

Hit the Trail

Objective

The student will draw three cattle trails that passed through Indian Territory, using written descriptions of the trails. Students will write a journal of life on the trail. Students will research cattle trails. Students will complete a vocabulary page.

Background

The great cattle drives began in 1866, following the Civil War. Herds of longhorn cattle were driven north from Texas and Mexico to Nebraska, Kansas, the Dakotas, Wyoming and Montana. There the stock could be fattened on open range. The cattle were then driven to railroad towns in Kansas and shipped east to St. Louis, Chicago or Cincinnati. In some cases, cattlemen rented or leased the right-of-way across Indian land or ranches to safeguard their herds. Some landowners allowed passage; others did not.

Between 25 and 30 thousand cowboys took part in the cattle drives. Many really were just boys. Few were grown men. Usually the oldest people on any drive were the trail boss and the cook, whose average ages were 30. The cowboys worked an exhausting schedule—eighteen hours in the saddle, sleeping on the ground, with nothing more than a bed roll for comfort. They endured snake bites, wild river crossings, driving hail storms and deadly stampedes. Many young men were drawn to this lifestyle because they yearned for excitement and wanted to prove to their families that they could make it on their own. For many, working a trail drive brought in more money than they had ever seen in their lives—an average \$30 a month.

The Shawnee Trail, also known to early settlers and merchants as the “Texas Road,” was the first cattle trail in Oklahoma. The trail entered Oklahoma just south of the present-day city of Durant and meandered north, past Muskogee and Fort Gibson, to the Kansas border. The East Shawnee Trail had fine grass and an abundant supply of water, but it was expensive, because the Chickasaw and Choctaw governments charged for its use. As the railroads progressed westward, a western branch of the Shawnee Trail was developed. This route connected the main trail with Wichita, Kansas, after departing the Texas Road at the Boggy Depot stage station.

The most famous trail during this period was the Chisholm Trail. Named for the Cherokee Indian trader Jesse Chisholm, the trail entered Oklahoma from Texas at the Red River Station and proceeded almost due north to Kansas. Most cattlemen preferred the Chisholm Trail or the Great Western Trail because these trails were the shortest. However, the Great Western, or Dodge City Trail was dangerous because of hostile Indians.

Oklahoma Academic Standards

GRADE 3

Economics: 2.3.

Geography: 1CD. Oklahoma History: 5,6,10

Speaking and Listening: R.1,2,3; W.1,2. Fluency: 1. Reading and Writing Process: R.1,2. Critical Reading and Writing: R.7; W.1. Vocabulary: R.1,3,5. Research: R.1,2,3,4; W.1,2,3. Multimodal: W.2

GRADE 4

Geography: 2B. Exploration and Settlement: 4

Speaking and Listening: R.1,2,3; W.1,2. Fluency: 1. Reading and Writing Process: R.1,2. Reading and Writing: R.7; W.1. Vocabulary: R.1,3,5. Research: R.1,2,3; W.1,2,3. Multimodal: W.2

The range cattle industry lasted only a short period of time—about 23 years. Settlers began to put up fences around their farms, making the movement of cattle difficult, and railroads in Oklahoma provided a safer and less expensive method of moving cattle. By 1889, there was little unfenced range left. Only scattered evidence remains today of these great trails.

Materials

- colored map pencils
- Oklahoma road maps (available free from Oklahoma Department of Tourism)

Procedures

1. Ask students what comes to mind when you say the terms “wild west” and “cattle drive.” List all reasonable responses on the chalkboard. Read and discuss background and vocabulary.
2. Hand out copies of the Cattle Trail Map and Cattle Trail Descriptions, included with this lesson.
 - Review the directions on the map with students.
 - Study the map carefully as a class to make sure students understand all the information presented. Explain that the maps only show the parts of the cattle trails passing through Oklahoma. Explain that most of the trails started in Texas and ended in cattle market towns in Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska.
 - Students will label the cattle trails, based on the Cattle Trail Descriptions page. Caution students to follow the instructions carefully and not be tempted to simply connect the towns.
3. Lead a discussion in which you ask students the following questions:
 - How many of the towns on the map are located on rivers?
 - Which towns were stage coach stations? (Enid Stage Stand, Dover Stage Stand)
4. Divide students into groups of four or five, and provide each group with an Oklahoma road map. Students will compare the cattle trail maps with current road maps by answering the following questions:
 - Which of the towns on the cattle trail map are towns or cities today?
 - What, if any, major highways follow the old trails?
5. Students will research the impact of the changes in transportation on the development and growth of towns in Oklahoma.
 - Which Oklahoma towns were formed because they were located on rivers? Along the cattle trails? Near railway stations? Interstate highways?
 - Students will research to find out why some of the towns survived while others did not.
6. On a map of the United States find the states that surround Oklahoma and were a part of the cattle drives.

Ag in Your Community

Invite a cattle broker, rancher or modern day cowboy to speak to the class. Ask the speaker to discuss his or her daily routine and compare it to the practices of yesteryear. Have students brainstorm questions to ask before the speaker arrives.

7. Hand out copies of the Trail Journal, included with this lesson.
 - Read the directions with your class.
 - Students follow the directions to complete the record books.
 - Ask for volunteers to read aloud from the created trail records.
8. Divide students into groups, and assign each a historical trail to research (Trail of Tears, Pony Express, Overland Mail, Santa Fe, Mormon, Oregon, etc.), using a variety of online and/or library resources.
 - The groups will share the information they have gathered through maps and multimedia class presentations.
 - The groups will recreate the period dress of the people who followed the trails they have researched.
 - The groups will write short scripts and role-play events that may have taken place on the trails they have researched.
9. Read some poetry created by cowboy poets like Baxter Black, Waddie Mitchell and Oklahoma’s own Fred “Sky” Schivers. Make a list of terms used in the cowboy poetry that are not familiar to students. Assign different students to find the meanings of the terms and share them with the class.
10. Hand out copies of the “Vocabulary Trail” page, included with this lesson. Students will follow the directions to complete the worksheet.

Vocabulary

cattle drive—moving cattle on foot from one place to another
cattle trail—one of several routes on which cattle were driven for long distances in the US in the late 19th and early 20th centuries

longhorn cattle—the descendants of cattle with long curving horns which the Spanish explorer Coronado originally brought to the North American continent.

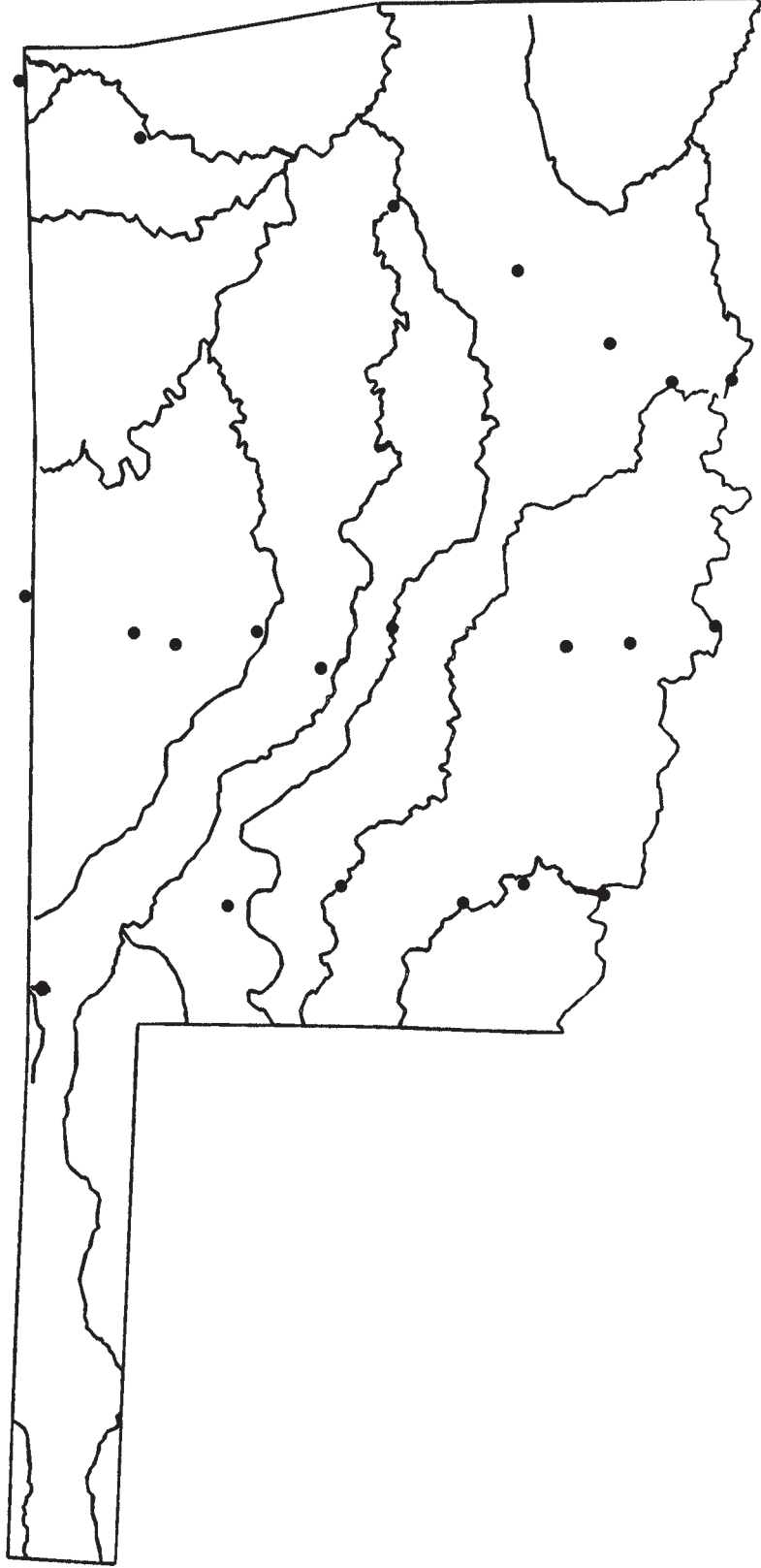
open range—extensive range area which has not been fenced into pastures.

right-of-way—privilege to travel across a given piece of land which may be purchased or granted by a landowner.

Name _____

Cattle Trail Map

Most of the great cattle trails went through Indian Territory on their way from Texas to open range in Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, Montana and the Dakotas. From there they were driven to railroad towns in Kansas where they were shipped back East. On the map below, use different colored pencils to draw the routes following these cattle trails as they passed through what is now Oklahoma as they are described on the page provided.



Oklahoma Ag in the Classroom is a program of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry and the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

Cattle Trail Descriptions

Most of the great cattle trails went through Indian Territory on their way from Texas to open range in Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, Montana and the Dakotas. From there they were driven to railroad towns in Kansas where they were shipped back East. On the map provided, use different colored pencils to draw the routes following these cattle trails as they passed through what is now Oklahoma.

Great Western Trail

Crossed the Red River on the west side of the North Fork at Doan's Store and crossed the North Fork just north of Old Camp Ground. Continued northwest to Briggs Cedar Ranch Dover Stage Ranch, then north, crossing the Washita at Edward Rock Crossing. Headed back northwest to cross the Canadian south of Cedar Ranch. From Cedar Ranch headed northwest and crossed the Wolf River, then north across the North Canadian and on to Sherman Ranch and into Kansas.

Chisholm Trail

Crossed the Red River at Red River Station and headed north through Monument Hill and Old Duncan Store, crossing the Washita and then the Canadian at Silver City. Headed northeast until it crossed the North Canadian, then back northwest to cross the Cimarron at Dover Stage Stand. Headed north through Buffalo Springs and Enid Stage Stand, then left Indian Territory at Caldwell. Another fork headed northwest at Silver City, crossed the North Canadian then headed northeast at Caddo Springs and met the other fork at Dover Stage Stand after crossing the Cimarron, then followed the north bank of the Cimarron northwest and out of Indian Territory.

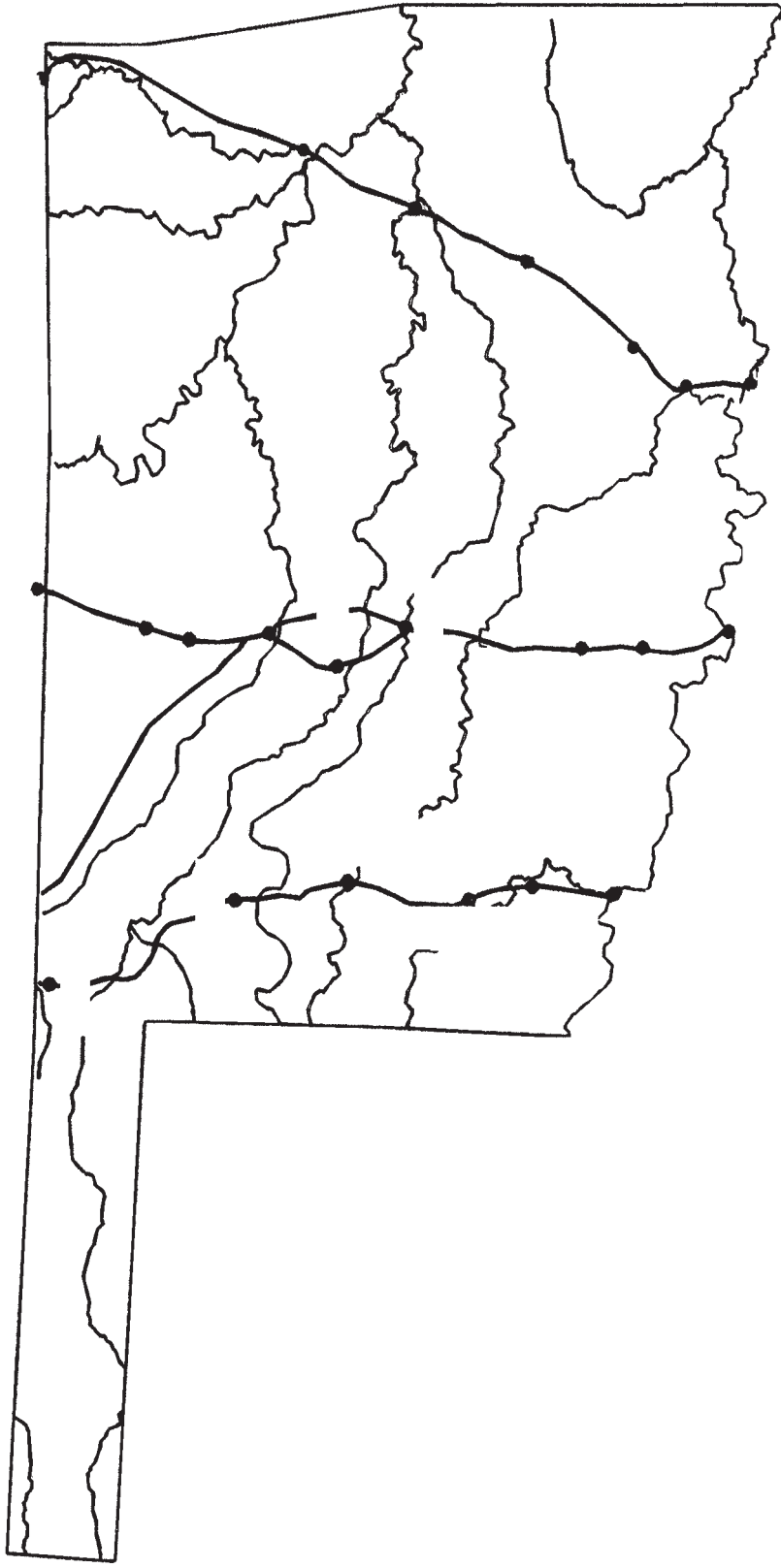
East Shawnee Trail

Crossed the Red River at Colbert's Ferry, turning northeast at Fort Washita through Boggy Depot and Perryville. Crossed the Canadian and then the North Canadian at North Fork Town and continued northeast. Crossed the Arkansas at Fort Gibson and followed the east bank of the Grand River before crossing the river at the northeast corner of Indian Territory and heading northwest to Baxter Springs.

Name _____

Cattle Trail Map (answers)

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Name _____

Trail Journal

Usually the trail boss was the only person on the drive who could write more than just his name and do simple math problems. He was responsible for keeping accurate records for the rancher who organized the drive. Every time a cowpoke was injured or cattle were lost, he had to write it in the diary. At the end of the trip, the trail boss would turn the diary over to the rancher, along with the money earned from cattle sales.

In the space below, pretend you are the cattle boss, and describe two of your days on the trail. Describe events that happened. Write in complete sentences. Check spelling and punctuation. Use the back of the page if you run out of space.

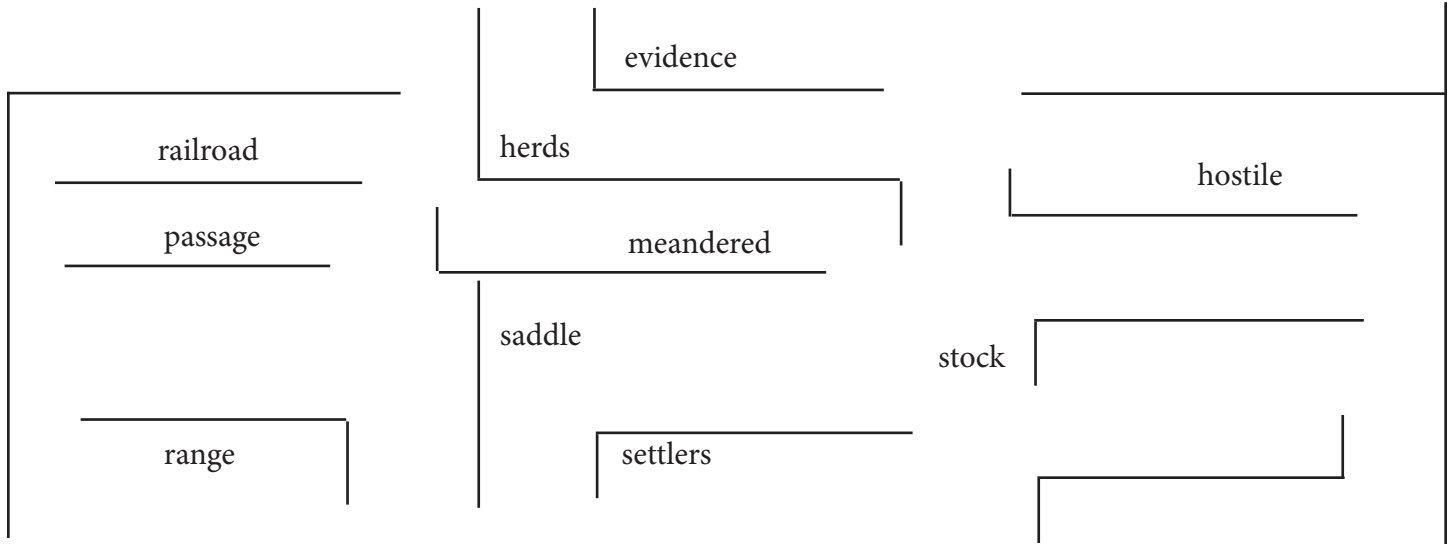
Day 1 _____

Day 2 _____

Name _____

Vocabulary Trail

Use your pencil to follow the trail by tracing the words below in alphabetical order in the spaces below and look them up in your dictionary. Write the dictionary page number and guide words from the top of that page for each word.



Word	Dictionary Page Number	Guide Words from That Page
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
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