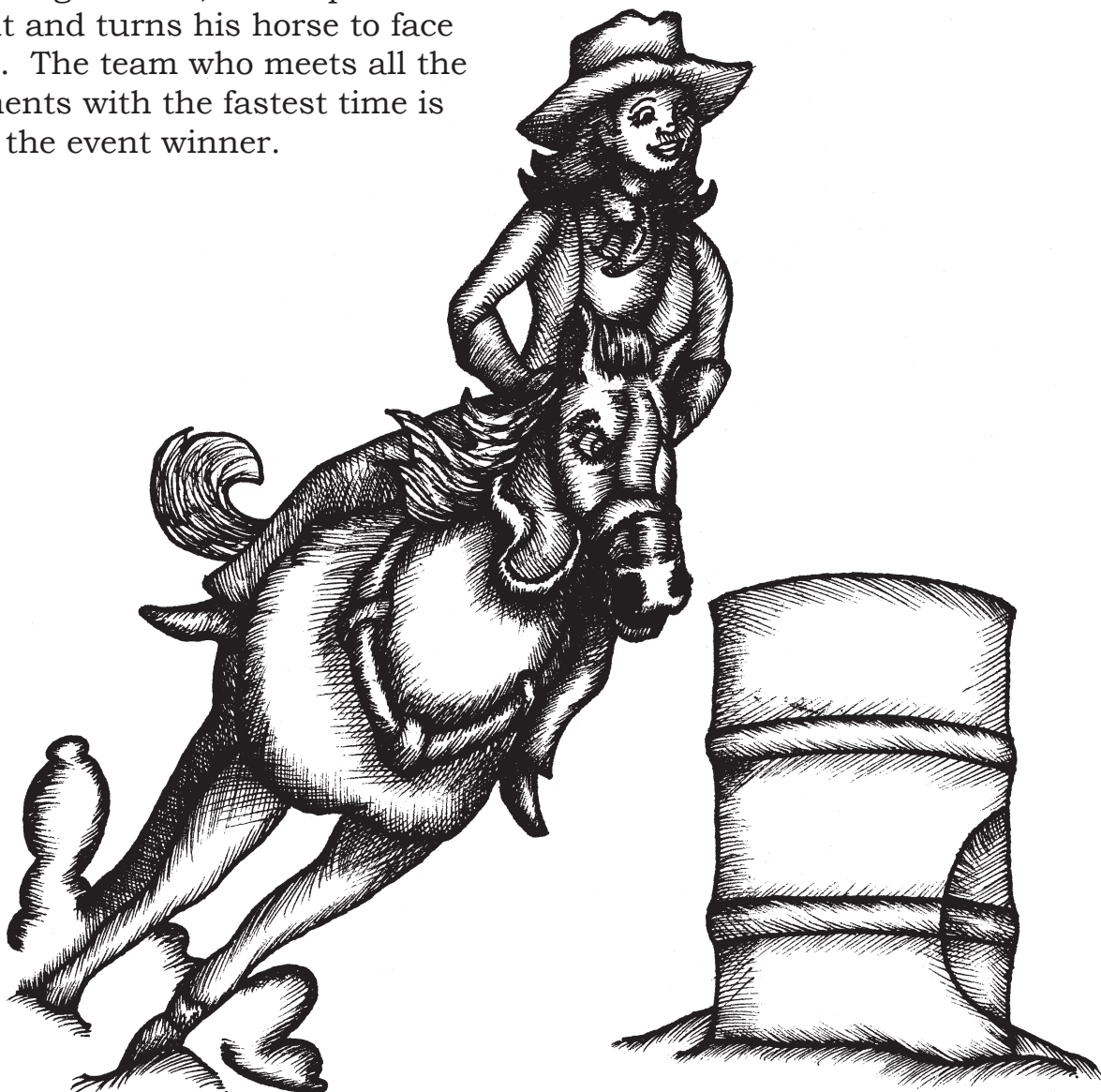
## Team Roping

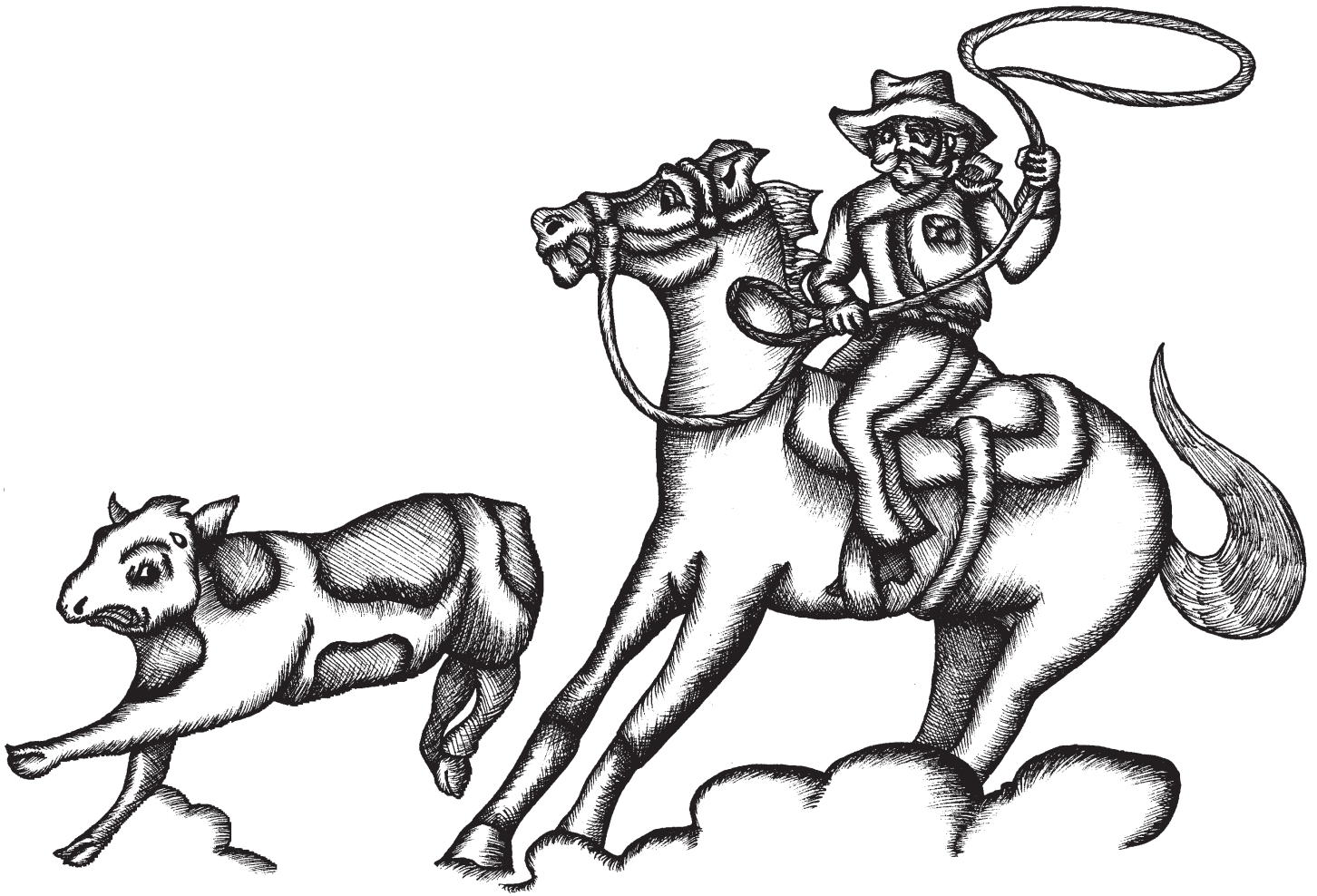
Team roping is an event that involves two cowboys and their horses all working together to rope a steer. The steer is given a head start, and then the cowboy urges his horse to leap into action. One cowboy is a "header." His job is to rope the steer either around the head and one horn, around the neck, or around both horns. When this is done he wraps the rope around his saddle horn and turns his horse to face the steer.

His partner, called the "heeler," moves behind the steer and attempts to rope both hind legs. Then, he too pulls his rope tight and turns his horse to face the steer. The team who meets all the requirements with the fastest time is declared the event winner.

## Barrel Racing

The barrel race is reserved for cowgirls. Using a specially trained horse, the cowgirl races her horse around three barrels spaced apart to form a triangle inside the rodeo arena. Rider and horse must follow a particular pattern or pathway. Failure to do so results in a disqualification. If a barrel is tipped over, five seconds are added to the cowgirl's riding time.





### **Bull Riding**

Cowboys must ride for eight seconds with a flat, braided rope pulled around the bull and across their riding hand. A bull, weighing well over a thousand pounds, is powerful and quick and often spins as it bucks. Riders study the movements and habits of each animal hoping to gain an advantage over the bull.

The contestant uses his free arm for balance and to counter the bull's spins and lunges while holding on with his riding hand and legs. If the cowboy touches the bull or slaps his outfit with his free hand before the whistle blows, he will be disqualified.

### **Tie Down Roping**

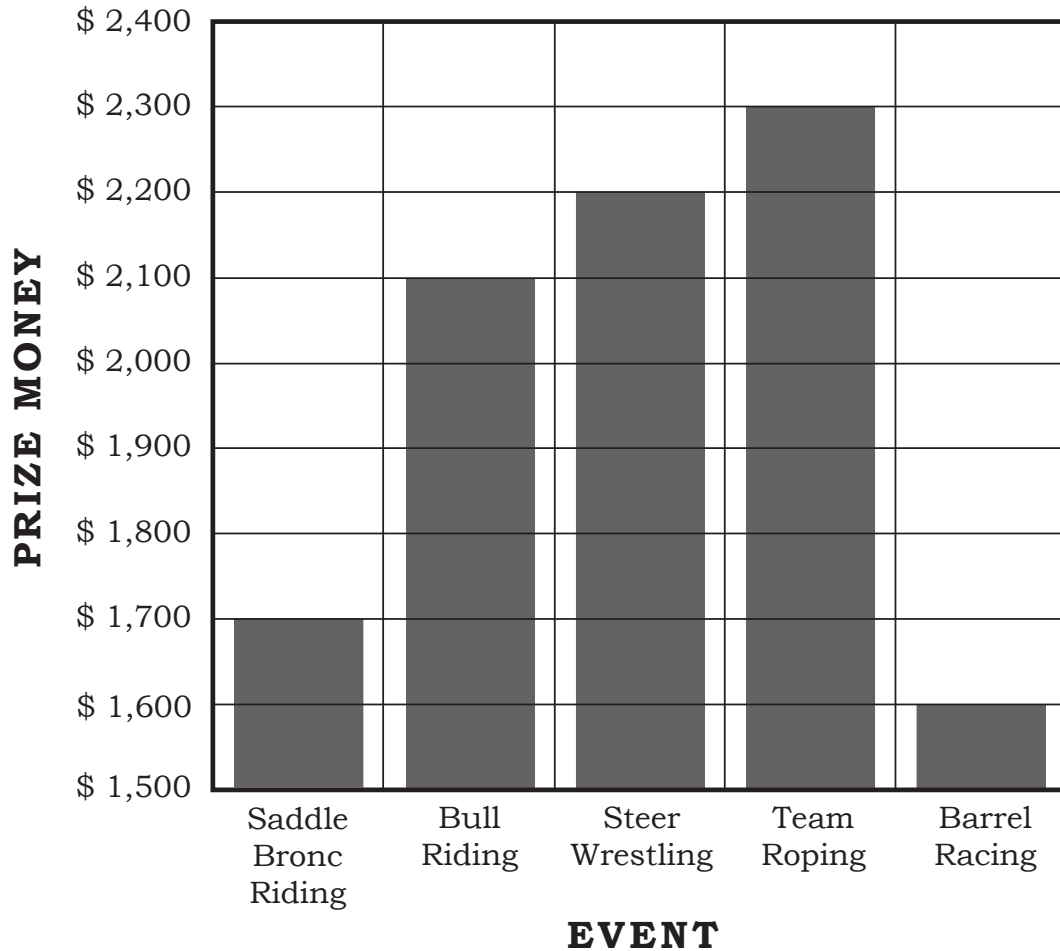
Tie down roping requires a mounted contestant to start from behind a barrier. The barrier gives the calf a head start and if the cowboy starts too soon, he receives a ten-second penalty. Once the barrier is opened, the cowboy charges toward the calf and ropes it as soon as possible. He then has to dismount, throw the animal to the ground, and tie any three legs together.

Each contestant is allowed a maximum of twenty-five seconds to rope and tie the calf. In addition, the calf must remain tied for six seconds or the cowboy is disqualified.



# Earning Rodeo Prize Money

The following graph shows the prize money earned by various event winners at a rodeo in Poway, California.



Use the graph to answer these questions:

A. What was the total “Prize Money” for the five events? \_\_\_\_\_

B. What were the **top three** money-winning events?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

C. Which event provided the **smallest** amount of prize money?

\_\_\_\_\_

D. Which event provided the **largest** amount of prize money?

\_\_\_\_\_



Over the years, the total prize money offered by Rodeos throughout the country has been steadily increasing, even though the number of rodeos has slightly decreased.

Year	States with Rodeos	Total Prize Money
2000	39	\$ 32,312,786
2001	40	\$ 33,106,770
2002	40	\$ 33,372,102
2003	41	\$ 34,869,419
2004	41	\$ 35,532,631
2005	41	\$ 35,676,130
2006	38	\$ 36,261,528
2007	38	\$ 40,470,983

E. How much money was won in the year that provided the most prize money?

\_\_\_\_\_

F. List the three **highest** money-winning years:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

G. List the three **lowest** money-winning years:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



# Becoming a Rodeo Clown

Rodeo clowns make you laugh, but they also have the important job of keeping cowboys safe. After a bullrider falls off his bull, it is the rodeo clown's responsibility to get the angry bull's attention while the rider gets to his feet and heads for safety. In fact, rodeo clowns sometimes are called bull fighters. Between rodeo events, rodeo clowns also entertain the audience by performing funny skits and joking with the announcer. The clowns' brightly colored clothes are baggy because the clothes have to fit over protective padding. Rodeo clowns also wear tights and denim split pants with suspenders, use decorative bandanas and funny hats, and apply gaudy face paint.



**Draw a picture of yourself as a rodeo clown!**

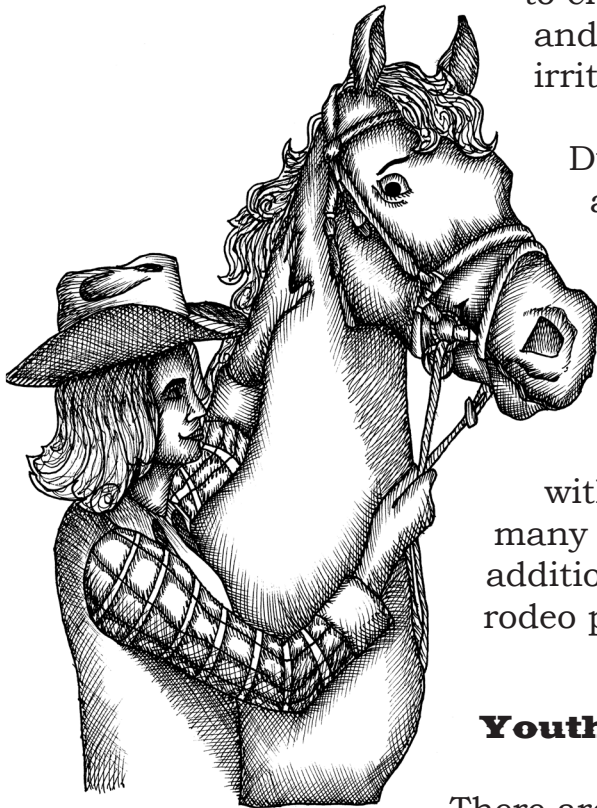
A large rectangular area defined by a dotted line, intended for drawing a picture of oneself as a rodeo clown.

# Caring for Rodeo Livestock

As important as cowboys and cowgirls may be, a rodeo could not happen without its animal participants. To protect rodeo animals, the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association has strict rules for how livestock should be treated.

You may wonder if some of the rodeo events are harmful to animals. For example, does it hurt a calf to be lassoed during a roping contest? Because of the way a calf's muscles grow, along with its hairy thick hide, it is protected from being hurt.

Bucking horses are not wild, but neither are they saddle-broken. They don't want to be ridden. They want to buck, and they enjoy it. Although cowboys may use spurs to encourage a horse to buck, they are dull or blunt and too short to cut the horse. Spurs are used to irritate the horse, but do not inflict pain.



During steer wrestling, the cowboy's positioning and timing are more important than his personal strength. More than anything, the cowboy uses practiced body skills to place the steer on its side. Remember, the steer typically weighs more than twice as much as the cowboy!

Rodeo animals are quite valuable, and raised with special attention. Therefore, the cowboys follow many rules to protect and care for the animals. In addition, a veterinarian is required to be on-site at all rodeo performances.

## Youth Organizations

There are opportunities for young people to receive training and participate in rodeo events at their age level.

The following associations can provide information about programs in your area:

### **American Junior Rodeo Association**

4501 Armstrong Street  
San Angelo, TX 76903  
(325) 651-2908 • [www.ajra.org](http://www.ajra.org)

### **Calf Riders Only**, for ages 6–18

10393 60th Street  
Mira Loma, CA 91752  
Contact: Ron & Michelle Sartor  
Cell: (951) 285-5475 • Home: (951) 360-9266

### **National High School Rodeo Association**

1200 Tejon Street, Suite 128  
Denver, CO 90234  
(800) 466-4772 • [www.nhsra.com](http://www.nhsra.com)

### **National Little Britches Rodeo Association**

5050 Edison Ave., Suite 105  
Colorado Springs, CO 80915  
(800) 763-3694 • [www.nlbtra.com](http://www.nlbtra.com)

# Answer Keys

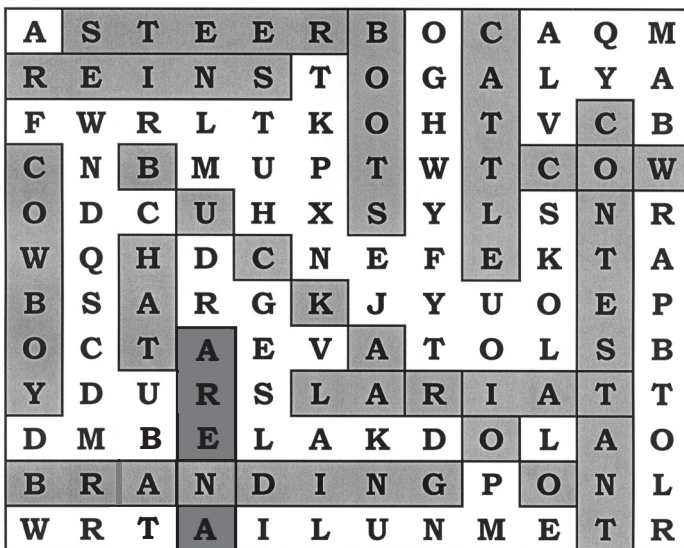
## Meet the Mighty Vaquero

1. Local Indians/Native Americans
2. Cattle
3. Mexico
4. They demonstrated riding and roping skills.

## Cowboy Crossword Puzzle



## Wrangler Word Search



## Earning Rodeo Prize Money

- A. \$9,900
- B. 1. Team roping  
2. Steer wrestling  
3. Bull riding
- C. Barrel racing
- D. Team roping
- E. \$40,470,983
- F. 1. 2007  
2. 2006  
3. 2005
- G. 1. 2000  
2. 2001  
3. 2002



## Credits

The Community Kids Day Activity Book was revised in 2008 by staff from the Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum and is based on an original concept by Irene Beck.

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