



EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

2026-2027

HOWAY!

The stories of the American West have come a long way since we last gathered around the campfire. Here at The National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, it's our mission to keep those stories alive and pass them on. That's why we're mighty eager to open our doors to you and your students.

You see, The Cowboy is more than just a collection of art and artifacts. We've turned ourselves into a hub for learning, inspiring students and empowering teachers. If you haven't been here lately, you'll see that:

- Our tours align with Oklahoma's latest Social Studies Academic Standards.
- Support the Oklahoma Visual Arts Standards.
- Incorporate STEM/STEAM initiatives.

On these pages, you can check out all the ways we can partner together – from guided tours to big events. At The Cowboy, we don't merely talk about history, we "DO" history through cooperative, thought-provoking and interactive experiences.



STUDENT TOURS



The Cowboy offers student tours for all grades, guiding our young guests through engaging stories of the West.



GRADE-LEVEL TOURS

Animal Tales | Grades PK-1

Foster imagination and critical thinking through animal art and folklore. Engage with stories that impart lessons, values and creative explanations about Western wildlife and nature using your five senses.

American Cowboy | Grades 3-4

Embrace the heart of cowboy culture from its vibrant origin story to the adrenaline-pumping world of modern rodeo. Compete in a cattle drive challenge and identify the tools and technology needed to survive. Leave with an understanding and deep appreciation of what the cowboy represents.

First Peoples | Grades 3-6

The American West is the ancestral home to many Indigenous Nations. The arrival of immigrants introduced new trade items and materials for daily use; however, it also brought about the loss of land and lifeways. Explore defining challenges and the perseverance of Native people and culture.

Geo-Detectives | Grades 4-7

Explore vast and diverse environments using the “Five Themes of Geography” to grasp a clearer understanding of each concept within the context of the American West, its lands and cultures, past and present.

Go West, Young Artist | Grades 5-8

Take an adventure through the lens of artists who recorded our past and continue to preserve Western heritage and culture today. Use the “Elements of Art” to analyze incredible examples of artists’ work.

People on the Move | Grades 6-8

Discover the forces that expanded a nation through the dreams, challenges and motivations that sparked westward movement. The results transformed America’s landscape and continue to impact our society.

Art of the American West | Grades 9-12

Study the artists who defined Western art and the contemporary visionaries shaping its future. Dive into the techniques and stories behind these great works, while reinforcing your understanding of the “Principles of Design.”

Oklahoma’s Legends & Legacies | Grades 9-12

Journey through time with Native cultures, frontier life, the role of the military, boomtowns and statehood. Discover the people and events that shaped Oklahoma’s unique history and how they affect us today.

Origin of the Cowboy | Grades 9-12

Trace the working cowboy from his beginnings to the ranching industry, life on the cattle trails and his evolution into an entertainment icon, modern rodeo athlete and national symbol.



Scan to Reserve a
Student Tour



Reading Rodeo at The Cowboy!

Join us any weekday in June or July for Reading Rodeo. Kids will enjoy a lively Western story, take a fun “trail ride” through the galleries with Cookie the Chuckwagon Cook and take home their own souvenir.

Along the way, they’ll explore the Code of the West and discover the everyday hero in each of us. Appropriate for daycare groups, church summer programs and more! For Pre-K – Grade 4 (ages 5-11)

Pre-registration required. For more information, call: (405) 839-7796



Classroom Extensions

Consider preparing for or following up your visit to The Cowboy with one of these lessons:

- Back in the Saddle Again
- Old and New – Keepers of Native America Culture
- Stewards of the West – The Birth of American Conservation
- Artists of the American West – Chroniclers of History
- Women of the West – Shaping the American Frontier
- Tech on the Trail, Rodeo & STEM Principles and Native Engineers

Teacher-Guided Tours

The Cowboy also offers the option of teacher-directed field trips. Create your own curriculum or use one of the following self-guided activities:

- Choose Your Own Adventure Gallery Guides (elementary)
- Family Scavenger Hunt Guide: An Adventure in Art and History (elementary)
- Prosperity Junction: Frontier Boomtown (elementary)
- Find Your West Challenge (secondary)
- Windows to the West (secondary)



SPECIAL PROGRAMS

The Cowboy offers large-format experiences. Limited space requires pre-registration. Students may bring their lunch, then explore the Museum galleries after the program.



FALL 2026

Cherokee Cultural Celebration | Grades K-12

September 15, 2026

In partnership with the Cherokee Nation, students engage in hands-on activities that explore 19th-century Cherokee culture. Play traditional games like stickball, marbles and games of graces as skilled demonstrators showcase pottery making, basket weaving and language games to highlight unique aspects of life during that era. Other activity stations immerse children in the Cherokee language and feature storytellers sharing Cherokee legends. Students who visit all stations may earn a prize for their participation. (Pre-registration required by September 7.)

Adventures in Agriculture | Grades 8-12

November 5, 2026

Connect with agriculture-related organizations and discover science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)-related careers. Learn about careers in farming, ranching and agricultural businesses. Hear from keynote speaker Amanda Radke, agricultural spokesperson, podcaster and author. Radke provides an empowering message for kids to chase their dreams while giving them the tools they need to effectively utilize social media to advocate for agriculture, brand themselves and carve out opportunities in the field of their choice! (Pre-registration required by October 29)

Oklahoma Heritage Concert with Oklahoma Opry | Grades 5-12

November 18, 2026

Celebrate Oklahoma Statehood Day and watch history come to life in a performance by Oklahoma Opry. Learn our state's history through music and culture, while following a listening guide that reveals interesting facts about Oklahoma. Bring a sack lunch to enjoy after the program, then embark on self-exploration of The Cowboy. (Pre-registration required by November 6.)

SPRING 2027

Wild Weather Camp | Grades K-8

February 24, 2027

Weather is a significant part of life in Oklahoma, so it's essential for kids to know how to stay safe when storms roll through. That's why The Cowboy teamed up with Chief Meteorologist David Payne and the News 9 Weather Team to teach students about the different types of severe weather in our state and what to do when they happen. Meteorologists demonstrate the science behind lightning strikes and tornadoes. Museum curators also explain how weather impacts the Western landscape and is portrayed in Western artwork. Students may participate in a self-directed gallery hunt that encourages a deeper look at objects and artwork. (Pre-registration required by February 15.)

Indigenous Foodways | Grades K-8

April 29, 2027

Join Native American Chef Sonny Fields (Pawnee) as he shares the importance of traditional foodways in indigenous cultures and demonstrates how to make a special dish. Chef Sonny explores food sources from the Americas, uses of the bison and the importance of heirloom seeds. After the presentation, enjoy samples to supplement your sack lunch. Students may participate in a self-directed gallery hunt that encourages a deeper look at objects and artwork. (Pre-registration required by April 21.)



Scan to Register for a
Special Program



BOOK YOUR VISIT



Scan to Reserve a **CLASSIC OR IMMERSIVE FIELD TRIP**



Scan to Register for a **SPECIAL PROGRAM**



FIELD TRIP FACTS

ADMISSION

- Rates apply to all participants.
- Select either the Classic Field Trip, the Immersive Field Trip or Special Program Option for your entire group:

Classic Field Trip	Immersive Field Trip	Special Program Field Trip
Grades PK-12	Grades K-12	Grades K-12
Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Museum Admission • Guided Student Tour (if requested) 	Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Museum Admission • Guided Student Tour (if requested) • <i>The Cowboy Immersive Journey</i> film 	Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Museum Admission • Auditorium-style program
\$6.00 per student (60% off general child admission)	\$12.00 per student (60% off general child admission + film)	\$6.00 per student (60% off general child admission)
1 FREE teacher/chaperone for every 7 students	1 FREE teacher/chaperone for every 7 students	1 FREE teacher/chaperone for every 7 students
\$10.00 for each additional adult (60% off regular adult admission)	\$20.00 for each additional adult (55% off regular adult admission + film)	\$15.00 for each additional adult (40% off regular adult admission)
A minimum of 15 students is required. If this minimum cannot be met, then the base rate of \$90.00 will be applied.	A minimum of 15 students is required. If this minimum cannot be met, then the base rate of \$180.00 will be applied.	No minimum required.

Self-guided student group pricing follows the Classic and Immersive Field Trip rates. No additional discounts apply to the above reduced school rates.

PAYMENT

- Payment is due upon entry and can be made with cash, check, credit card or purchase order.
- To expedite your check-in process, the group leader is responsible for paying the entire amount.

LUNCH

- Reservations are required to ensure space is available for school-provided lunches.
- Groups without a reservation are not guaranteed a space to eat.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Looking for new, effective ideas for teaching social studies? Let us bring interactive workshops to your site or via Zoom for school or district in-service opportunities. Each 50-minute workshop is free of charge. Contact Pam Merrill at pmerrill@thecowboy.org for more information.

Exploring Inquiry Through the 5-E Framework – Crafting Lessons that Spark Curiosity | Grades 3-12

Learn how the 5-E model for designing classroom lessons and units can enhance collaborative and student-centered learning, as well as build independent critical thinking skills. Examine a collection of classroom-ready lessons using inquiry design to teach content in history, geography and economics.

Seeing is Believing – Inquiry-Based Investigations with Art, Artifacts and Museums | Grades 3-12

Examine a variety of easy-to-use strategies that empower students to find meaning from visual evidence. Explore several proven tools that use artwork and artifacts from the Museum’s collection. (Appropriate for Social Studies and Visual Arts educators.)

Preserving Culture: Native American Artists and Historians | Grades 6-12

Trace the continuity of Native cultures through selected forms of art and traditional record-keeping to explore how Native American artists serve as historians, preserving culture and ways of life.

Voices of the West: leaning Into Literacy | Grades 5-12

Discover new literacy-based strategies, using the MAX Model, for analyzing primary sources and gaining a deeper understanding of the many historical perspectives found in significant documents.



PARTNERS IN STEM & STEAM

Howdy! We’re looking for new partners in student learning. At The Cowboy, we know the work of the cowboy – and life in the American West – is rooted in science, technology, engineering, art and math. From the physics of bronc busting and bull riding to the ingenuity of Indigenous engineering and trail technology, Western history offers a memorable way to bring STEM and STEAM concepts to life for students.

We are pleased to offer a complimentary program for school and community STEM nights, featuring hands-on demonstrations of the science behind

barrel racing and roping – two skills every cowpoke needs. Students will also receive copies of our original elementary STEM publications to extend learning into the classroom:

- Cowboy Science
- Tech on the Trail
- Indigenous Engineers

Recommended for grades 3–5.

To invite The Cowboy to your next STEM or STEAM night, contact Pam Merrill at pmerrill@thecowboy.org.



TRAVELLING TRUNKS

Travelling Trunks are the perfect resource, whether you are setting the stage for a field trip or enhancing your curriculum. The trunks include artifacts, tools, clothing and images from the Museum's collection, as well as primary source activities, assessment ideas and storybooks to share with students. **Best of all? They're yours to borrow – free of charge.** Simply pick them up and return them. Don't miss this opportunity to bring history alive!

The American Cowboy Trunk | Grades 3-5

The cowboy is a celebrated and iconic figure in Western American history and lore. This trunk explores the role of the cowboy in American culture, specifically through the lenses of work and folklore. Through object interpretation, primary source investigation, artwork analysis and creative writing, your students discover the American cowboy in a new light.



Native American Trunk | Grades 3-5

Native American artistic traditions, rich with symbolism, often relate stories important to a particular Tribe or culture. This trunk highlights Native Americans – their relationship to place, lifeways impacted by harvest cycles, seasonal celebrations and rites of passage. Learners explore enduring traditions through a wide variety of art forms and media. Native artists continue to express themselves, revealing the West to the rest of the world.



Scan to
Reserve Your
**TRAVELLING
TRUNK**





THE COWBOY

AN IMMERSIVE JOURNEY



Surround yourself with the stories of the cowboy and the sights and sounds of the American West.



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

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Their support helps students explore, learn and connect with the rich history of the American West.



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