

Bovine Oversteps Boundaries

Grades 6-8

English Language Arts



Objectives

Students will read a true story about Grady, the Silo Cow, from Yukon, Oklahoma. They will create newspaper headlines, captions, and stories.

Vocabulary

cattle cubes—feed provided, usually in winter, to give cattle extra nutrients they cannot get from grazing dead grass

feedlot—a place where cattle are kept in a small space and fed special food so they will grow larger

Hereford—breed of beef cattle developed in Herefordshire, England, having a reddish coat with white markings.

silo—vertical cylindrical airtight structure for storing green crops such as corn, grass, and legumes or for storing grains for later use as livestock feed.

silage—fodder (as hay or corn) fermented (as in a silo) to produce a rich moist feed for livestock

weaning— separating a young animal from its mother for feeding purposes

Background

The story of Grady, the cow, is a true story that happened in Yukon, Oklahoma, on February 22, 1949.

Animal instinct is flight or fight. In the story, Grady whirled around and started chasing her owner when he untied her because she was scared. Then she tried to get away by jumping through the only opening she saw, the **silo** window.

A silo is the tall building you sometimes see on old farms. It looks something like a rocket. In the past, farmers used silos to make **silage**, a kind of fermented feed for farm animals. The farmer makes the silage by chopping fresh green plants (alfalfa, corn, grass) and storing it in a place where no air can get in. This allows the plants to ferment so they are easier to digest. These days most silage is made in pits dug in the ground and covered with plastic.

Grady was a **Hereford** cow. Hereford cows have red bodies and white faces. Some have white markings on their bodies, too. This breed of cattle originally came from England and is raised for meat. Grady weighed 1200 pounds. A typical beef cow weighs about 1,000 pounds. A calf typically weighs between 75 and 95 pounds at birth. A bull weighs about 1,500 pounds.

Grady's calf was born in the middle of winter, but most beef calves are born either in the fall or the spring. Ranchers try to arrange it that way because grazing is better at those times of year, and the weather is not so harsh. They also try to time the birth of calves so they are ready for market at the time when market prices are best. Dairy cattle are born year-round so the supply of milk will be constant.

Like Grady's owner, Bill Mach, most cattlemen go to great lengths to take good care of their animals. A good cattleman works very closely with each one of his or her animals to make sure they stay healthy, strong and free of stress and injury. An animal that is abused or neglected will not bring a good price at the market.

Bovine Oversteps Boundaries (continued)

Many ranchers bring cows into sheds and barns during calving time. That way the rancher can watch the cows and help them give birth if necessary. The cows are checked often, day and night, during calving season.

Calves are born in 283 days. After the calf is several days old, it is moved into a pasture with its mother. The mother cows are given extra feed, such as hay and **cattle cubes**, to keep them healthy. Calves are normally **weaned** at seven to nine months of age, when they weigh between 400 and 600 pounds. By this time the calves do not need milk because they can eat grass and drink water .

After weaning, heavier calves (600-650 pounds) may be sold directly to **feedlots**. Most calves weaned in the fall weigh between 350 and 450 pounds. These lighter calves are classified as stockers and will be grazed on lush wheat pastures across Oklahoma until they reach feeder weights between 600 and 750 pounds in March or April of the next year. At that time they go to commercial feedlots to be fed to an acceptable slaughter weight of about 1200 pounds. Most of the calves produced in Oklahoma are sent to feedlots spread across western Kansas, Oklahoma, Nebraska and Texas.

The cattle and calf industry is the most profitable agricultural enterprise in Oklahoma. In 2018 Oklahoma ranchers earned more than \$2.79 million on cattle and calves. In most years the population of cattle and calves in Oklahoma is over 5 million. In 2018 Oklahoma ranked number four in the nation in the production of cattle and calves.

Additional Reading

Townsend, UnaBelle, *Grady's in the Silo*, Pelican, 2003.

Websites

<https://yukonprogressnews.com/2019/02/21/celebrating-70-years-of-grady-the-cow-silo-story/>

<https://oklahoman.com/article/2568820/silo-landmark-torn-down-grady-the-cow-only-a-memory>

<https://www.news9.com/story/5e34f492e0c96e774b364538/yukons-biggest-celebrity-in-1949:-grady-the-cow>

<https://yukonsbest.com/2019/07/24/celebration-of-grady-the-cow/>

<https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1955&dat=19610725&id=ZhUrAAAAIBAJ&sjid=lpwFAAAIBAJ&pg=3764,3425828>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=payKQhPleP4>

Bovine Oversteps Boundaries

Activity 1: Grady, the Silo Cow, (ELA)

2-3 50 minute class periods

Students will read the article about Grady, the silo cow and write their own headline and news story. Students will include the main idea and supporting details. Students will create captions for the news story photograph.

Oklahoma Academic Standards

Activity 1: Grady, the Silo Cow (ELA)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 6.2.R.1
7.2.R.1
8.2.R.1 | Students will create an objective summary, including main idea and supporting details, while maintaining meaning and a logical sequence of events. |
| 6.2.R.3
7.2.R.3
8.2.R.3 | Students will paraphrase main ideas with supporting details in a text. |
| 6.2.W.1
7.2.W.1
8.2.W.1 | Students will apply components of a recursive writing process for multiple purposes to create a focused, organized, and coherent piece of writing. |
| 6.2.W.2
7.2.W.2
8.2.W.2 | Students will plan (e.g., outline) and prewrite a first draft as necessary. |
| 6.2.W.3
7.2.W.3
8.2.W.3 | Students will develop drafts by choosing an organizational structure (e.g., description, compare/contrast, sequential, problem/solution, cause/effect, etc.) and building on ideas in multi-paragraph essays. |

Materials:

- Activity 1 Reading Page “**Grady, the Silo Cow Newspaper Story**”
- Activity 1 Worksheet 1 “**Newspaper Headline and Article**”
- Activity 1 Worksheet 2 “**Photo Caption**”
- newspapers

Procedures

1. Hand out copies of the “**Grady, the Silo Cow Newspaper Story**”
 - Students will take turns reading from the account.
 - Stop periodically to discuss unfamiliar vocabulary.
 - Students will use context clues and dictionary definitions to find meaning of unfamiliar words.

Bovine Oversteps Boundaries

2. Bring newspapers to class.
—Students will examine newspapers and work in groups to discuss the purpose of a headline and what makes a good headline. Write the following examples on the chalkboard:
 Bovine Oversteps Boundaries
 “Moo—I Want Out,” says Grady
 Grady Wants Out—Now
3. Pass out Activity 1 Worksheet 1 “**Newspaper Headline and Article**”
—Students will create three possible headlines for the Grady story.
—Students will identify the main idea, key actions and main characters in the story before developing their own version of the news article.
4. Students will look at photograph captions in the newspapers.
—Hand out Activity 1 Worksheet 2 “**Photo Caption**” and give students a chance to look at the photographs of Grady.
—Students will write their own captions for each of the photographs.

Extension

1. Students will create cartoons illustrating the story of Grady, the Silo Cow.
2. Students will write newspaper stories of unusual things that have happened to them or their families, complete with headlines and photographs, if available.
—Students should use the following questions as they write their stories:
 What happened?
 Who was involved?
 When, where and why did the event take place?
 How did it happen?
3. Use the student stories and photos to create a class newspaper.
4. Students will use online or library resources to research the story of the Chicago fire of 1871 and Mrs. O’Leary’s cow.
—Students will choose from a variety of media to present their findings (PowerPoint, student skit, poster, etc.)
5. Students will use online search engines to find recent unusual news stories about farm animals.

A good headline draws the reader in and makes him or her want to read the story. It should also summarize the main point of the story, or the reader will feel tricked.

Read the actual newspaper story of Grady the Silo Cow below, then create three headlines of your own to fit the story.

Bill Mach of Yukon and Mrs. Patrick O'Leary of Chicago have a lot in common. Both owe their fame to a cow. O'Leary's cow is credited with kicking over a lantern which started the great fire of October, 1871, which virtually destroyed downtown Chicago.

On February 22, 1949, Mach's cow, Grady, jumped through a small opening into a silo and became trapped. Her plight and how to get her out, caught the fancy of people all over the United States. She was featured in Life magazine and in countless newspaper stories across the nation.

At the time, Grady was a wild six-year-old Hereford. She was valued at \$500 and weighed a little over 1,200 pounds. Shortly before Grady bolted through the 17- by 25- inch door in the silo, she gave birth to a stillborn calf. Because her labor was difficult Mach said he had called veterinarian D.L. Crumb to assist.

During the ordeal, Grady was tied to a post in a small shed next to the silo. When Crumb had completed his work, he told Mach to untie the cow. When he did, the cow bolted. Mach said she made a "wild whirl" and chased him on top of a pile of cottonseed sacks. The only light showing in the darkened shed was from the small opening to the silo. Grady dove for the opening.

"The vet must have had his eyes closed. He asked me 'Where'd she go?'" Mach said. The only evidence that the cow went through the door, other than the undeniable fact that she was inside the silo, was a few red hairs clinging to the beveled edge of the heavy steel silo door.

Word of Grady's plight got out, and the Machs began getting telephone calls, telegrams and letter. The curious arrived in cars and planes.

They lost count of the visitors and the phone calls, but the final tally of letters was around 5,400 and about 770 telegrams. Mach said he heard from people in 45 states as well as Canada, Mexico and Germany.

Many offered suggestions on how to get Grady out of the silo. One person suggested tunneling under the silo. Oklahoma Governor Roy Turner, himself a Hereford man, said the cow should be given anesthetic. An officer at Tinker Field (now Tinker Air Force Base) said he knew of a helicopter that would lift 1,200 pounds but that it was in San Marcos, Texas. However, he wasn't sure the Army wanted to lift the cow out of the silo.

Three days after Grady's leap, Mach got a call from Ralph Partridge, the Denver Post's farm editor. He told Mach he was coming to Yukon to get Grady out of the silo. Partridge supervised while a ramp was built from the floor of the silo to the door. The door edges were coated with axle grease. Grady was then outfitted with two heavy halters, coated with axle grease and given two shots of Nembutal. While men outside the silo pulled on ropes attached to her halters, Partridge and J.O. Dicky Jr., a Yukon vocational agriculture teacher, pushed.

She slid right through the door with only a couple of scratches along her back to show for the trip and her five-day stay in the silo. Once she was out, Mach shut the silo door.

Grady went on to become a mother several times, and she was such a tourist attraction that Mach put up a small sign on Route 66 noting her home. He kept Grady in a special pen by the road. Grady, the cow, died in July, 1961.

Adapted, with permission, from "Cow's Plight Remembered by Couple," by Ellie Sutter. Copyright, 1993, Oklahoma Publishing Company. From the June 21, 1993, issue of The Daily Oklahoman.

Bovine Oversteps Boundaries

Activity 1 Worksheet 1: Newspaper Headline and Article



Name: _____ Date: _____

Create three possible headlines for the previous news article about Grady, the Silo Cow. Use the information in the article to create your own version of the news story in the box below. Include the main point and supporting details.

Headline 1:

Headline 2:

Headline 3:

Bovine Oversteps Boundaries

Activity 1 Worksheet 2: Photo Caption



Name: _____ Date: _____

Write a caption for each of the photographs below.



Photo Credits: Copyright, 1993, Oklahoma Publishing Company. From the June 21, 1993, issue of the Daily Oklahoman.

Copyright, 2019, Yukon Progress. From the February 21, 2019, issue of the Yukon Progress.

Storychasers, April 24, 2013, Grady the Cow by Sheri Carpenter (a tale from Yukon, Oklahoma), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=payKQhPleP4>