LESSON 23 TEACHER’S GUIDE

Blazing a Cattle Trail

by Russell Watson

Fountas-Pinnell Level T

Informational Text

Selection Summary

In 1866, the demand for beef fostered the Long Drives from Texas to market. Oliver Loving and Charles Goodnight blazed a new cattle trail through difficult terrain and across the treacherous Pecos River. In 1867, Loving was killed by Comanches, but the Goodnight-Loving Trail lived on. Later, Goodnight extended their trail to Wyoming.

Characteristics of the Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Informational text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text Structure</td>
<td>Third-person narration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Long cattle drives following the Civil War</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oliver Loving and Charles Goodnight form a partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Themes and Ideas</td>
<td>One’s achievements can live on for a long time.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Persistence in facing hazards and overcoming obstacles can lead to success.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The market is a powerful motivator, but market conditions can change.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language and Literary Features</td>
<td>Exposition; informal language</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Descriptive details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Complexity</td>
<td>Many short sentences, rather than compound sentences; few complex sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Terms and names associated with cattle drives, some of which might not be familiar to English language learners, such as longhorn, vaqueros, Chisholm Trail, Goodnight-Loving Trail, chuckwagon, sourdough. Cultural references such as rustlers (page 13).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>Most words one or two syllables: cowboy, round, southwest</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Context provided for unfamiliar terms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Illustrations</td>
<td>Photos, historic illustrations, and map with captions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book and Print Features</td>
<td>Sixteen pages of text, nine with illustrations; sidebars</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Table of contents; nine main headings, five sub-headings; introduction, conclusion</td>
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Blazing a Cattle Trail by Russell Watson

Build Background
Build on students’ prior knowledge by asking questions such as the following Have you ever seen a Western movie that showed cowboys driving cattle? Long cattle drives were common after the Civil War. Do you know why? Read the title and author and talk about the cover illustration. Tell students that “blazing a trail” means “marking a trail.” Explain that this book is informational text, so they may expect to read facts and information about blazing a cattle trail.

Frontload Vocabulary
Some everyday words may be unfamiliar to English learners. Before reading, check understanding of the following words: mission, longhorn, market, graze

Introduce the Text
Guide students through the text, reading the captions, noting important ideas, and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary so they can read the text successfully. Here are some suggestions:

Pages 2–3: Ask students to look at the contents. Point out that the book has an introduction, seven chapters, and a conclusion. Three chapters have subheadings. Have students find the word sprawling on page 3. Ask: Why would sprawling grasslands be a perfect place for cattle to flourish?

Pages 4–5: Have students look at the photograph and read the caption. Ask: Why might this breed of cattle’s long horns make it difficult for ranchers to control?

Pages 6–7: Have students look at the illustration and read the caption. Ask: What is the form that snakes back to the horizon? Cultural Support: The text on page 7 says Oliver Loving is known as the “Dean of Texas Trail Drivers.” Explain that a dean is an important person at a school, like a principal. The writer uses the term as a figure of speech to indicate how important Oliver Loving was to the Texas trail drives.

Now turn back to the beginning of the book and read to find out how the Goodnight Loving Trail was blazed.

Target Vocabulary
acknowledged – recognized or accepted, p. 7
acquainted – to know, p. 7
dominate – a weakening, p. 17
extending – stretching from one point to another, p. 3
flourished – thrived or prospered, p. 3
hostile – not friendly, p. 17
prospered – to have been successful, p. 18
residents – people who live in a place, p. 5
sprawling – spread out, p. 3
Read
Have students read silently while you listen to individual students read aloud. Support their understanding of the text as needed.

Remind students to use the Summarize Strategy by summarizing each chapter to themselves after they have read it.

Discuss and Revisit the Text
Personal Response
Invite students to share their personal responses to the selection.
Suggested language: What do you think would have been the most difficult thing about being on a Long Drive?

Ways of Thinking
As you discuss the text, help students understand these points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking Within the Text</th>
<th>Thinking Beyond the Text</th>
<th>Thinking About the Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Long Drives started because of the scarcity of beef in parts of the U.S. after the Civil War.</td>
<td>• Trail blazers may have to overcome dangerous obstacles and even face death.</td>
<td>• The introduction gives background for the historical narrative, and the conclusion ends the narrative and acts as an epilogue.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Loving and Goodnight blazed a new western trail to avoid dangerous areas and drive cattle to Denver and beyond.</td>
<td>• The demand for products and the prospect of getting rich can motivate people to explore new areas.</td>
<td>• Historic photographs and illustrations support the text and display many details about the Old West and the life of a cowboy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The Goodnight-Loving Trail went through 80 miles of desert and crossed the Pecos River.</td>
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Choices for Further Support
- **Fluency** Invite students to create a script for a readers’ theater. Have them use the last two paragraphs on page 10 as a starting point from which to create a dialogue in which Goodnight and Loving discuss setting up their partnership.
- **Comprehension** Based on your observations of the students’ reading and discussion, revisit parts of the text to clarify or extend comprehension. Remind students to go back to the text to support their ideas.
- **Phonics/Word Work** Provide practice as needed with words and word parts, using examples from the text. Call attention to *decline* on page 17. Tell students it is formed from the prefix *de-* , meaning “down” and the root *cline* , meaning “slope.” Ask how “down a slope” suggests the meaning of *decline*.
Writing about Reading

Critical Thinking
Have students complete the Critical Thinking questions on BLM 23.10.

Responding
Have students complete the activities at the back of the book, using their Reader’s Notebook. Use the instruction below as needed to reinforce or extend understanding of the comprehension skill.

Target Comprehension Skill

Main Idea and Details
Remind students that when they read nonfiction, they should look for the main idea and the details that support it. Model how to add details to the Graphic Organizer, using a “Think Aloud” like the one below:

Think Aloud

The main idea on page 4 is that the Texas Longhorn was a good, popular animal. They were big, with lots of meat on them. There were lots of them on the plains in the West. Add these details to the chart.

Practice the Skill
Have students share an example of another selection that gives information by using both text and graphic features.

Writing Prompt: Thinking Beyond the Text
Have students write a response to the prompt on page 6. Remind them that when they think beyond the text, they use their personal knowledge to reach new understandings.

Assessment Prompts

• What is the meaning of acquainted on page 7?
• How does the author organize the information in the chapter on page 11?
• What can the reader conclude about the Goodnight-Loving Trail as described in this book?
Critical Thinking

Read and answer the questions. Possible responses are shown. 

1. Think within the text. What are the “roaming cattle”?
   Roaming cattle are wild cattle in Texas.

2. How far did the cowboys travel on a typical day?
   They traveled 12–15 miles.

3. Think beyond the text. What kind of person do you think would have made a good cattle driver?
   Someone who didn't mind hard work, who was brave, who wasn't married and didn't have kids, and who wanted to make money.

4. Think about the text. Why do you think the author included the information in the sidebar on page 15?
   To give some extra information about the Navajo; to persuade the reader that the U.S. Army did not treat the Navajo well.

Making Connections

If you had been a cowboy like Goodnight and Loving, what would you have done for fun? Write your answer in your Reader's Notebook.
Thinking Beyond the Text

Think about the questions below. Then write your answer in two paragraphs.

Remember that when you think beyond the text, you use your personal knowledge to reach new understandings.

Why do you think Goodnight and Loving were willing to take the risks that they did in order to establish a new cattle trail? Do you think the risks were worth it, since the era of the Long Drive only lasted for about 20 years? Why or why not? Explain your answer, giving examples from the selection.
Critical Thinking

Read and answer the questions.

1. Think within the text  What are the “roaming cattle”?

2. Think within the text  How far did the cowboys travel on a typical day?

3. Think beyond the text  What kind of person do you think would have made a good cattle driver?

4. Think about the text  Why do you think the author included the information in the sidebar on page 15?

Making Connections  If you had been a cowboy like Goodnight and Loving, what would you have done for fun?

Write your answer in your Reader’s Notebook.
The Civil War ended in 1865. After that, taking cattle to market, or “driving cattle,” became a big business. At that time, there wasn’t enough beef in parts of the United States. Texas ranchers hired cowboys to round up their cattle. The cowboys drove the cattle over long trails. The trails went north, east, and west. There were train stops at the end of the trails. The trains took the cattle to markets further away.

It was the time of the Long Drive. A Long Drive usually lasted several months. These cattle drives went over long and dusty trails.