

# Trouble on the Trail

## Objective

TLW trace the history of ranching and identify problems and solutions to keeping the ranching industry alive during the 1870s and 1880s. Students will use decision-making skills to solve problem situations on the ranch.

## TEKS

History 4.4(B), Social Studies 4.24, Geography 4.9(A)

## Building Background

In the 1860s, prior to the establishment of the Four Sixes Ranch, the Civil War had ended and Texas soldiers returned to find an incredible number of unclaimed Longhorn cattle roaming the countryside. Soon ranchers were gathering cattle and driving them to markets in Kansas and Colorado. Burk Burnett was one of the first ranchers in Texas to buy steers and graze them for market.

However, as ranchers expanded westward in the 1870s and 1880s, they experienced many ups and downs that threatened the development of the industry.

Discuss: Using the lists below, discuss the positive and negative situations that Burk Burnett and other ranchers may have experienced during the 1870s and 1880s.

### Challenges of the Rancher:

- Extreme blizzards caused the loss of thousands of cattle.
- Drought forced ranchers to move their herds elsewhere.
- An economic crisis gripped the entire nation in the Panic of 1873. Banks failed, factories were closed, and thousands of workers lost their jobs.
- There was an urgent need to find fresh grazing land.
- The open range closed and barbed wire fencing forced ranchers to purchase large amounts of land.
- Foreign businessmen (particularly English and Scottish) with large amounts of money purchased much of the available land.
- The cost of driving cattle to market was extremely high.
- Cattle profits, once sold at market, were extremely low.
- An estimated 50% of cattlemen in Texas dropped out of the cattle business between 1890 and 1895.

### Victories of the Rancher:

- A successful negotiation with Comanche Chief Quanah Parker for the lease of Indian lands resulted in 300,000 acres of grassland for grazing cattlemen's herds.
- President Theodore Roosevelt approved an expansion on the land lease. Grazing rights were granted for two additional years.
- Oil was discovered on many ranches, which brought in more money to purchase additional ranch land.
- The Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association was formed to help struggling ranchers solve problems. Solutions included encouraging registration, and branding,

- immunizing livestock and alternating grazing pastures for higher yields.
- Free rangers raced to West Texas to claim free public grazing lands.
- The windmill gave the rancher the freedom to use all of his land, even without surface water because of an abundant area resource—the wind.

#### Procedure

Students will learn about the hardships and victories ranchers faced in the late 1800s as they play the board game, “Get Along Little Dogies.”

Materials for each team:

Game board activity sheet, 1 die, situation cards, pipe cleaners, play money

- Divide students into groups of four. Using pipe cleaners or other flexible material, students will make their brand, which will be used to move around the game board.
- Roll the die to determine who goes first. The highest roller begins the game.
- Each player will roll the die, move the allotted number of spaces, draw a situation card and follow the directions on the card.
- The first player to reach Abilene, Kansas, and sell their cattle for the highest price wins.

#### Summary

Discuss: Based on the positive and negative situations ranchers faced in the 1870s and 1880s, would you have chosen to be in the ranching business if you lived during that time period? Why or why not?

#### Extend



##### Write About It!

Students will use decision-making skills to solve a problem on the ranch. Each student will draw a (problem) situation card. If you were appointed manager of the ranch, how would you solve the problem?





# Get Along Little Dogies

## Situation Game Cards

<p>Extreme blizzards. 6,000 head of cattle lost. Go back 3 spaces.</p>	<p>Drought forces you to move the herd elsewhere. Go back 2 spaces.</p>	<p>Panic of 1873. Banks failed, jobs lost. Go back 1 space.</p>
<p>Urgent need to find fresh grazing land. Go back 3 spaces.</p>	<p>Open range is closed and land is fenced with barbed wire. Go back 2 spaces.</p>	<p>English and Scottish businessmen purchase large amounts of land. Go back 1 space.</p>
<p>High costs driving cattle to market. Go back 3 spaces.</p>	<p>Low cattle profits. Go back 2 spaces.</p>	<p>50% of cattlemen in Texas drop out of the business and you're one of them. Go back to START.</p>
<p>Land agreements with the Comanche people secure 300,000 acres of grazing land. Move forward 3 spaces.</p>	<p>President Roosevelt grants extension on land lease for two additional years. Move forward 2 spaces.</p>	<p>Oil is discovered on your land. Move ahead 5 spaces.</p>
<p>Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Assn. helps struggling ranchers. Move ahead 2 spaces.</p>	<p>Free rangers race to West Texas to claim free public land. Move ahead 3 spaces.</p>	<p>Use of the windmill gives ranchers access to abundant water. Move ahead 2 spaces.</p>
<p>You inherited 800 acres from your great uncle. Go ahead 3 spaces.</p>	<p>Cattle prices are up. Go ahead 2 spaces.</p>	<p>Rainfall is good and grazing grass is abundant. Move ahead 1 space.</p>

<p><b>START</b></p> 
<p><b>SKIP A TURN</b></p>

<p><b>ROLL AGAIN</b></p>

<p><b>YOUR CATTLE SOLD FOR \$6,000 GO AHEAD 1 SPACE</b></p>
<p><b>BIG WINNER!</b></p> <p><b>COLLECT \$8,000 FINISH</b></p>



<p><b>GO BACK 2 SPACES</b></p>



**GET  
ALONG  
LITTLE  
DOGIES**