

Get the Point

Objective

Students will read about longhorn cattle and answer comprehension questions. Students will measure the spans of longhorn horns from pictures included with this lesson and convert the measurements. Students will answer questions from a chart about numbers of cattle driven to market between 1867 and 1881 and graph the information.

Background

Ranching was developed by the Spanish, who taught it to the people who lived in the area we now know as Mexico. In the beginning, ranch hands did all their work on foot. Only the privileged Spanish ranchers rode horses. In time, the ranchers discovered their workers needed to move more quickly to avoid the deadly long horns and feisty temperaments of their cattle. So the Mexican *vaqueros*, or cowboys, became skilled riders. They were the models for the American cowboy.

The first American cowboys rounded up wild longhorn cattle in Texas Territory and drove them north to railway stops like Dodge City, Kansas. There the cattle would be herded into railroad cars and sent to the eastern United States to provide meat for the people living there.

Many of the longhorns that made the first cattle drives were gathered in a criminal way. Texas cowboys would cross into Mexico, gather wandering cattle, and drive them back across the Rio Grande River into land not governed by Mexican laws. The longhorns may have been marked in some fashion by the *vaqueros*—by ear notching or branding—but in Texas Territory it did not matter.

Eventually ranch wars over longhorn cattle erupted along the river. Hired cowboys on both sides of the river would cross to steal longhorns, only to have them stolen back by cowboys on the other side. Many cowboys were killed in these wars.

One of the most famous longhorn steers, Old Blue, was owned by Charles Goodnight, a Texas rancher who blazed the Goodnight - Loving Trail to make way for other ranchers who would come later. Old Blue was a lead steer. One characteristic of cattle and other herd animals is that they always follow the lead of a dominant member. These natural leaders are the first to cross streams, gullies and other obstacles, showing the others the way.

Old Blue made the long trek from West Texas to Dodge City eight times, leading an estimated 10,000 head of cattle. After his last cattle drive, Old Blue was turned out to live his final days in leisure, in a pasture near the Goodnight Ranch. When he died, his massive horns were mounted and hung in the Goodnight ranch office.

Oklahoma Academic Standards

GRADE 3

Social Studies: 4.6

Speaking and Listening: R.1,2,3,4; W.1,2. Reading and Writing Process: R.1,3. Critical Reading and Writing: R.7.

Vocabulary: R.1,3,5

Measurement: 2.3,4. Data: 1.1

GRADE 4

Social Studies: 1.4,5

Speaking and Listening: R.1,2,3,4; W.1,2. Reading and Writing Process: R.1,3,4. Critical Reading and Writing: R.7.

Vocabulary: R.1,3,5

Measurement: 2.4. Data: 1.1,2

GRADE 5

Speaking and Listening: R.1,2,3,4; W.1,2. Reading and Writing Process: R.1,3.

Vocabulary: R.1,3,5

Measurement: 3.2,3. Data: 1.1

Vocabulary

adapt—to make or become suitable

brand—a mark indicating identity or ownership, burned, tattooed or painted on an animal's coat or hide

ear notching—cutting notches into an animal's ears for identification purposes

feisty—having or showing a lively aggressiveness

feral—domesticated animal living in the wild

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

ranching—the work involved in raising and caring for livestock

temperament—disposition

vaqueros—Mexican cowboys

English Language Arts/Social Studies

1. Read and discuss background and vocabulary.
2. Hand out copies of the reading worksheet, "Get the Point."
—As a class, read the brief history of longhorn cattle and discuss their effect on the American cattle industry.
—Students will use the information to answer the questions.
—Discuss student answers as a class.

Math

1. Review with students the steps required to measure an item and to convert the information into real numbers using a scale measurement.
2. Hand out copies of the "Measuring Longhorn Horns" worksheet included with this lesson.
—Students will follow directions on the worksheet. Measurements will vary, depending on the printer used.
3. Hand out the chart showing the number of cattle driven to market between 1867 and 1881.
—Students will use the information to answer the questions.
—Ask students if they can think of reasons for the change in numbers. (For the first five years, the number of longhorn cattle leaving Texas increased steadily. An oversupply brought prices down dramatically, and two years later a crippling depression hit.)
—Students will use an appropriate graphing tool to organize their data (Excel spread sheet, line plot, pictograph.) Review graphing information from the "Additional Resources" section on the OAITC website.

Extra Reading

McPherson, James M., *Into the West*, Atheneum, 2006.

Murdoch, David Hamilton, *Cowboy*, Eyewitness Books, Knopf, 1993.

Schlissel, Lillian, *Black Frontiers: A History of African American Heroes in the Old West*, Simon and Schuster for Young Readers, 2000.

Name _____

Get the Point

Longhorn cattle come from cattle that Christopher Columbus brought to the New World on his second visit, in 1493. The cattle were a source of fresh meat for early Spanish settlers. Cattle were also used for trading. The cattle were allowed to roam in the wide open spaces of the New World. Over time, some of the cattle roamed away. These untamed, or feral, longhorns crossed between Mexico and Texas Territory because there were no fences to stop them.

Soldiers returning from the Civil War heard stories of fat cattle roaming free. Many were eager to round up their own herds of longhorns and become ranchers. Longhorns adjust easily to weather changes and will try to eat all types of grasses. They are a healthy breed and can travel a great distance without much water.

The market for cattle grew as the demand for fresh beef grew. The beginning of refrigeration also caused the demand for cattle to grow. The increase in railroads drove the price of cattle up, too. To sell the cattle, they had to be taken to the railroad stops. There they could be loaded and shipped to the eastern states. To get the cattle to market in Kansas, cowboys in Texas had to walk them. This was the start of the cattle drives of the Old West.

- 1. What is an antonym for the word “feral?”**
- 2. What does it mean that longhorns “adjust” easily to weather changes? Look in a dictionary to see if your definition was correct.**
- 3. Explain why soldiers returning from the Civil War would be interested in rounding up longhorn cattle.**
- 4. What three things drove up the price of cattle after the Civil War? Name some things that might drive up prices today.**
- 5. Look on a map of the US to see where the cattle had to walk to get from Texas to Kansas. What state or states did they have to walk through?**
- 6. Write a summary of this reading selection and list the most significant details.**

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.

Name _____

Get the Point (answers)

Longhorn cattle come from cattle that Christopher Columbus brought to the New World on his second visit, in 1493. The cattle were a source of fresh meat for early Spanish settlers. Cattle were also used for trading. The cattle were allowed to roam in the wide open spaces of the New World. Over time, some of the cattle roamed away. These untamed, or feral, longhorns crossed between Mexico and Texas Territory because there were no fences to stop them.

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1. What is an antonym for the word “feral?”

The word “tame” is an antonym for the word “feral.”

2. What does it mean that longhorns “adjust” easily to weather changes? Look in a dictionary to see if your definition was correct.

Longhorns can get along, or survive, in any kind of weather.

3. Explain why soldiers returning from the Civil War would be interested in rounding up longhorn cattle. Soldiers returning from the war were young men looking for a way to make a living. They could make money by rounding up the cattle and driving them to the railway stops in Kansas.

4. What three things drove up the price of cattle after the Civil War? Name some things that might drive up prices today.

The demand for fresh beef, the beginning of refrigeration and the increase in railroads drove the price of cattle up. Today high demand for a product and new technology can cause prices to go up.

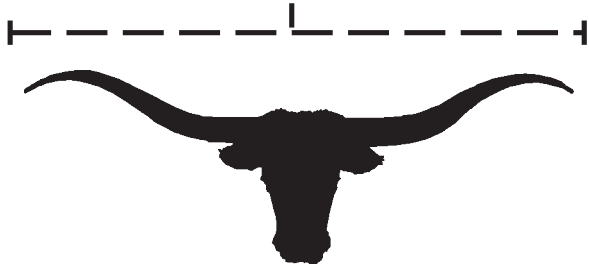
5. Look on a map of the US to see where the cattle had to walk to get from Texas to Kansas. What state or states did they have to walk through? The cattle had to walk through Oklahoma to get to Kansas

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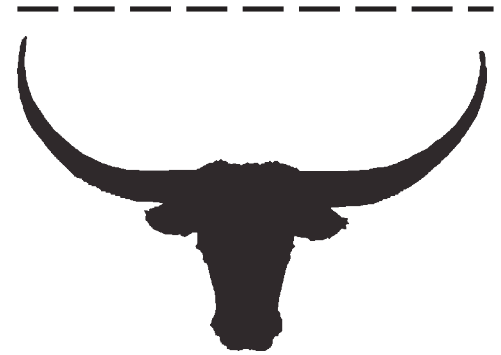
Name _____

Get the Point

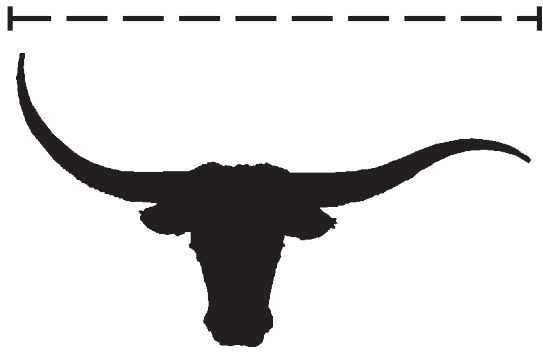
Measure the span between the tips of each longhorn's horns. Measure the spans in inches and then in centimeters. Convert inches into feet at the following scale: 1 inch = 2 feet.



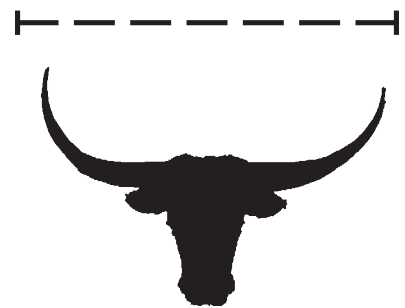
1. _____ inches
_____ centimeters
_____ feet



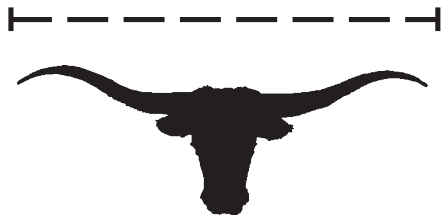
4. _____ inches
_____ centimeters
_____ feet



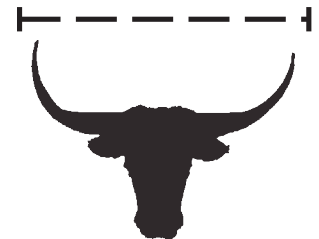
2. _____ inches
_____ centimeters
_____ feet



5. _____ inches
_____ centimeters
_____ feet



3. _____ inches
_____ centimeters
_____ feet

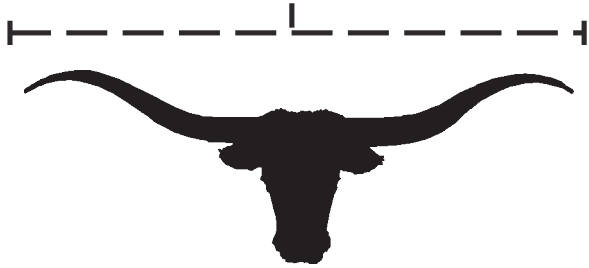


6. _____ inches
_____ centimeters
_____ feet

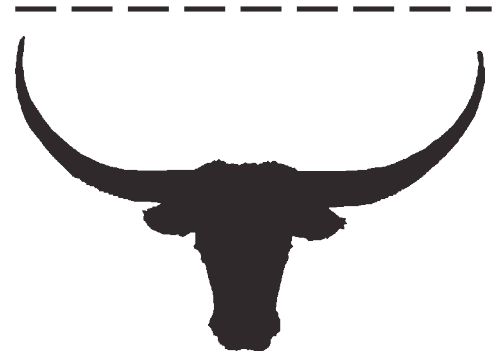
Name _____

Get the Point (Answers)

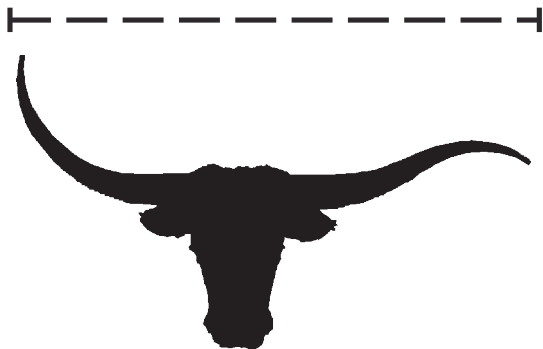
Measure the span between the tips of each longhorn's horns. Measure the spans in inches and then in centimeters. Convert inches into feet at the following scale: 1 inch = 2 feet.



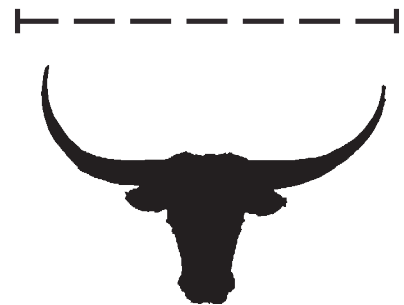
1. 3 inches
8 centimeters
6 feet



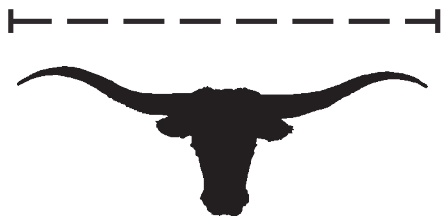
4. 2.5 inches
6 centimeters
5 feet



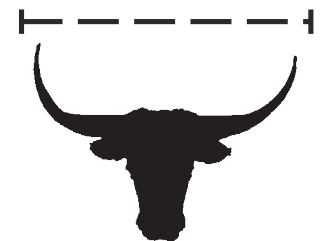
2. 2.75 inches
7 centimeters
5.5 feet



5. 2 inches
5 centimeters
4 feet



3. 2.25 inches
5.5 centimeters
4.5 feet



6. 1.5 inches
4 centimeters
3 feet

Name _____

Cattle Driven to Market, 1867–1881

1867	35,000
1868	75,000
1869	350,000
1870	300,000
1871	600,000
1872	350,000
1873	405,000
1874	166,000
1875	151,618
1876	321,998
1877	201,159
1878	265,646
1879	257,927
1880	394,784
1881	250,000



1. In which year were the most cattle shipped to market?
2. In which year were the fewest number of cattle shipped to market?
3. Write each number in expanded form.
4. Round each number to the nearest 1,000 and then estimate the total number of cattle that went to market during this 15-year period. Work in a small group to compare your answer with others in the group and form a consensus about the correct answer.
5. Calculate the range _____, mean _____, median _____ and mode _____.
6. Use this information to create a graph. Be sure to include a title and key if needed.

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Name _____

Cattle Driven to Market, 1867–1881

(answers)

1867	35,000
1868	75,000
1869	350,000
1870	300,000
1871	600,000
1872	350,000
1873	405,000
1874	166,000
1875	151,618
1876	321,998
1877	201,159
1878	265,646
1879	257,927
1880	394,784
1881	250,000

1. In which year were the most cattle shipped to market? 1871
2. In which year were the fewest number of cattle shipped to market? 1867
3. Write each number in expanded form.
4. Round each number to the nearest 1,000 and then estimate the total number of cattle that went to market during this 15-year period. Work in a small group to compare your answer with others in the group and form a consensus about the correct answer. 4,114,000
5. Calculate the range 215,000, mean 274,266.66, median 265,646 and mode 350,000.
6. Use this information to create a graph. Be sure to include a title and key if needed.