



GEORGE RANCH HISTORICAL PARK

1890S DAVIS MANSION EDUCATORS GUIDE

George Ranch Historical Park is a living history museum that tracks four generations of one family through one hundred years of Texas history. The George Ranch Historical Park's history follows family lines beginning in 1824 when Texas was still part of Mexico and the first Texas pioneers settled near the Brazos River. In the years since, the Ranch has passed through four generations and grown into a Fort Bend County landmark.

The family's original "home place" is at the core of the George Ranch Historical Park where the legends and legacies of those who shaped this place come to life every day. Authentic locations, historic homes, costumed presenters and a remarkable story of determination and courage set the stage for trekking through Texas history.

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Our family history



The George Ranch's heritage follows four generations of one family line. The story begins in 1824 when the first Anglo pioneers, members of Stephen F. Austin's "Old 300", came to the fort at the bend in the Brazos River. Originally settled as part of Austin's Colony by Nancy and Henry Jones, four generations of Jones descendants managed and loved this land and left an enduring legacy in Fort Bend County. By the blessing of marriage, rightful inheritance, and coincidence, this land uniquely passed from mother to daughter.

Henry and Nancy's daughter, Polly Jones Ryon, with her husband William Ryon, managed the ranch and its cattle during the "golden era" of cattle drives across the West's open ranges. Their daughter, Susan Ryon, married JHP Davis. The Davis's and (the widowed) Polly continued to build the farming and ranching operations. Susan died when she was still young, leaving JHP Davis alone with Mary Elizabeth (Mamie) and Thomas Walter (Bud), their two small children. Davis remarried and his new bride, Belle, honored Susan's children's inheritance.



In 1886, Mamie Davis married A.P. George and together they continued to manage the family's ranching and business interests. When oil and natural gas were discovered on ranch property, the family's fortune changed forever. Without heirs to pass the land and its assets on to, the Georges established The George Foundation, which holds title to the Historical Park land.

The George Ranch Historical Park was opened in 1988 to tell this unique family story and their place in greater Texas history to school children and general visitors from around the world.



Visiting the George Ranch Historical Park

SCHEDULING A SCHOOL PROGRAM

The George Ranch Historical Park offers their living history classroom September through May, Tuesday through Friday. To see our available programs, please visit <https://www.georgeranch.org/plan-a-visit/field-trips/>. Bookings can be made by calling 281-343-0218 ext. 220 or by e-mailing education@georgeranch.org.

PREPARING FOR YOUR TOUR

The pre- and post-activities included in this guide are structured to enhance any visit. We encourage you to use them freely in advance of your program or self-guide tour. While some of our sites are completely hands-on environments, several houses are more traditional Museum-like settings. As such, it is a good idea to review museum etiquette with students in advance of your visit.

WHAT TO WEAR

Students and teachers are encouraged to dress comfortably for the outdoors depending on the time of year you visit and wear close-toe shoes if possible. Tram service is available but not guaranteed; the walking loop around the Park is just under 1 mile.

WHAT TO BRING

Cameras are welcome at the George Ranch Historical Park. To help everyone stay hydrated, bottled water or a rolling water cooler is allowed into the Park. Picnic tables are available throughout the Park for groups who bring their lunch.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE

For any trip that you plan here at the Ranch, please arrive at least 15 minutes before your scheduled program time (9am or 11am) and allow at least 90 minutes for your classes to complete a program. This extra time gives students time to unload, take a restroom break and hear a brief introduction to the Park.

WEATHER PREPARATION

As an outdoor living history park, we are open rain or shine. However, in case of lightning, the tram does not run and impacted sites are closed until the lightning passes. If you have questions about weather conditions the day of your program, please call the Park for a weather update.

CHAPERONES

Chaperones are welcome to accompany your class and/or tour. Please encourage the chaperones to actively participate in this unique experience and to limit distractions such as cell phones.

CANCELLATIONS

Cancellations must be received in written format at least thirty days before your scheduled tour. School representatives can re-schedule by calling 281-343-0218 ext. 220.

PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES



BLACKSMITH KWL CHART

TEK Alignments:

§113.15. Social Studies, Grade 4, Adopted 2018

(11) Economics. The student understands patterns of work and economic activities in Texas. The student is expected to: (D) explain how developments in transportation and communication have influenced economic activities in Texas.

Learning Objectives:

After completing this activity, the student will be able to:

- Describe what a blacksmith is and what he/she does for the community.
- Determine why a blacksmith was important to a pre-industrial community and how they effected the local economy.

Materials:

- Chart below

Descriptions:

Using the questions below as a starting point, fill in the “Know” and “Want to Know” sections of the chart. After your trip to the Ranch, you can fill in the “What I learned” section together.

What is a blacksmith?

What does a blacksmith do?

What kind of metal or metals does a blacksmith work with?

Why were blacksmiths important to the community?

Give examples of things that a blacksmith can make.

What tools does a blacksmith use?

What I know about Blacksmithing	What I want to know about Blacksmithing	What I learned about Blacksmithing.



CHANGE COMES TO THE RANGE

TEK Alignments:

§113.15. Social Studies, Grade 4, Adopted 2018

(4) History. The student understands the political, economic, and social changes in Texas during the last half of the 19th century. The student is expected to:

- (B) explain the growth, development, and impact of the cattle industry such as contributions made by Charles Goodnight, Richard King, and Lizzie Johnson;
- (C) explain the effects of the railroad industry on life in Texas, including changes to cities and major industries

Learning Objective:

After completing this activity, the student will be able:

- Understand the importance of cattle to Texas history.
- Describe how the invention of barbed wire changed the industry and effected travel and beef prices.

Materials:

- Photographs

Description:

As the expansion of the railroad and the eventual invention of barbed wire slowly closed open-ranges, cowboys and ranchers had to adapt to a new way of raising livestock. Using the 2 photographs below, compare and contrast the similarities and differences between the two ways of raising, feeding and moving cattle. How did this effect the market? Then, discuss what the differences meant to the people of Texas as well as the rest of the United States.



San Diego Historical Society



A SHARECROPPER CONTRACT

TEK Alignments:

§113.15. Social Studies, Grade 4

(4) History. The student understands the political, economic, and social changes in Texas during the last half of the 19th century. The student is expected to:

A. describe the impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on Texas

(11) Economics. The student understands patterns of work and economic activities in Texas. The student is expected to:

(A) identify how people in different regions of Texas earn their living, past and present;

(B) explain how physical geographic factors such as climate and natural resources have influenced the location of economic activities in Texas;

Learning Objectives: After completing this activity, the student will be able to:

- Describe what a sharecropper is and how they were a part of the Reconstruction community in Texas.
- Understand the economic hardships of these people and what it meant to be a sharecropper.

Materials:

- Transcribed text from Sharecropper contract dated 1882
- List of Questions.

Description:

Using the excerpt below, answer the following questions about the life of a sharecropper.

1. What did the sharecropper have to do in order to use the plantation owner's land, farming tool, and mules?
2. Do you think this is a fair contract? Why or why not?
3. Why was the sharecropper in debt to the plantation owners?
4. Why do you think the sharecropper agreed to this contract?

A Sharecropping Contract

To everyone renting land, the following conditions must be agreed to:

For every 30 acres of land (rented by sharecroppers), I will provide a mule team, plow, and farming tools. The sharecroppers can have half of the cotton, corn, pumpkins and potatoes they grow if the following conditions are followed, but—if not—they are to only have two-fifths.

For every mule or horse furnished by me there must be 1000 good sized rails (logs) hauled, and the fence repaired if I so direct. All sharecroppers must haul rails (logs) and work on the fence whenever I may order. The wood must be split and the fence repaired before corn is planted. No cotton must be planted by sharecroppers on their home patches of land. No sharecropper is to work off the plantation when there is any work for them to do for me.

Every sharecropper must be responsible for all gear placed in his hands, and if not returned must be paid for unless it is worn out by use.

Nothing can be sold from their (sharecroppers') crop until my rent is all paid, and all amounts they owe me are paid in full.

I am to gin & pack all cotton and charge every sharecropper an eighteenth of his part, the cropper to furnish his part of the bagging, ties, & twine.

The sales of every sharecropper's part of the cotton to be made by me when and where I choose to sell, and after taking all they owe me.

Source: Grimes Family Papers (#3357), 1882; Held in the Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill.

KEY WORD SEARCH

TEK Alignments:

§113.15. Social Studies, Grade 4, Adopted 2018.

(4) History. The student understands the political, economic, and social changes in Texas during the last half of the 19th century. The student is expected to:

(B) explain the growth, development, and impact of the cattle industry such as contributions made by Charles Goodnight, Richard King, and Lizzie Johnson;

Learning Objectives: After completing this activity, the student will be able to:

Recognize vocabulary associated with the Golden Age of the Cattle Drive and the closing of the open Prairie.

Materials:

- Attached word search

Description:

Print each student a copy of the attached word search. Have each student complete the exercise by circling the words as they find them. Then, using the key, go through each word and its meaning.

Round Up- a gathering of cattle herds in preparation for a cattle drive

Remuda- a group of horses on a cattle drive

Drover- a cowhand who is responsible for pushing along a herd of cattle

Drag riders- Riders who ride behind a herd of cattle to push them forward

Flank riders- Riders that ride alongside a herd of cattle to keep them walking in a straight line

Hitching Post- a post used to tether horses in place when not ridden

Line Shack- A shack built for temporary housing for fence line riders

Mule- an equine hybrid animal (half horse, half donkey) used to pack heavy equipment

Strand- a line of wire

Barb- a sharp point on a wire

Steer- a neutered male cow that is raised for beef

Mare- Female horse

Gelding- Neutered Male horse

Chuckwagon- covered wagon used on cattle drives to move food and items needed while on trail; invented by Charles Goodnight.



Round Up word Search

OGOJMLFIMWIWRBNWELDACXCAEZLPYG
 MGQYCDHQTEAHPUHFSJRMLMAGCMIIZH
 LWEAGLWSHCUCUOCOBQTLJADWRLEPRY
 BGVCRAUJHMBBVZSBFDPDYRZTEFFITX
 VDGGCYVIZEAGCRUPXPNQLEEWPRSMWH
 LOKOHOWIJURYTPJACNTLTIBLDQHDIRI
 MGZDAICOCABKKTOFFCBKHBNSCHFCEX
 WJMTKEKFFVQWESUSLIOLBKNBEXUNPRB
 ESDASOGWWWISXFFCPDROVERGSDRLNQ
 QGDRJ IUSIXRNDRWQSATBVUXIFHXJSL
 EUACLRJZGMEYXSCZZUIHGRIXJYAPJK
 QWVUCQBUNRFJSOBUUQVHACLQOWLCJO
 UXWMFRXJSTRANDYZSNAFZPOENKJQKE
 KFXLAZBREZPLOOMJTBXSXA IWMPJCGJ
 ACLYCISOFCUKUUKRLQENDIWVXWBZIFEX
 BSOFRQAI OHHNMCNOECFLXNPAMOFALD
 TFYTQZDVCTULOAMIRYFFNRQWXPYJDE
 CSVJSGHWTOJCLXOQKBLBPBAQNNPQIU
 WREIHMVDIXSHKHQREMUDAFBYGRKKNO
 CJGZNI FYQWSMYWVWXOWHDBEQCFUTGZ
 ATJQBFTJZZJWAEAVKKKUIASWYXIBMT
 APMECTCCZNWQSCJGXKBUGHFHMPQMUE
 OLHYMMNHHAOYHMLBOMRMAIPBSVLRLY
 DQBMISLJWIMFRQNTZNOIDEAERLQVEU
 PAXUHAXAKQNLFEKARPUTHXFAQWXOHS
 JREWZIH YADXGZTFPBRNMGBLIHAERMG
 GIUTWTTNOMFXPBHJBWDWFVPGADMAQF
 ALSMCVRFDRCKOKQLIUUVJEYWVZCEJJ
 THJVGKGTWAVFXASVLBPOKSQGZDJKBW
 BRANDFQFKLUOGWK TQQEALZOJRAHCHG

Hitching Post

Chuckwagon

Line Shack

Mule

Barbwire

Round Up

Gelding

Remuda

Drover

Strand

Cowboy

Steer

brand

Mare

POST VISIT ACTIVITIES



RAILROAD BARON GAME

TEK Alignments:

§113.15. Social Studies, Grade 4, Adopted 2018.

(11) Economics. The student understands patterns of work and economic activities in Texas. The student is expected to:

(D) explain how developments in transportation and communication have influenced economic activities in Texas.

Learning Objectives: After completing this activity, the student will be able to:

- Understand the correlation between the connectivity of the railroad and how wealth and goods were centered around railroad hubs.

Materials:

- Basic game instructions
- Board photocopies
- Profit sheet
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Pencil

Description:

Give each child a copy of the squares map. (Optionally, you can break the students into groups and have them work together) Have the students name their rail line at the top of the page. Explain that when train lines are built, they are built to connect places together.

- If you are a passenger train line, you connect cities together because people want to travel from city to city.
- If you are a freight train line, you want to connect farms, ranches and mines to bigger cities and markets so you can sell your goods.
- Most train lines move a combination of people and cargo.

Everyone starts the game with \$1,000 to spend on “tracks”. Each square on the map is a track and worth \$100.

Have the students color 10 squares of “track” anywhere they want. Remind them that the goal is to connect places together.

Talk a bit about why connecting certain places is more profitable than connecting other places:

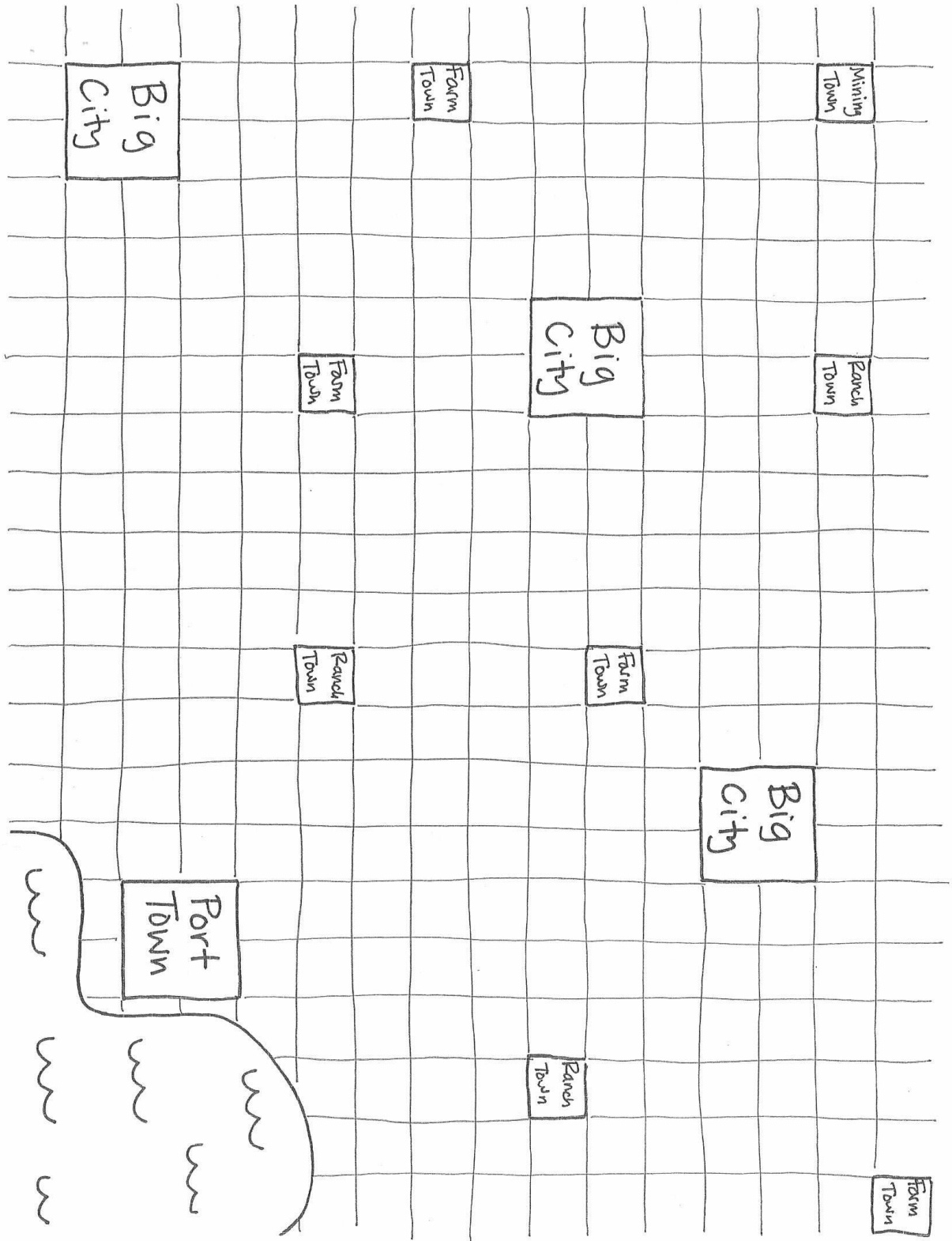
The least profitable move is connecting a similar town to a similar town; you don’t want to buy things you already have. Cows need to go to the market, not another ranch.

Fuel is worth more money than vegetables, so mining towns will bring in more money than farm towns.

Farms have more buildings than ranches, so they need more fuel and stone. It is more profitable to connect a farming town to a mining town rather than a ranching town to a mining town.

Once the students have finished coloring their first 10 squares/track spaces, use the profit sheet to determine the profits they receive from connecting the different places. Using Profits that they made from round one, have each student add more train tracks to his/her map. Remember each square is \$100- and they can only add tracks if they have enough money! Continue the game for 5 rounds, then have the students tell a story with their train maps of what goods they are bringing to which markets and why they connected the places that they did.





Railroad Baron Game Profit Sheet

Start Location End Location Profit

Ranch Town	Port Town	\$ 700
Ranch Town	Farm Town	\$ 300
Ranch Town	Big City	\$ 500
Ranch Town	Ranch Town	\$ 300

Farm Town	Port Town	\$ 300
Farm Town	Ranch Town	\$ 300
Farm Town	Big City	\$ 500
Farm Town	Farm Town	\$ 300

Mining Town	Big City	\$ 700
Mining Town	Farm Town	\$ 500
Mining Town	Ranch Town	\$ 300

Port Town	Big City	\$ 500
Big City	Big City	\$ 300

Round 1 Profit: _____

Round 2 Profit _____

Round 3 Profit _____

Round 4 Profit _____

Round 5 Profit _____

SHARECROPPER PHOTO ANALYSIS

TEK Alignments:

§113.15. Social Studies, Grade 4

(4) History. The student understands the political, economic, and social changes in Texas during the last half of the 19th century. The student is expected to:

A. describe the impact of the Civil War and Reconstruction on Texas

(8) Geography. The student understands how people adapt to and modify their environment. The student is expected to:

(A) describe ways people have adapted to and modified their environment in Texas, past and present, such as timber clearing, agricultural production, wetlands drainage, energy production, and construction of dams;

Learning Objectives: After completing this activity, the student will be able to:

- Accurately describe what a sharecropper is and what their life was like on the farm.
- Understand the injustice of sharecropping as a legalized form of slavery.

Materials:

- Photograph attached
- Question sheet

Description:

After studying the attached photograph and with your knowledge gained through the Freedmen to Farmers Program, answer the following questions:

Who are the people in this photograph? Can you tell?

What does this picture tell you about the people who worked as sharecroppers?

How does sharecropping differ from a system of slavery?

What crop is the family gathering? Why was it important to the Texas economy?



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE BRISCOE CENTER FOR AMERICAN HISTORY UT AUSTIN

MAKE YOUR OWN BLACKSMITH SHOP

TEK Alignments:

§113.15. Social Studies, Grade 4, Adopted 2018

(11) Economics. The student understands patterns of work and economic activities in Texas. The student is expected to: (D) explain how developments in transportation and communication have influenced economic activities in Texas.

Learning Objectives: After completing this activity, the student will be able to:

Materials:

- Blank sheet of paper and pencil
- List of steel and tools attached

Description:

Despite industrialization taking away a large part of the role of the local blacksmiths, these tradesmen were still an important part of the community who often operated as repairmen, farriers, and artisans. This module requires some role playing and thinking skills.

Put your students in the role of a late 19th century blacksmith setting up shop in a new town. First, they must decide whether they will set up shop; in a rural town for a city center.

Next, they need to know what they are going to specialize in.

- What will you make and sell? What type of blacksmith will you be? (example: wagon maker, tool maker, ferrier, chainmaker, bladesmith, gunsmith, plowmaker). Take into consideration where you want to set your shop as you answer this question, it will help you determine what type customers you will receive).

After, they will have to include certain items and tools in their shop in order to make goods for the local community. They have up to ten slots in their shop that they can fill with tools and equipment.

- A. What tools and supplies will you use? Take into consideration the type of steel and tools that will work best for the items you want to make.
 - a. Decide what kinds of tools you want to use. Start with what kind of forge and what kind of air source (blower or bellows). Then decide on the type of anvil(s), hammer(s). After that fill the remaining slots with the other tools you may want to use such as a swage block, mandrels, drill press, files, bar stocks, silver etc.

Fill the slots

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

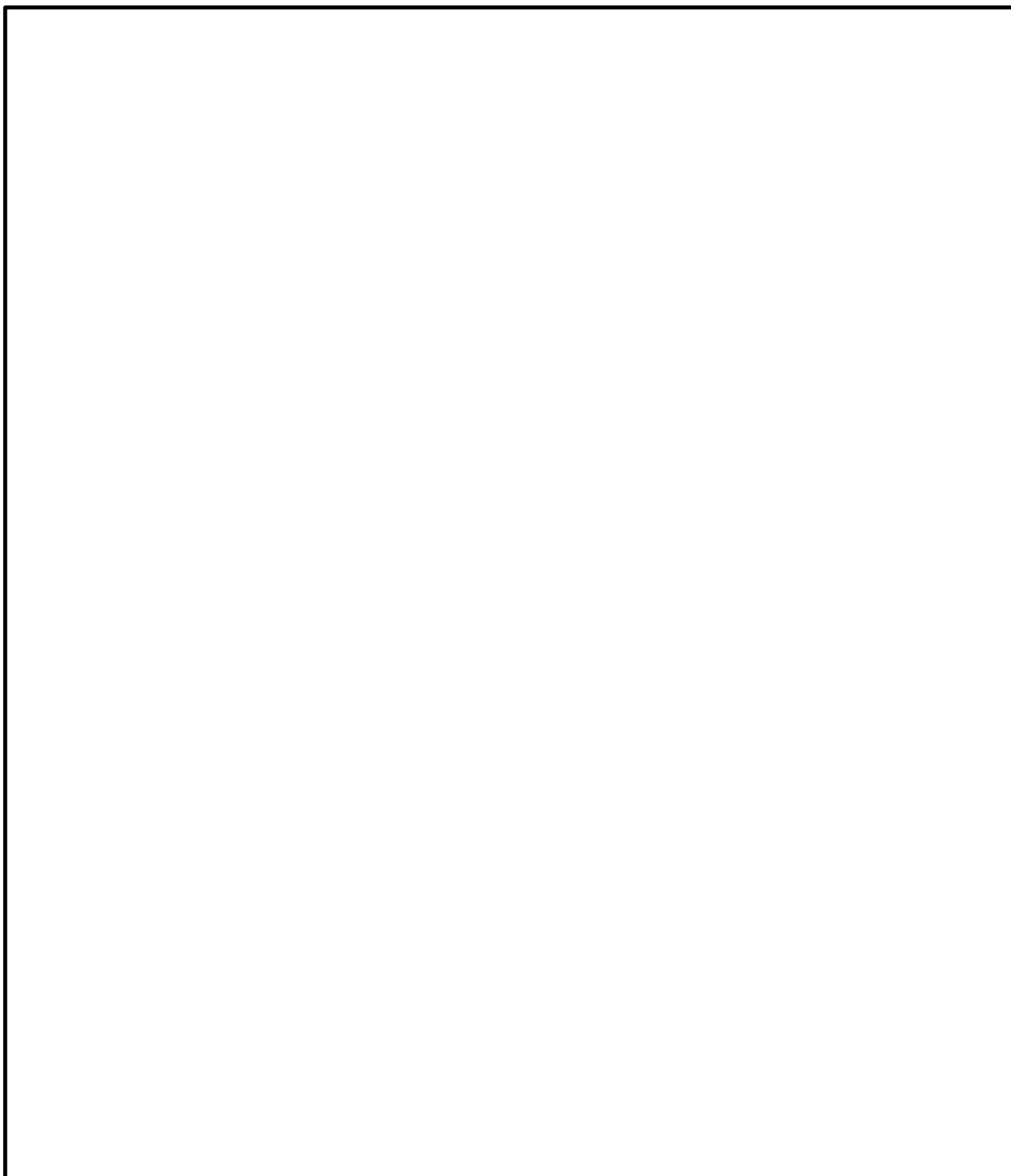
7.

8.

9.

10.

Draw your shop and fit all the items you have selected into it. If you're using a travel forge try to see how you will fit all your items on your wagon.



Types of iron or steel

Low carbon steel/ mild steel - A category of steel usually containing between 0.04% to 0.30% carbon. Used for making steel items that aren't subject to high stress. Easiest steel to form, cut, and bend.

Medium carbon steel - Contains 0.31% to 0.61% Carbon, and 0.60% to 1.65% manganese. Stronger than mild steel but harder to form, cut, and bend. Can be hardened and tempered through heat treatment.

High carbon steel - Contains 0.61% to 1.50 % carbon, and 0.30% to 0.90% Manganese. Hardest to form, and very difficult to cut and bend. Once it is heat treated it becomes very hard but brittle.

Machinery steel - A low carbon steel that is easy to be machined. Hardest to form, cut and bend.

Structural steel - A low carbon steel that is used for making construction materials.

Spring steel - Medium carbon or high carbon steels with high yield strength. Used in the manufacturing of springs.

Tool steel - High hardness, abrasive resistant steel. Often used for making tools for cutting, impact applications such as hammer , and a common steel that is used for knives. Tool Steels are extremely hard and are quite often used to form other metal products.

Tools

Hammers

- a. Ball peen
- b. Straight peen
- c. Cross peen
- d. Rounding hammer

Tools for shaping

- e. Anvil
- f. Swage block
- g. Swages
- h. Mandrel
- i. Punches (choose the size of the punch)
- j. Hot-cut Chisel
- k. Cold-cut Chisel
- l. Drill press

Flux for welding

Grinding

- m. Grindstone
- n. Files
- o. Sandpaper

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES



BLACKBERRY PIE RECIPE

While blackberries can be found native all over the world, here in Texas they grow wild on the prairie. This fruit would have been readily available in the springtime for picking, jamming and baking in a delicious pastry. Using these simple ingredients make yourself a slice of history!

Ingredients

- 4 cups fresh blackberries
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup white sugar, divided
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 (9 inch) double crust ready-to-use pie crust
- 2 tablespoons milk

Directions

- **Step 1**
Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C).
- **Step 2**
Combine 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of blackberries with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar and flour in a large bowl. Spoon mixture into the unbaked pie crust. Spread remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup berries on top of sweetened berries, and cover with the top crust. Seal and crimp the edges, and cut vents in the top crust for steam to escape.
- **Step 3**
Brush the top crust with milk and sprinkle with remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar.
- **Step 4**
Bake pie in the preheated oven for 15 minutes. Reduce the temperature of the oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C) and bake until filling is bubbly and crust is golden brown, an additional 20 to 25 minutes. Cool on wire rack.



MAKE YOUR OWN STICK HORSE

Having a trusty steed when you are on a cattle drive is an important tool for any cowboy worth his salt! Make your own stick horse and join in the classroom cattle drive!

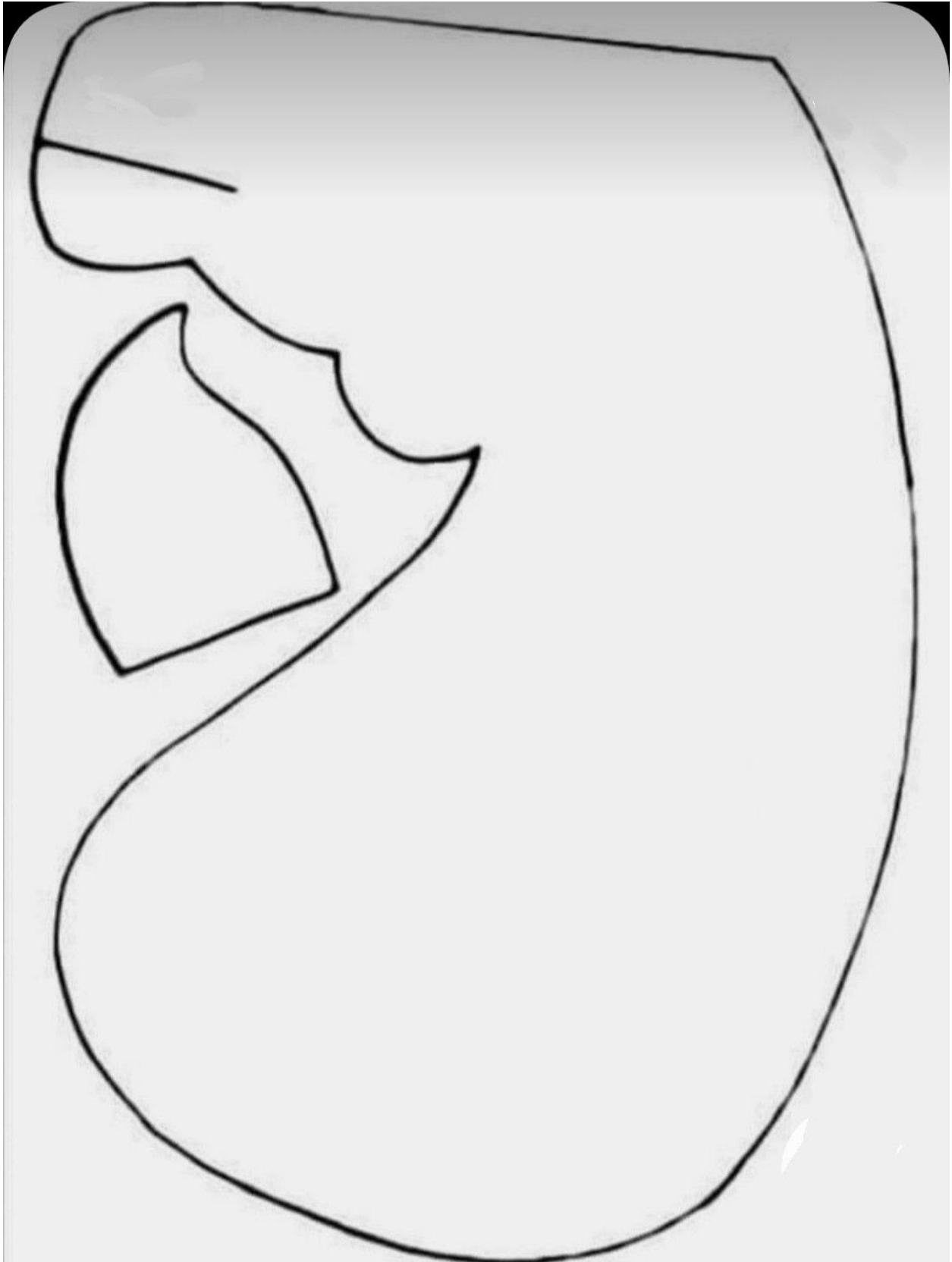
Materials:

- A brown paper shopping bag
- Colored crepe paper
- Glue stick
- Googly eyes X2
- Large popsicle stick
- Marker
- Scissors

Instructions:

- Using the template, cut out 2 horse heads and ears. Glue them together aligning the popsicle stick at the base of the neck, in between the 2 pieces. Then glue on the ears.
- Cut 4 pieces of crepe paper, 2 for the mane and 2 for the forelock. Glue on each side of horse head. Carefully snip the crepe paper to create hair.
- Glue the 2 googly eyes on the horse's face. Draw in the nostrils and mouth.

You're burning daylight! Get on your pony and ride that Chisolm Trail!



PLANT A SEED!

Growing a seed at home is an easy way to learn about plant life cycles and what it takes to be a farmer!

Materials:

- Paper egg carton
- Scissors
- Potting soil
- Spoon
- Seeds (hardware store)
 - (easiest is oregano or basil)
- Water
- Spray bottle

Instructions:

- Carefully cut the egg carton in half.
- Using the spoon, fill the egg cups with soil and press firmly.
- With your pinky finger, make a small divot in the soil for you to place your seed.
- Place your seed in each one of the cups.
- Cover with a small spoon of soil.
- Fill a spray bottle with water and gentle spray your egg carton with water.
- Check the carton for dryness and spray when needed. Keep in sunlight but not direct.
- Watch your plants grow!



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

During the late 19th century, innovation and discovery paved the way for Texas to become the economic powerhouse of the early 20th century. While farming and ranching have always been a major part of the Texas economy, the closing in of the prairies led to the discovery of oil and natural gas that sustained the Texas way of life through the Depression and both World Wars.

For more information on cattle drives, the closing of the Prairie and the dominance of the Texas railroad system, use <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook>

For a short history of sharecropping see <https://texancultures.utsa.edu/cabin/history/>

For information on railroads

<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/exhibits/railroad/beginnings/page2.html#:~:text=Finally%2C%20in%201853%2C%20the%20Buffalo,Other%20railroads%20soon%20followed.>

Other resources:

Briscoe Center for American History, Austin <https://briscoecenter.org/>

The Bullock Museum of Texas History <https://www.thestoryoftexas.com/>