



Beyond Cowboys: the 'Wild West'

A Children's University activity designed by the American Scholars at the Second Air Division Memorial Library in Norwich. This can be completed at home and handed in to any Norfolk Public Library. If you have any questions please phone the Memorial Library on 01603 774747 or email 2admemorial.lib@norfolk.gov.uk.

Activity details...

Time for completion:	1 - 1.5 hours
Appropriate for ages:	10 and up
Number of Children's University Credits earned	1 stamp
Proof of Completion (brought to a local library):	Completed Info sheet & 'yarn' doll

Aims and Objectives...

In this activity, you will learn about the history and geography of the American 'Wild West' through looking at popular Hollywood films, maps, folk stories, legends, and United States politics. As you read about the 'Wild West' you will come to understand how difficult it is to find a definition for the American West both in terms of where it is, and when it was.

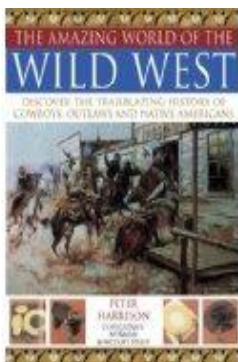
Introduction...

Look at the map that is included on this activity sheet (see page 5). Think about where you believe 'The West' might be. It may be hard to find a location that everyone can agree upon. Some think that the 'Wild West' is anyplace to the left of the Mississippi River, while others think of the Southwest and Mexico as the West. You might think that it would be easier to ask, "When' was The West?" but this is also tricky because even though people began to explore and build homes and towns in the 1820s and continued to do so through the 1930s (over almost a hundred years), most think of the time of the 'West' as a really very short period indeed.

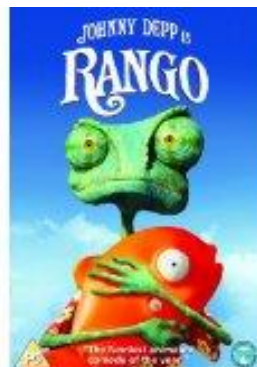
Many people who study history believe that the 'Wild West' period began around 1869. After the American Civil War, when more and more people traveled west where there was more land and more opportunities. These people needed a lot of space to raise cattle, which was a very good businesses because the citizens of the United States wanted beef to eat and were willing to pay for it. Unfortunately, as more and more people crossed the country, fighting between the settlers and the Indians grew, making the West more and more of a dangerous place to live. Also, settlers who built farms got in the way of the cowboys who were driving their cattle, forever changing the life of the American Cowboy. Officially, the Wild West period ended in 1890 when the American Government made laws limiting westward expansion.

However, even though the Wild West had officially ended, stories about the west continued. Travelling shows like Buffalo Bill's Wild West toured America and Europe with real life cowboy William F. Cody, and Native American chiefs like Sitting Bull and Geronimo performing. Also, books, movies and television programs about the Wild West became popular. All of these romanticized the Wild West more than they told the truth about this time in American history, which is why we usually remember the west in the way that we do today.

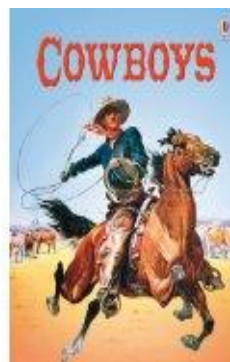
Find out more: Suggested books and films...



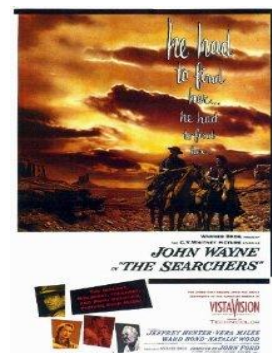
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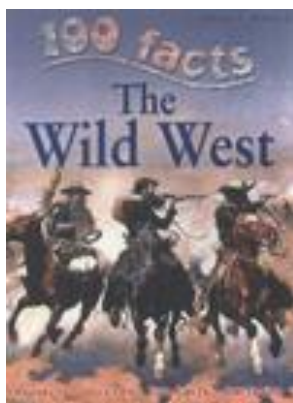
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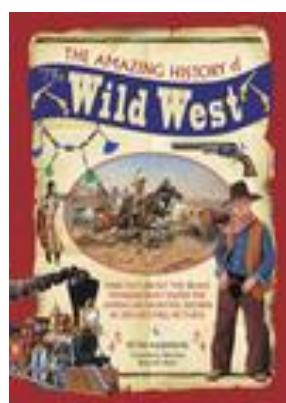
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[click here](#)

Click below the image for more information on where the book / film can be found.

Remember that these titles can be reserved online free of charge, and sent to your local library for collection.

Historical background...

Watch these videos and use the information to answer the questions on pages 6 and 7

- 1) Where Did the Cowboys Come From? <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/z6yf9j6>
- 2) The Life of the Cowboys <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zh3v87h>
- 3) Hardships of the Trail West <http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/clips/zk27sbk>

(Don't forget to check with a parent or responsible adult to get permission before going on line.)

Making a 'yarn' doll...



In the 'West' of the United States, on the ranches where most families lived, parents had to travel many miles before they came to a town. Because of the long distances, and the fact that transportation was usually on a horse, or a wagon, it could take a day or longer just to go to the store.

Rather than buying things like toys for their children, mothers would often make them at home, or teach their children to make the toys for themselves. Here is an example of a toy that a settler could have made.

Craft materials required...

- Yarn (what Americans call wool)
- Stiff card
- Scissors
- Doll decorations (these could include google eyes, ribbon, or fabric)

Directions...

<http://www.kidactivities.net/post/How-to-Make-Yarn-Dolls.aspx>

1) Begin by cutting a piece of thick and sturdy card the size of the doll you are making

2) Tape the end of a length of wool to the card

3) Loop the wool around the card lengthwise. The more times you wrap, the thicker your doll will become. (Expect to wrap a total of 80 to 200 times).

4) Slip a 10 inch piece of wool through your loops at the top of the card, and tie it in a knot. Then slip the looped wool off the card.



This is what your 'doll' should look like as you do steps 1 - 4

5) Tie another 10 inch piece of wool about an inch down the loops of wool. This will be the head of your doll.



6) Separate the bottom loops of the doll, below the head, into three sections. The sections on the right and left will be the arms and the middle section will be the body, so make the middle section bigger than the sections at the right and left. Tie each arm.



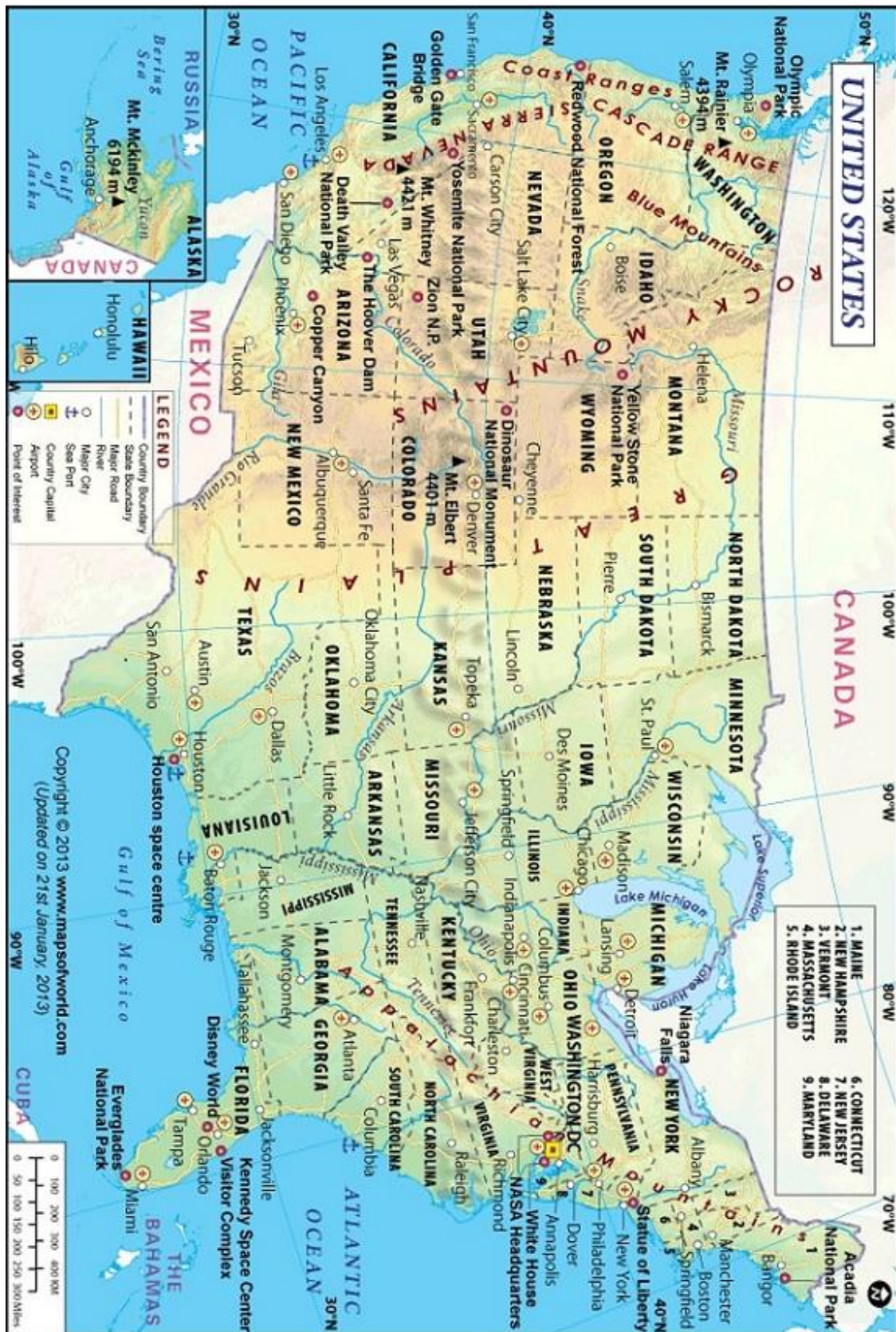
7) Clip the loops at the bottom of the doll. Then decide if your doll is a boy or a girl. If the doll is a boy, then separate the wool into two equal sections and tie them to form legs. For a girl doll leave the wool to make a skirt.



8) To decorate you can glue eyes, or draw them on; add hair by looping a different colour of yarn around two fingers and tying it to the head of the doll; or make a dress by tying a piece of fabric to the body of the doll.

Map of the United States:

Where do you think 'The West' would be?



Your Name _____

Beyond Cowboys: 'The Wild West'

Watch the film clip 'Where Did the Cowboys Come From':

- 1) Which state in the United States is considered the 'heart of cowboy country'?

- 2) Why did the cowboy tradition start?

Watch the film clip 'The Life of the Cowboys':

- 3) How many cowboys worked together in a 'crew' during a cattle drive?

- 4) What was the worst job on a cattle drive that a cowboy could have and why?

- 5) How long did a cowboy have to be away from his family on a cattle drive?

6) What happened to change the life and livelihood of the cowboy?

7) What was the future of the cowboy after 1883?

Watch the film clip 'Hardships of the Trail West':

8) What did independence rock stand for?

9) What were some of the problems that the settlers faced?

10) What was the worst tragedy recorded in history of the settlers?

Well Done !! Once you have completed this sheet, and made your frontier doll, bring them in to your local library to receive your Children's University credit !