



Cool History for Middles

Year Four, Week 8

QUESTIONS FROM THE READINGS

1. One day in 1830, the B&O Railroad hosted one of the strangest races ever. Who were the contestants?

2. What was the most a Pony Express rider could weigh? _____
3. The Pony Express ran for less than two years before something new and better put it out of business. What was that something? _____
4. Which president signed the Pacific Railroad Act— the law started the Transcontinental Railroad? _____

5. The company that laid tracks from the west had hardly left Sacramento when it ran into a big mountain range. Name this range. _____
6. This company hired foreigners to do most of its tunnel drilling. Most of these foreigners came from what country? _____
7. Where and when did the two companies meet? _____

8. Why did workers of the Union Pacific Railroad kidnap their boss, Thomas Durant, just before the Wedding of the Rails? _____
9. Name the law that promised almost-free land to any settler who would move out West and live on it. _____

10. Name the 1874 invention that made it a lot easier to fence off land. _____
11. What was a “Boomer”? _____

12. What was a “Sooner”? _____

13. Name the American inventor who made big improvements to the threshing machine. _____

14. Starting in 1883, the United States was divided into how many time zones? _____
15. How long did President James Garfield live after Charles Guiteau shot him? _____
16. How many pairs of pants did President Chester Arthur own? _____
17. Where did Thomas Edison build his famous inventors’ laboratory? _____
18. Edison was using electricity to light whole neighborhoods in New York City by what year? _____

CHALLENGE QUESTIONS

1. FILL IN THE BLANKS: The Pony Express started at St. _____, Missouri and ended at _____, California. The distance between was about _____ (number) miles; and yet the riders covered it in just _____ (number) days.
2. Which company laid tracks westward, starting from Omaha, Nebraska? _____

3. Which company laid tracks eastward, starting from Sacramento, California? _____

4. FILL IN THE BLANKS: One reason the buffalo disappeared so fast was the high price of their hides. For a while, one buffalo hide sold for \$_____ — in a time when workers earned just \$_____ for a hard day's work.
5. FILL IN THE BLANKS: On cattle drives, cowboys who handled cattle were called "_____." Cowboys who handled horses were called "_____." Cowboy cooks carried supplies in special trailers called _____.
6. What was the fight between settlers and cattle ranchers called? _____

7. How long did this fight last? _____

8. FILL IN THE BLANKS: The only part of wheat that's fit to eat is the _____. To thresh wheat is to separate the _____ from the parts that aren't fit to eat: _____ and _____.

[U.S. PRESIDENT: James Garfield, Chester Arthur](#)

OPTIONAL BONUS QUESTION/ACTIVITY

What nursery rhyme did Thomas Edison use for his first phonograph recording?

