

# The Long Drive

Many years ago, ranch owners needed to send their cattle hundreds of miles to 'cow towns' where they would be sold. Every year it was the cowboys' job to round up all the cattle and take them in large herds to the cow town. This was known as 'the long drive'.

The drive was a challenge for all cowboys. Their day began at 4.00am and ended after dark. Even then some had to stand on guard during the night.

The average herd was made up of about 3000 cattle and the cowboys were responsible for keeping them safe all the way.

The cowboys worked as a team but each had his own job to do (see diagram).



The **trail boss** was in charge. He gave orders, checked the herd and then rode ahead to find water. He decided where the camp would be made and generally took care of the men. He rode at the front of the herd.



The **pointers** were also experienced riders. They led the herd when the trail boss went ahead to look for water or a camp.



The **swing** and **flank** men rode at the side to keep the herd together.



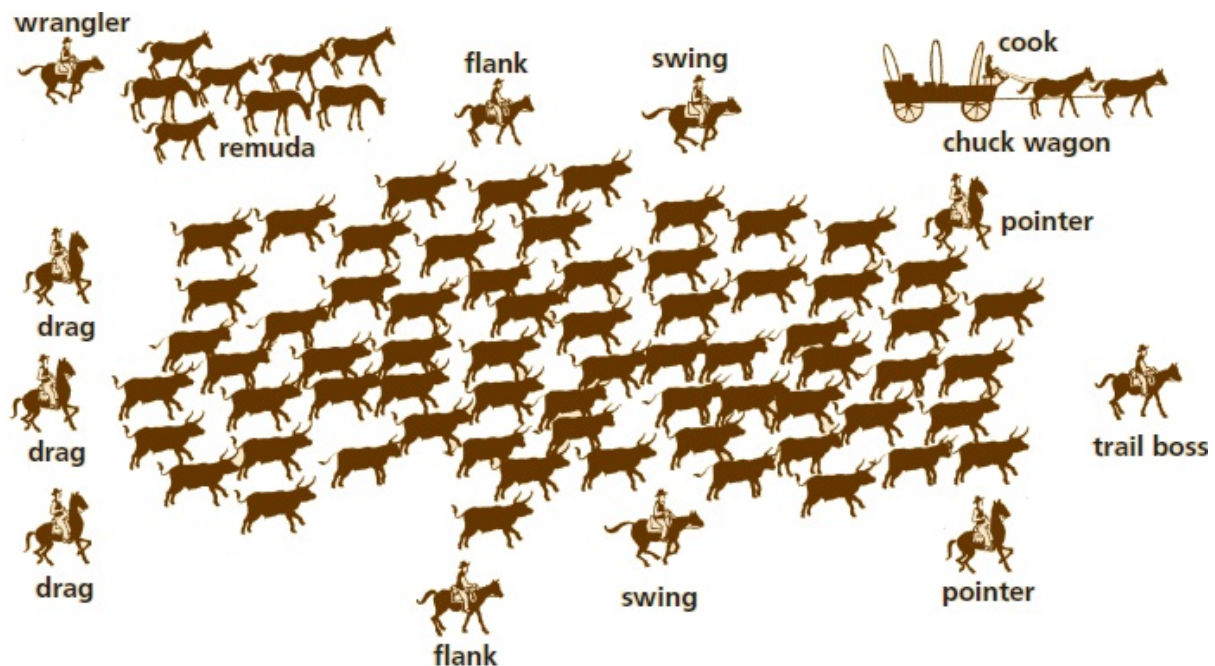
The **drag** men were at the back. This was the worst job because they were covered in dust from the herd in front.



The **wranglers** were the youngest and most inexperienced cowboys on the drive. They carried messages up and down the line and looked after the **remuda**, the spare horses.



The **cook** drove the **chuck wagon** and produced the food for the cowboys wherever they camped.



# Difficulties and Dangers

**Rounding up the cattle was very dangerous and the cowboys needed to be agile riders. On the long drive, there were many risks.**

## **Rivers**

Crossing rivers was often dangerous, especially if they were swollen by rain or there were quicksands.

## **Stampedes**

A sudden noise might make the whole herd of cattle stampede, rushing along out of control. Stopping a stampede was dangerous work – cowboys tried to drive the cattle into a circle to slow them down.

## **Weather**

Blistering hot winds or torrential rain and hailstones often made the conditions unpleasant.

## **Rustlers**

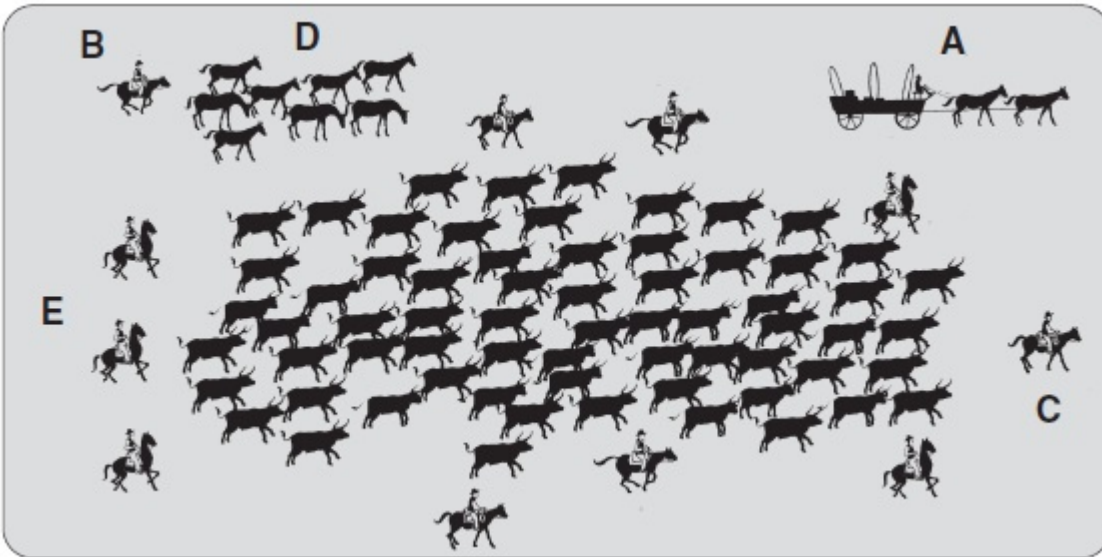
These were people who set out to steal the cattle.

2

What job in the team would the youngest cowboy have?

---

1 mark



Match each statement to a letter on the diagram.

One has been done for you.

the youngest cowboy

B

the cowboys who had the worst job

the cowboy who made the meals

the spare horses

the cowboy in charge

1 mark

4

Look at the text in *The Long Drive* above the diagram.

What is the purpose of this section?

Tick **one**.

to explain how difficult the work of the cowboys is

☐

to explain the roles of the riders

☐

to show how many animals had to be moved

☐

to tell you the order of what happens on the long drive

☐

1 mark

5

Look at *The Difficulties and Dangers* section.

Why did the cowboys have to guard the cattle at night?

---

1 mark

6

*...cowboys needed to be agile riders.*

Give the meaning of the word *agile* in this sentence.

---

1 mark

7

This text tells us some of the difficulties cowboys face in their work.

Using what you have read, explain what you think cowboys might **like** about their job.

---

---

---

2 marks

8

It says in the text that

*the cowboys worked as a team.*

What evidence of team work can you find in the text?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

3 marks

# THE RUSH FOR GOLD

Gold is a very beautiful and valuable metal and has been used for centuries in the exchange of goods. From the earliest times, men and women have searched for gold, willing to travel for hundreds of miles and live in poverty, hoping to find gold and 'get rich quick'.

A 'gold rush' is when hundreds of people travel to the same place after gold has been discovered there. It starts very suddenly when news of the discovery of gold spreads. There have been gold rushes in different places all over the world.

A famous gold rush occurred in 1897 in a remote part of Canada called the Yukon. The Yukon is a very cold region where the average winter temperature is  $-28^{\circ}\text{C}$  but it can sometimes drop to a dangerously cold  $-50^{\circ}\text{C}$ . (Compare this to an average English winter temperature of  $3^{\circ}\text{C}$ .)

On 16th August 1896 a group of prospectors\* located gold in the Yukon, near a town called Dawson. They immediately claimed the area as their own. Local people then started looking for gold and were equally lucky. These early prospectors and the local people owned all the gold they found and became very wealthy.

Because the Yukon is very isolated and difficult to reach, it took nearly a year for news about the discovery of gold to leak out to people in the rest of the world. When people heard, a race to reach the Yukon began. These gold-seekers were so desperate for wealth that they travelled through harrowing and dangerous conditions to get it.

*\*People who search for gold are called prospectors.*





The journey was very long and very cold. The cheapest way of travelling was on foot or by horse. However, horses could not travel up the steep and icy mountains so the gold-seekers were forced to carry the food and supplies themselves. Mountains were not the only difficulty they had to face. There were wild animals and raging rivers as well as extreme weather conditions. Many gold-seekers died, fell ill or lost enthusiasm and either stopped where they were or turned back.

Approximately 100,000 gold-seekers set off to the Yukon. Only 30,000 completed the journey.

Unfortunately, of those who actually made it to Dawson, few found the riches they had hoped for. By the time most arrived, all the land and the gold in it had been claimed. The gold-seekers' dreams were shattered.

*Now, many people travel to the Yukon in search not of gold, but of a unique holiday experience. Instead of inns where the lucky few could celebrate their success, there are jewellery shops, whose owners are hoping to get a share of the tourists' spending money.*

### **These are quotations from people who took part in the Yukon Gold Rush.**

*We got up at five this morning ... There are hundreds of people here dragging or carrying their supplies, all striving to reach the Yukon. Some have horses and still others have dog teams, but most of them act as their own horses.*

Inga Kolloen's diary, March 21, 1898,  
on the Dyea Trail

*This may have begun as an exciting adventure, and seemed exceedingly romantic, but digging for gold is downright hard labour. I don't know anymore if it's really worth it.*

Letter written by Alfred Green

*Ice cream would be a hot drink here.  
Oil is frozen in the cans.*

Diary of Edward C. Adams,  
January 16, 1901, Yukon Territory



10

Using information from the text, tick one box in each row to show whether each statement is **true** or **false**.

	true	false
The Yukon is part of the United States of America		
The average winter temperature in the Yukon is $-28^{\circ}\text{C}$ .		
Gold was found in the Yukon in 1896.		
People from Dawson also found gold in the area.		
100,000 gold-seekers arrived in the Yukon.		

2 marks

11

What hardships did people face on the journey to the Yukon?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

3 marks

12

*Many gold seekers died, fell ill or lost **enthusiasm**...*

Give the meaning of the word *enthusiasm* in this sentence.

\_\_\_\_\_

1 mark

**13**

Number these events 1 - 5 to show the order in which they appear in the text.

One has been done for you.

seekers started the journey

prospectors located gold

30,000 people completed the journey

people died

news leaked out

1 mark

**14**

If you went to the Yukon today, where would it be easiest to find gold?

Tick **one**.

in the streams

☐

in the ground

☐

in the jewellery shops

☐

in the mountains

☐

1 mark

15

Look at the paragraph beginning: *Because the Yukon is very isolated...*

What does the word *leak* suggest about the way the news spread?

---

---

---

2 marks