Lucille Mulhall: The First Cowgirl

Objective
The student will read about Lucille Mulhall, a famous cowgirl of Oklahoma Territory, and complete activities to connect, predict, motivate, summarize and strengthen vocabulary.

Materials
• small rings of jute (gardening twine), tied to look like lassos
• photos of western themes to be cut up for puzzles

Procedures
Note: A Powerpoint presentation is available on the OAITC website to aid in teaching this lesson: http://www.clover.okstate.edu/fourh/aitc/lessons/extras/audrey/mulhall/Lucille power point for AITC.pptx

1. Place the pictures of Lucille Mulhall participating in roping events included with this lesson on tables covered with paper
   — Students will rotate from one picture to the next at one-minute intervals.
   — Instruct students as follows:
     Look at the photos or text on your table.
     Use the markers to write words that come to your mind as you look at the picture or read the text.
     What is happening?
     What does this make you think of?
     What do you think we are going to read about?

2. Ask students what experiences they have had with horses, rodeo, roping, etc. What about movies they have seen or books they have read?
   — Show students the photo of Lucille Mulhall included with this lesson.
   — Students will use the first lasso column to make some predictions about Lucille Mulhall. (What are we getting ready to read? Where is the setting? Who are the characters? What action is taking place?)
   — Students will read the information on the Lucille Mulhall Reading Page and write correction notes in the second lasso column.
   — As they read, students will make notes on the lines provided of any words that are difficult to read and hard to understand.
   — Discuss the reading as a class.

3. Lasso Your Vocabulary Words
   — Identify Tier 2 words to emphasize. (Tier 1 are everyday words kids should know. You don’t have to teach them. Tier 3 are specifically for this subject, and won’t be used in everyday language too much. Tier 2 are more difficult than Tier 1, and show up in reading. They need to be taught.)
   — Provide students with a list of the Tier 2 vocabulary words included with this lesson.

Oklahoma Academic Standards

GRADE 3
History: 6,10
Speaking and Listening: R.1,2,3; W.1,2. Reading and Writing Process: R.2. Critical Reading and Writing: R.7; W.2. Vocabulary: R.1,3,5. Research: R.1,2,3,4; W.1,2,3

GRADE 4
Speaking and Listening: R.1,2,3; W.1,2. Reading and Writing Process: R.2. Critical Reading and Writing: R.7; W.2. Vocabulary: R.1,3,5. Research: R.1,2,3,4; W.1,2,3

GRADE 5
Speaking and Listening: R.1,2,3; W.1,2. Reading and Writing Process: R.2. Critical Reading and Writing: R.7; W.2. Vocabulary: R.1,3,5. Research: R.1,2,3,4; W.1,2,3

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—Review the words.
—Provide each student with a small “lasso” made of jute.
—Students will toss the lassos onto the reading page.
—Did they catch any of the vocabulary words? Ask them to read what they “caught” and any words before or after the vocabulary word. What clues do they see to help them understand the new word?

4. Vocabulary Foldable
—Students will fold a piece of paper into thirds lengthwise and then into 3, 4, or 6 rows crosswise, depending on how many vocabulary words you want to address that week.
—In the first column, students will write their vocabulary words.
—In the second column, students will write SHORT, kid-friendly definitions that your class creates.
—In the third column, students will draw pictures to help them remember the meaning of the word.

5. Pre-Writing Puzzler
—Cut apart western-themed photos to make puzzles.
—Divide class into two groups, and give one of the puzzles to each group.
—Students will put the puzzle together and begin to write words about what they see as they put it together, including descriptive words about the setting, the characters that begin to appear and what event or plot is taking place in the puzzle.
—These words will be their word bank for a group, paired, or individual writing activity.

6. Research: Students will use online or library resources to research and write short papers about topics related to the reading, including:
• Miller Brothers 101 Ranch
• Pawnee Bill
• Buffalo Bill
• Cowgirls
• Cowboys
• Cattle Trails
This is Lucille Mulhall. She was raised in Oklahoma and made a name for herself. Before reading the non-fiction article about her, make some predictions. Use the 2-column notes below.

TWO-COLUMN NOTES

predictions before reading

corrections after reading

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.
The golden age of the cowboy began in 1866 and ran for 25 years. Cattle were driven from Texas to the end of the railroad line in Kansas. Some of the cattle were transported further north to satisfy the increasing demand for beef across the nation.

Women were involved in the early stages of cattle drives, but in fewer numbers than men, and without as much recognition. Most contributed by way of their family work and a few ran ranches of their own. Their pioneering spirit created the legend of the cowgirl.

Cowgirls had a challenging beginning. Many people thought working a ranch was not acceptable work for a lady. Oklahoma’s own Lucille Mulhall defied that tradition. As a small girl, she rode her pony over her father’s large ranch in Oklahoma Territory. She learned to rope and tie a steer and to shoot a rifle. Her teachers were the men who rode herd in the cattle drives of the Old West. Lucille also refused to ride sidesaddle, as was the tradition for women at that time. She was even among the first women to wear a divided skirt, to make her riding easier. (Women did not wear pants back then.)

By the time she was seven, Lucille had her own herd of cattle. Her father had promised she could have all the yearlings she could rope and brand herself. He soon had to get out of this bargain because Lucille had claimed too many calves.

The age of the cowboy began to wind down after homesteaders moved onto the range and began building fences. Cowboys and cowgirls looking for work found employment in rodeos and wild west shows. They provided frontier entertainment to settlers. Buffalo Bill, Pawnee Bill and many other promoters gathered cowgirls, cowboys and Indians for performances featuring shooting, riding and roping expertise. Annie Oakley is probably the best known of the cowgirls, but Lucille Mulhall made a name for herself, too.

Cowgirls working in the Wild West Shows often sewed and decorated their own outfits. Many times husband and wife teams would perform together in the shows to earn extra money. Many cowgirls even met their husbands while working in the shows.

Lucille got her start in show business as the star of her father’s “Congress of Rough Riders and Ropers” at the 1899 St. Louis World’s Fair. The show also featured the young Will Rogers.

After she threw and tied a steer at an El Paso roping, the rodeo crowd went wild and swarmed over her, trying to tear her clothes to see if she was really a girl. Her brother had to rescue her.

She was among the first women to compete in roping and riding events against men and earned such titles as “Champion Lady Steer Roper of the World” at the Winnipeg Stampede. She starred in Mulhall’s Wild West, the Miller Brothers’ 101 Ranch Wild West show, and in vaudeville. In 1913 she formed her own troupe. In 1916 she produced her own rodeo, Lucille Mulhall’s Roundup.

For Lucille Mulhall it made economic sense for a frontier woman to work in the Wild West shows.

“People were getting three dollars a week for housework or for working in a store,” she said. “You could get $25 a week working for a Wild West show.”

Lucille Mulhall’s popularity was due to her skill, the result of perfect timing with her rope, unusual balance on her horse, and her small size and ladylike behavior. She was inducted into the Rodeo Hall of Fame in 1975 and into the National Cowgirl Hall of Fame in 1977.

In the spaces below write any words that are difficult to read and hard to understand.
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Vocabulary

abilities— the powers or skills to do something
among— in the presence of (a group of people)
bargain— an agreement between parties settling what each is to give or receive in a business deal
brand— a mark made by burning (as on cattle) to show ownership
break— to train an animal
bronc— an untamed or partly tamed horse of western North America
cattle drive— the process of moving a herd of cattle from one place to another, usually moved and herded by cowboys on horses
claim— to ask for as rightfully belonging to oneself
compete— to strive for something (as a prize or reward) for which another is also striving
defied— refused boldly to obey or to yield to
demand— an urgent need or requirement
earned— deserved as a result of labor or service
economic— financial consideration
employment— the state of having a job that pays wages or a salary
entertainment— a means of amusement or recreation
exhibition— a public showing (as of works of art, manufactured goods, or athletic skill)
expertise— the skill of an expert
featured— played an important part
frontier— a region that forms the edge of the settled part of a country
herd— a number of animals of one kind kept or living together
homesteader— someone who acquires or settles on public land by living on and cultivating it
inaugural— to introduce into office with suitable ceremonies
increasing— making or becoming greater
inducted— installed

lasso— a rope or long leather thong with a noose used especially for catching livestock
legend— a story coming down from the past whose truth is popularly accepted but cannot be checked
performance— an activity that a person or group does to entertain an audience
permitted— consented to
pioneering— opening or preparing for others to follow previously
promoter— a person who helps increase the sales
ranch— a place for the raising of livestock (as cattle, horses, or sheep) on range
range— open land over which livestock may roam and feed
refused— to show or express positive unwillingness
rode herd— kept close watch or tight control over a herd of cattle
rodeo— an exhibition featuring cowboy skills (as riding and roping)
settler— a person who goes to live in a new region
show business— the arts, occupations, and companies that make up the entertainment industry
sidesaddle— a saddle for women in which the rider sits with both legs on one side of the horse
steer— a male domestic bovine castrated before sexual maturity and especially one raised for beef
swarmed— moved or gathered in a large group
tradition— a belief or custom handed down from one generation to another
transported— moved from one place to another
troupe— a group of theatrical performers
vaudeville— theatrical entertainment made up of a variety of songs, dances, and comic acts
yearling— an animal that is a year old or in the second year after birth
Cowgirl Pictures

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Buffalo Bill's
Wild West
Rough Riders of the World

Girl Lassoing
Lucille Mullhall, Worlds Champion Lady Roper Rider, Tied Up Pendleton Ore