Branding

Goals:

* Students will learn how brands are designed and read.
* Students will learn why brands were important during cattle drives.

Objectives:

* Students will design their own brand and answer questions about branding.

Vocabulary:

* Brand: A permanent identification mark usually burned into the hide of an animal which is used to show ownership.
* Mavericks: Unbranded animals. Their ownership may be questioned when they are found separated from the herd.
* Rustler: Someone who steals cattle or other livestock. Rustlers may brand unmarked cattle with their own brand or alter any existing brand.

Pre-lab questions:

1. How are cattle used for food products? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. How are cattle used for household products? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. How are cattle used for leather?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. How are cattle used for fertilizer?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

History of Branding:

* A brand is a mark burned into an animal’s skin. Owners use brands, which never wear off, to identify their animals. The practice of branding is ancient. Some Egyptian tomb paintings at least 4,000 years old show scenes of roundups and cattle branding.
* The practice of branding came to the New World with the Spaniards, who brought the first cattle to New Spain (Mexico).
* Burning an identifying mark into the hide of an animal was the only method of marking that lasted the life of the animal, until the invention of the tattoo.
* Cattle are usually branded when they are calves. Brands are usually placed on the hindquarters, hip, shoulder or side.
* It takes several cowboys working together to brand each calf. Branding irons, which are long metal rods with identification figures on the end, are heated in a fire and then used to burn through hair to permanently mark the hide of the animal. When cattle are branded today, vaccinations are given at the same time to prevent certain diseases.
* Brand registration did not begin until the 1870s or 1880s. During this time, millions of cattle were moved on cattle drives from Texas through Oklahoma to Kansas to be shipped by rail to provide food for those living in the Eastern part of the United States. Cattle were driven to Kansas because railroads did not come through Texas or Oklahoma at that time.
* The land was not fenced, so it was not uncommon for cattle to wander away from the herd and become lost. Also, cattle might be stolen by rustlers. The brand would indicate the identity of the owner.
* Unmarked cattle are often called mavericks, after Sam Maverick, a Texas lawyer and politician. At one time, Mr. Maverick received cattle instead of cash to settle a fee for legal services. Although he hired a cowboy to brand his cattle, many of them were never marked. Over time, many of his cattle were stolen and marked with different owner’s brands.
* In Texas today, brands are registered with the Counties Clerk Office where your cattle will be located.
* Brand designs include combinations of letters, numerals, and other symbols, such as circles or boxes. Simple drawings of common subjects such as a heart or diamond are often used. Because of the numerous brands already registered, new brands often contain 3 characters. The ability to read a brand is known as “calling the brand.

How to Design and Read Brands

* Read brands from left to right, top to bottom, and outside to inside. Symbols, numbers and capital letters can be used. Letters and numbers are read as letters and numbers. A brand that looks like “51A” would be read “fifty-one A"
* Simple outlines of familiar objects, such as a quarter moon, sun, diamond, triangle, or heart, can be used. Often these relate to an owner’s name or interests.
* “­­” is read as bar; “\_\_\_\_\_” is read as rail; “/” is read as slash.
* Dashes can be added at the tops or bottoms of the letters to indicate wings or feet
	+ Flying- Dashes are placed at the top of the left and right of the letter
	+ Walking- Dashes are placed at the bottom of the letter.
* The position of the letters determines how the brand is read. For example:
	+ Tumbling- Letter is turned partially on its face or back
	+ Crazy- Letter is upside down
	+ Reverse- Letter is backwards
	+ Running- Letter is cursive
	+ Lazy- Letter is on its side in a horizontal position
	+ Rocking- Letter is placed so the lowest part touches the inside of a curve

Use the guidelines above to design your own brand and a brand for your achool. As you design your brand, think about your own interest and activities.

Please write the names of your brands and explain what they mean.

Assessment Questions

1. Unmarked cattle are often called\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. Why do cowboys brand cattle? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. Why were cattle driven from Texas to Kansas in the late 1800s? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
4. Someone who steals cattle or other livestock is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
5. Where on cattle are brands usually placed? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
6. Write the names of the following brand:

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

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

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