



HOOKED ON BARBED WIRE

Learning Objectives: The students will...

1. Identify the contribution of Joseph Glidden to the history of the West.
2. Analyze the impact of barbed wire on farming and ranching in Texas.
3. Compare differing points of view as to the value of barbed wire.

TEKS: 4.18A&B, 4.19A,B,D, 4.21D

Materials Needed: The history of barbed wire (online or print resources such as www.barbwiremuseum.com), one copy of Barbed Wire—The Good and the Bad for each student, copies or projection of the lyrics to “Don’t Fence Me In” (or a recording, if available).

Vocabulary: barbed wire, economics, cattle drive, manufacture

Teaching Strategy:

1. Introduce lesson by asking students to brainstorm all the words they can think of when they think of “barbed wire.” Ask if any students have had experience with barbed wire, live in a place where there is barbed wire, and why it is useful.
2. Display a picture of Joseph Glidden and narrate how and why he invented barbed wire. (www.barbwiremuseum.com, http://xroads.virginia.edu/~CLASS/am485_98/cook/develop.htm)
3. Discuss the pros and cons of barbed wire from several perspectives. Ask students why some called it “Devil’s Rope.” In what ways is barbed wire better/worse than a wooden fence?
4. Divide the class into five groups, representing cowboys/ranchers, farmers, Native Americans, wire manufacturers, and the governor’s office.
5. Each group will analyze the invention and use of barbed wire from their perspective by completing the attached form in order to make a presentation to the Governor’s Office asking for a ban or consent to have barbed wire in Texas. The Governor’s Office group will consider economic impact and how each of the other groups might feel.
6. After allowing work time, each group will present their perspective to the Governor’s Office. They may make posters to promote their cause, if desired.
7. After all presentations have been made, the Governor’s Office must decide whether to allow barbed wire in Texas or not. The group should consider all the reasons presented and make a careful, thoughtful decision. The decision will be presented to the class, along with the reasons for the decision.
8. Display the lyrics of the ballad, “Don’t Fence Me In” and ask the students to identify the writer’s opinion of fences. Ask the class as a whole to write corresponding song lyrics, supporting fencing.
9. Divide the class into two groups and sing both versions of the song.

Extension for Gifted/Talented:

Students may wish to explore the impact of barbed wire on the famous XIT Ranch, which began as a three million acre ranch in the Texas panhandle shortly after barbed wire was invented. At one time, the ranch boasted 6,000 miles of fence. There is a book by that title, *6000 Miles of Fence* by Cordia Sloan Duke and Joe Frantz, (UT Press, 1961). See www.xitmuseum.com for more information.

“Don’t Fence Me In”

By Cole Porter



Well, give me land, lots of land under starry skies above
But don't fence me in
Let me ride through that wide open country that I love
Don't fence me in
Let me be by myself in the evenin' breeze
Listen to the murmur of the cottonwood trees
Send me off forever but I ask you please
Don't fence me in

Just turn me loose, let me straddle my old saddle
Underneath the western skies
On my cayuse, let me wander over yonder
Till I see the mountains rise

I want to ride to the ridge where the west commences
Gaze at the moon till I lose my senses
I don't like hobbles and I can't stand fences
Don't fence me in

Just turn me loose, let me straddle my old saddle
Underneath the western skies
On my cayuse, let me wander over yonder
Till I see the mountains rise

I want to ride to the ridge where the west commences
Gaze at that ole moon until I lose my senses
I can't stand them hobbles and I don't care for fences
Don't fence me in

Oh no...don't you fence me in

Barbed Wire—The Good and the Bad

(Our Group)

Good Things About Barbed Wire

Bad Things About Barbed Wire

