



National Park Service
with **Teaching MUSEUM Collections**
Management Program
<http://www.cr.nps.gov/museum>

Teaching with Museum Collections
I Want To Be A Cowboy Hat
March 2003/May 2004

❑ **Overview of the *Teaching with Museum Collections* initiative**

The National Park Service [NPS] *Teaching with Museum Collections* [TMC] introduces lesson plans for teachers to use NPS museum collections in student-centered activities. NPS museum collections tell the story of America, its peoples, cultures, varied habitats, significant events, and ideas that continue to inspire the world. Collections are located in the very places where people and events shaped the nation's history and environment. *TMC* emphasizes the links between the 'real things,' the collections, and the sites where those collections were found, collected, or used. NPS collections include cultural objects, natural history specimens and archival documents and photographs. *TMC* lesson plans contribute student-centered learning while increasing understanding of park themes and resources. *TMC* has the potential to be incorporated into over 320 NPS sites. Lesson plans will be developed for history, social studies, math, and language and visual arts. They will be linked to national education standards.

Lesson Plan Elements

❑ **I Want To Be A Cowboy Hat**

- Steve Medemar, Jim Konen, Bob Schalk

❑ **Grade Level: 8**

❑ **Length of Lesson: 45 minutes to 1 day**

❑ **Overview of object-based lesson plan**

- *Theme/Goal:* hat Understand the importance of the different styles, functions and importance of the cowboy hat in the western era.
- *Park name and collections:* Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site
- *Relevance:* Cowboy or Western hats are one of the unique trademarks of the cowboy. Hats of felt are worn in cold weather and straw hats are worn in hot weather. The important parts of a cowboy hat are the brim, crown, and crease. Felt is the material of choice for a cowboy hat for good reason. Felt is matted fur. Because it is matted, and the hairs run in all directions interlocking with each other, felt is stronger and lighter than woven materials. A water resistant fur / felt is desirable to help the hat hold its shape and shed water.
- *Teacher Information:*
Beaver and muskrat are the best and most expensive furs and felts. Rabbit, or a combination of rabbit with one of the other felts, is most common. Wool felt will not hold its shape. Nothing looks worse than a droopy cowboy hat. Felt hats are usually made of rabbit and beaver hair. The 5X, 10X, and 100X refers to the percentage of



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rabbit to beaver hair in the felt. Depending on the standards each hatter sets for their own product - a 5X hat might be all rabbit, a 10X hat 50% rabbit and 50% beaver, and a 100X hat 100% beaver.

1. Types of hats worn by cowboys during the late 19th century and early 20th century: a) Plainsman b) Sugar-loaf Sombrero c) Slouch hat d) Montana Peak e) Texas f) Bowler g) Wool hat
2. Cowboy Hat Functions: 1) Badge of individuality 2) Shade from sun 3) Fan a fire 4) Urge a horse to go faster (used as a riding crop) 5) Identification of origin of wearer 6) Umbrella against rain, hail, snow 7_ Carry water 8) Head cover 9) Worn to nap or sleep 10) Signal for help

□ **National educational standards**

Disciplinary Standards

- Social Studies

Montana Standards

- Social Studies Content Standard 1: Students access, synthesize and evaluate information to communicate and apply social studies knowledge to real world situations.

Benchmark 1: Apply the steps of an inquiry process (i.e. identify question or problem, locate and evaluate potential resources, gather and synthesize information, create a new product, and evaluate product and process).

Benchmark 2: Assess the quality of information (e.g. primary or secondary sources, point of view and embedded values of the author).

Benchmark 3: Interpret and apply information to support conclusions and use group decision making strategies to solve problems in real world situations (e.g. school elections, community projects, conflict resolution, role playing scenarios).

- Social Studies Content Standard 6: Students demonstrate an understanding of the impact of human interaction and cultural diversity on societies.

Benchmark 1: Interpret the past using a variety of sources (e.g. biographies, documents, diaries, eyewitnesses, interviews, internet, primary source material) and evaluate the credibility of sources used.

Benchmark 3: Use historical facts and concepts and apply methods of inquiry (e.g. primary documents, interviews, comparative accounts, research) to make informed decisions as responsible citizens.

Benchmark 4:



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❑ **Student Learning Objectives:**

- Students will be able to identify different styles of cowboy hats
- Students will be able to explain useful functions of the cowboy hat
- Students will learn the importance of role-playing Relating structure to function, classifying, cataloging
- Students will analyze the history of the cowboy

❑ **Materials/Objects and Collections:**

- Grant Kohrs traveling trunk
- Era cowboy hats, photos of cowboys and their hats, teacher collection of hats
- Western movies showing the different cowboys and their hats (teacher made), Each student will bring a cowboy hat
- Types of hats: "The Boss of the Plains" by J.B. Stetson - 1865 4" brim and 4" crown, "Dakota" by Stetson, Men's Panama Hat" by Montgomery Wards 1874 (not work hats), "Men's Planter's Hat" by Montgomery Wards 1878 (not work hats), "Buckskin Sombrero" 1883 - 5" brim and 4" crown, "Chief Moses" by Montgomery Wards 1900 - 3.5" brim and 5" crown, "The Denver" by Montgomery Wards 1910 - 3.5" brim and 5.5" crown, "Big Four Hat" by Montgomery Wards 1910 - 4" brim and 6" crown

❑ **Vocabulary**

Brim, Crown, Crease, Felt

❑ **Lesson Implementation/Procedure:**

1. Instruct students on the different kinds of cowboy hats by showing pictures and reproductions of different hats.
2. Break into small groups with each group is given a different style of hat. Instruct each group to create a short role-play about the cowboy under their specific cowboy hat.
3. Break into small groups with each group is a cowboy hat. Instruct each group to create a list of as many uses the cowboy had for his cowboy hat
4. Show pictures of cowboys in groups and have students identify the types of hats worn by each cowboy.
5. Show clips of different western movies or televisions shows and have student identify the different types of cowboy hat.

❑ **Assessment:**

1. Oral quiz over hat identification using individual hats provided by the Grant Kohrs traveling trunk.



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2. Short quiz on the functions of the cowboy hat discussed in class.

□ Enrichment Activities:

1. Compare and contrast the materials used in hat making, i.e. felts, straws, leather.
2. Discuss the style of cowboy hats considering geographic features.
3. Research cowboy hat manufactures such as Stetson, Montgomery Ward, etc.
4. Design and make your own cowboy hat

Resources

1. Grant Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site
Matt Connor, Chief Ranger and Interpreter
(406) 846-2070 ext. 230

2. Web sites

www.nps.gov/grko/home.htm Grant Kohrs Ranch:

<http://www.cowboystore.com>

<http://riverjunction.com>

http://www.randhats.com/hat_history4.htm

3. References:

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Foster-Harris. The Look of the Old West. New York: The Viking Press, 1955, p. 103 - 6.

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Murdoch, David. Dorling Kindersley Eyewitness Books: Cowboy. New York: DK Publishing, Inc., 2000, p. 20 - 1.