

Rhyme & Ride – Classroom Activities

Companion to *Way Out West on My Little Pony* by Jan Peck

Created for teachers, librarians, and caregivers. US Letter • Photocopiable for personal/classroom use.

Learning Objectives

- Build phonological awareness through rhyme, rhythm, and repeated phrases.
- Identify and describe prairie animals and their adaptations.
- Use map skills and sequencing to retell a journey narrative.
- Develop descriptive language and opinion writing tied to the text.
- Practice counting and simple data collection with animal observations.

Materials

- The book *Way Out West on My Little Pony*
- Projector or document camera (optional)
- Crayons/markers, scissors, glue, chart paper
- Printable coloring pages & animal cards (included)
- Large map outline of the prairie or a blank trail map (included)

Before Reading (5 minutes)

Show the cover. Predict: Where are the characters going? What animals might live on the prairie? Clap a steady 'trotting' beat and read the title together in rhythm.

During Reading (10–12 minutes)

Invite students to echo the repeating lines. Pause to let the class say "Howdy!" to each animal. Ask: What clues tell you we're on the prairie (sky, grass, wind, fences, buffalo, etc.)?

After Reading (10 minutes)

Turn-and-talk: Which prairie animal would you like to meet and why? Chart student ideas. Revisit the rhythm—can we read a favorite page like a song?

Activity 1: Rhyme & Rhythm Call-and-Response (K–2)

Teach this chant. Tap knees for the beat and snap on the rhyme. Replace the animal each round and let a student lead the motions.

Leader	Way out west we ride along,
Class	Clap—clap—clap to keep it strong!
Leader	Who do we see beside the trail?
Class	A coyote with a swishy tail!
All	Howdy, friend! Tip your hat—
All	Rhyme it, time it, trot—a—tat—tat!

Extensions: swap in bison, jackrabbit, roadrunner, prairie dog, longhorn, rattlesnake, skunk, armadillo, horned toad.

Activity 2: Map the Trail (Social Studies + Sequencing)

Give each student a blank ‘trail map’. Draw a starting corral and a sunset finish. Add 4–6 landmarks (cactus, creek, windmill, fence, butte). Place animal stickers or cards along the path. Students retell the story by moving a small paper pony from start to finish and saying, “First we saw..., then..., next...,”

Activity 3: Prairie Animal Mini–Book (Science + Writing)

Fold a sheet into a 4–page booklet. Page 1: cover and drawing. Page 2: “It lives on the prairie.” Page 3: “It eats... / It moves...” Page 4: “I notice... I wonder...” Add labels and a habitat background.

Activity 4: Count & Graph (Math Integration)

On a class chart list bison, prairie dogs, jackrabbits, meadowlarks, coyotes. Students tally how many appear in spreads (or outside during a nature walk poster). Create a simple bar graph; ask questions: Which is most/least? How many more bison than coyotes?

Activity 5: Word Work – Cowboy Talk & Animal Sounds

Collect fun words from the text (howdy, giddyup, prairie, lariat, corral). Make a two–column chart: ‘Cowboy Words’ and ‘Animal Sounds’ (yip, chirp, rattle, moo, snort). Practice reading with expression.

Printable Cards – Prairie Animals

Cut apart and use for sorting, memory, sequencing the ride, or building new rhymes.

Bison (Buffalo)	Pony
Coyote	Jackrabbit
Prairie Dog	Longhorn
Raccoon	Roadrunner
Horned Toad	Armadillo
Skunk	Rattlesnake

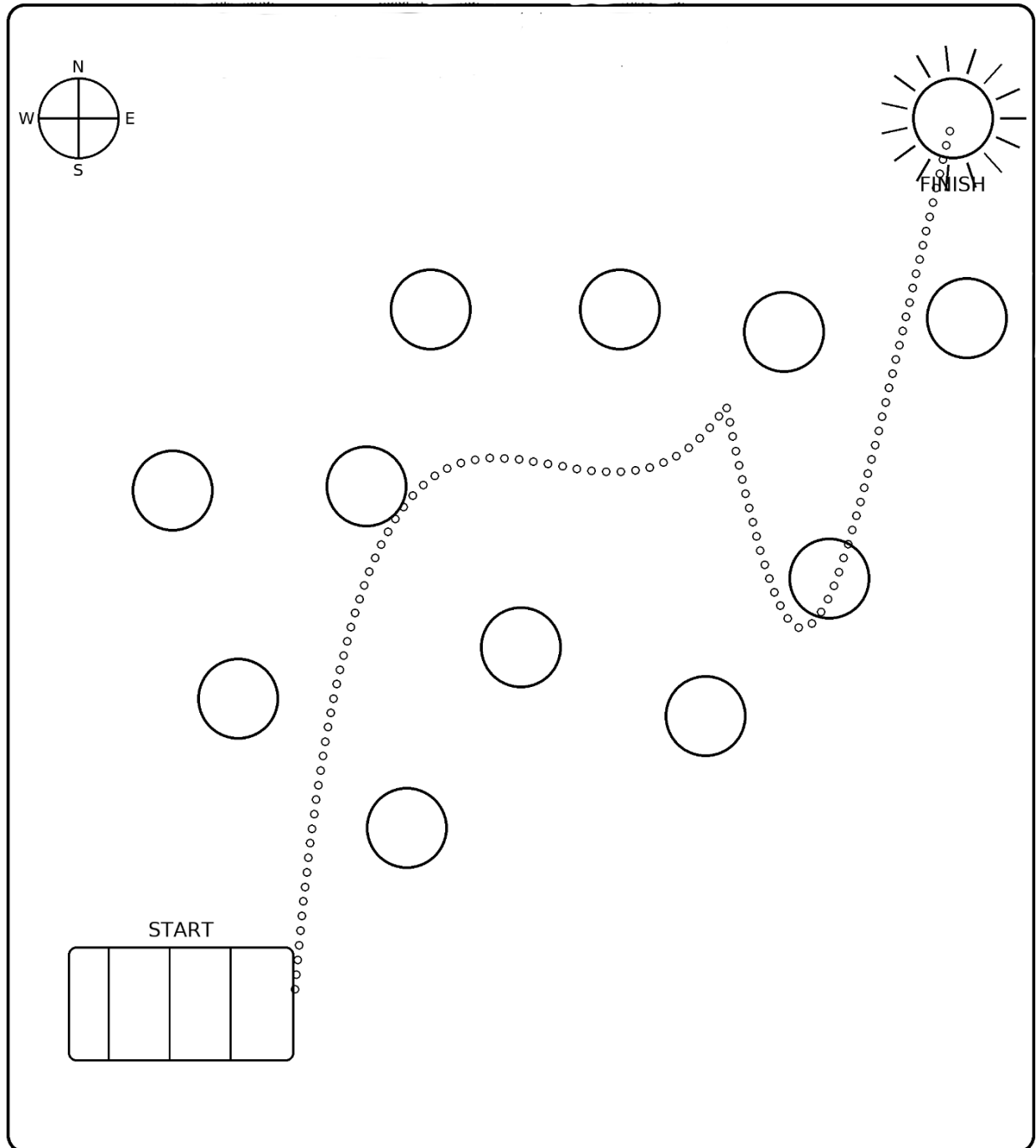
Printable – Blank Trail Map

Students draw a starting corral and finish, add landmarks and animals, then trace their ride with arrows.



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Pony's Prairie Map - Kids Version



Draw animals in the circles! Add fences, flowers, clouds, and a windmill.

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