



# Cowboy Brands

Explore the importance of brands to identify a rancher's cattle.

## Making your own brand

Hand out information sheets with examples of brands. Create your own or download from [LearnAboutAg.org/agbites](http://LearnAboutAg.org/agbites).

1. Have students read the information sheets. Discuss the variety of shapes used, how brands would imprint the cow's hide to distinguish ownership, and how brands have handles—often with a loop at the top—making it easier for the rancher to hold onto the brand.
2. Have students design their brand on a piece of paper. Advise students to keep designs simple, like the examples.
3. Distribute chenille stems. Have students use two stems to create their brand shape and the third for the handle.
4. To create the handle, bend a chenille stem in half. Holding a finger inside the bend, twist the stem creating a loop at the top. Continue to twist, finally attaching the ends opposite the loop to the center of the brand shape.

## Materials

- Three 12” chenille stems per student
- Pencil
- Construction paper
- Paint
- Sample of brands from [LearnAboutAg.org/agbites](http://LearnAboutAg.org/agbites)

## Tip

Brands can be dipped into paint to “brand” construction paper cattle.

## Classroom Activities

### Visual and Performing Arts

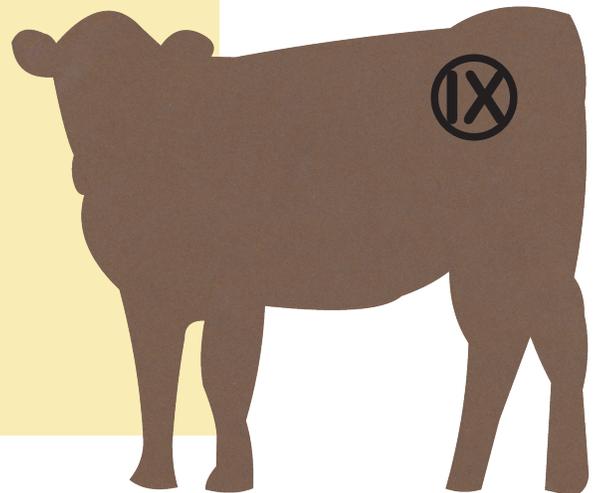
- Have students draw a scene with a cow or cattle and use their brand to brand the cow, showing ownership.

### English Language Arts

- Explain how brands are used in other parts of the world. Compare and contrast using a Venn Diagram.
- Write a personal letter describing what was learned about brands.

### History-Social Science

- Have students research and create presentations: What is the history of brands? Where and how are brands used? How are brands made?
- Describe how California’s economy changed from a hunter/gatherer economy to an agricultural economy. Discuss the importance of identifying cattle ownership and the roles brands played in California Missions.



## California Standards:

### Grade 3

Visual and Performing Arts Content:  
1.5, 2.4  
ELA CC: RI.3.2; W.3.2

### Grade 4

Visual and Performing Arts Content:  
3.2, 3.3  
ELA CC: RI.4.2; W.4.2

*Adapted from materials by the California Beef Council*

