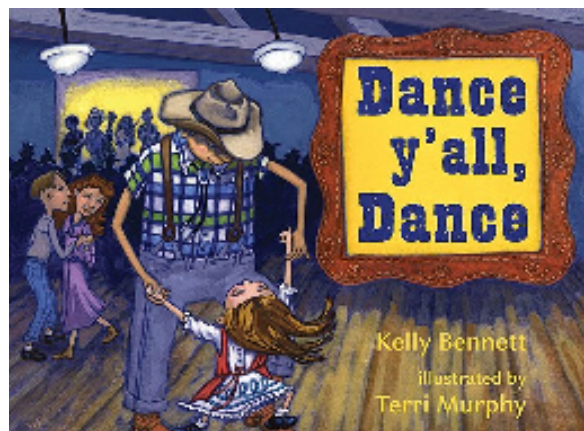


A Teacher's Activity Guide for  
*Dance, Y'all, Dance*

Written by Kelly Bennett

Illustrated by Terri Murphy

Published by Bright Sky Press



Teacher's Guide Created by Debbie Gonzales

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## Forward

*Dance, Y'all, Dance* is a lively, energetic, and entertaining picture book. The prose is poignant and playful. The intriguing illustrations beg to be studied at length. In short, I found it a delight to write a Teacher Guide for such a charming book.

The activities in this guide have been designed to complement *Dance, Y'all, Dance* in such a way that the child will need to review the pages while working with the activities. So, get your scissors and glue ready, y'all, and keep that book nearby, ya' hear?

The guide begins with a character analysis of a dog named Buck, whose presence ties the entire plotline of this great story together. A word game follows, one that is based on the historic terms found in the Author's Note. Next is a rhyming game with words pulled directly from the text. After insightful conversations with author Kelly Bennett and illustrator Terri Murphy, we go boot scootin' by creating a Dance Hall Diorama! Lastly, there is a research topic matching game and suggestions for further independent research opportunities.

Teachers, have fun with this book. Encourage your young reader to experience the prose's rhythmic rhyme, the captivating illustrations, all the while thoroughly enjoying the charm of *Dance, Y'all, Dance*.

I certainly have.

Yee Haw!

Debbie Gonzales

Author/Educator/Boot Scooter

*A native Texan, Debbie Gonzales has enjoyed a long and happy career as a classroom teacher, art program director, school administrator, curriculum designer, and an educational consultant. She earned her MFA from the Vermont College in Writing for Children and Young Adults and has published a number of early readers with Gilt Edge Publishing. Check out her popular blog, Simple Saturdays, where weekly she posts simple, inexpensive, and entertaining activities all family members can enjoy. She is currently serving as the SCBWI RA for the Austin, Texas chapter and, oh, does Debbie love to dance!*

## Character Analysis: Buck the Dog

1. We first see Buck in a truck with his family on his way to the Horseshoe Dance Hall.
  - a. Study his expression.
  - b. How do you think he is feeling?
  - c. How do you think the people in the truck with Buck are feeling?
  - d. Why?
  - e. Have you ever felt like Buck before? When?
  
2. Next, we see Buck tied to a rail outside the Horseshoe Dance Hall. See how he is leaning forward, straining the rope?
  - a. Study his expression.
  - b. How is Buck feeling at this time in the story?
  - c. How do you know that he is feeling this way?
  - d. Can you relate to Buck's feelings? Have you ever wanted to go somewhere and weren't allowed to do so?
  
3. On the page featuring Ida Belle and Clint dancing, we can see Buck poking his nose through the open window.
  - a. Study his expression.
  - b. Why is Buck peering through the window?
  - c. What does Buck see?
  - d. What do you see?
  - e. What does Buck want?
  - f. How did Buck get untied?
  
4. The next page features Buck inside the Horseshoe Dance Hall near the band peering around a wall.
  - a. Study his expression.
  - b. Why is he hiding?
  - c. What does he see?
  - d. What do you see?
  - e. If his owners see him in the Horseshoe Dance Hall, will he get in trouble? Why or why not?
  - f. What is Buck feeling right now?

5. Buck is now hiding under the stage with Harlin and Beau.
  - a. Study his expression.
  - b. Why do you think that one paw is resting on his forehead? What does this pose tell us about how he is feeling right now?
  - c. What does Buck think about the teasing trick that Harlen and Beau are doing?
  - d. What do you think about Harlen's and Beau's teasing trick?
  
6. Buck waits with Curt while the girls talk on the telephone.
  - a. Study Buck's expression. Study Curt's expression.
  - b. Do you think Buck knows how Curt feels?
  - c. How does Curt feel?
  - d. How do you know?
  - e. Is Buck being a friend to Curt?
  - f. How do friends help each other in times like this?
  
7. In the last picture, at the end of the book, Buck seems to be leaping off the stage and running toward Grams.
  - a. Study his expression.
  - b. Why is Buck in such a hurry?
  - c. Did Buck have a good time at the Horseshow Dance Hall?
  - d. Did he enjoy being with all those happy, dancing people?
  - e. Would you have had a good time at the Horseshoe Dance Hall with Buck and all those happy, dancing people?
  
8. Compare the excited picture of Buck at the beginning of the book and the leaping picture of Buck at the end of the book.
  - a. Study both expressions.
  - b. Are there ways that Buck's feelings are the same in these moments? Different?
  - c. How so?
  - d. He seems to be excited in both instances, doesn't he? What made him excited at the beginning of the book? What made him excited at the end of the book?
  - e. Can you relate to his excited feelings? How so?

### Boot Scootin' Lingo

Unscramble each of the clue words. Copy the letters in the numbered cells to the cells in the secret phrase below. Use the Author's Note found on the back page of *Dance, Y'all, Dance* as a reference.

YAWRETHESE RPRUESIS


XETSA WOT-PEST


SERTEWM GISNW


ZEPTELR


SDIE TEARVL


LDWI WETS SEFLUFH


NEVCOSROTINA


AHTIIPCOS


RYCUTNO NAD TENERSW


1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14							

## Rhyming Dominology

- Print the cards on pages 16 to 18 on card stock and laminate, if desired. Or, print on printer paper and allow the child to tape or glue matches together on a large piece of poster board.
- Cut out all cards.
- Shuffle cards.
- Begin with the card labeled with the Texas Star!
- Find the matches for all rhyming words. Lay the matches beside one another in domino form.
- Refer to the text in *Dance, Y'all, Dance* to verify rhyming matches.
- The final card is designated with a happy face!

wink

surprise

Pistachio

Flo

eyes

aglow

radio

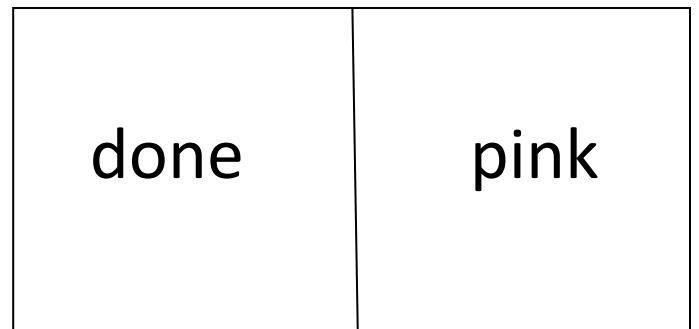
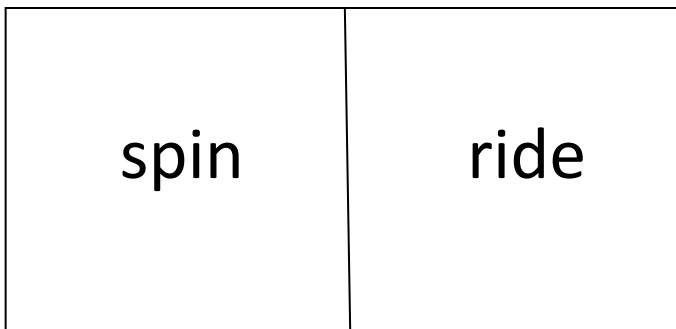
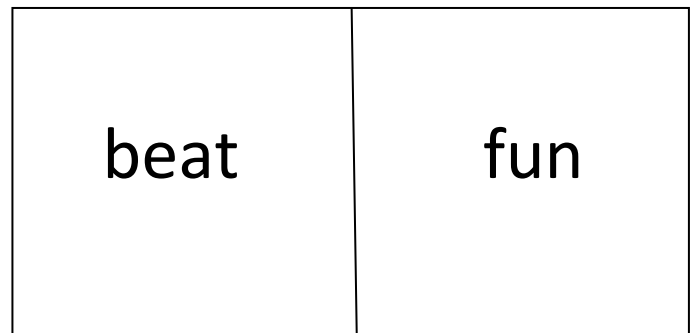
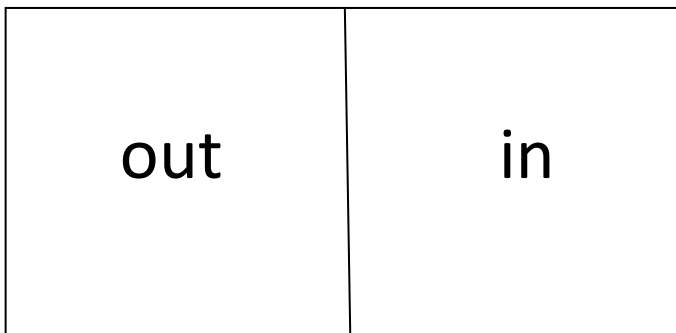
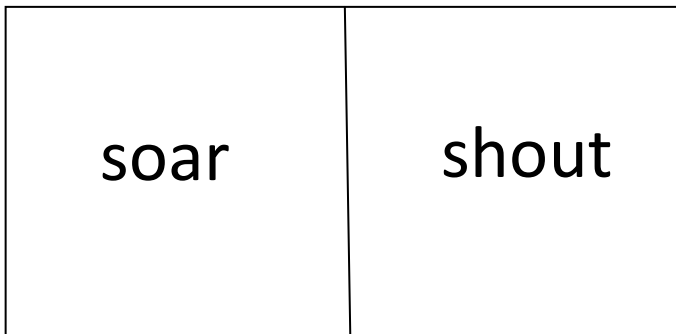
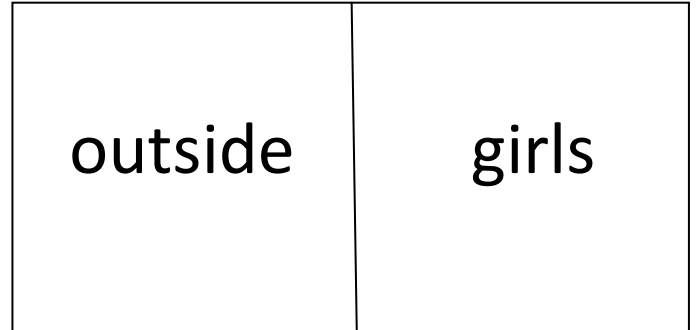
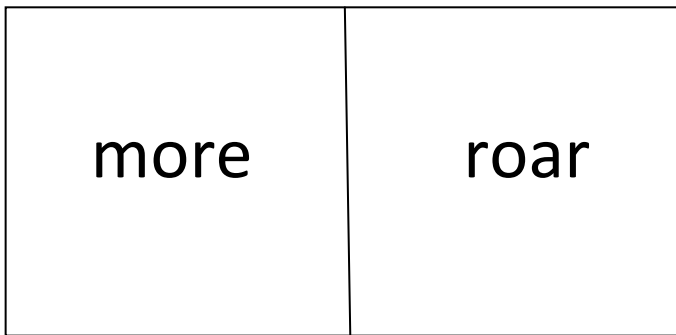
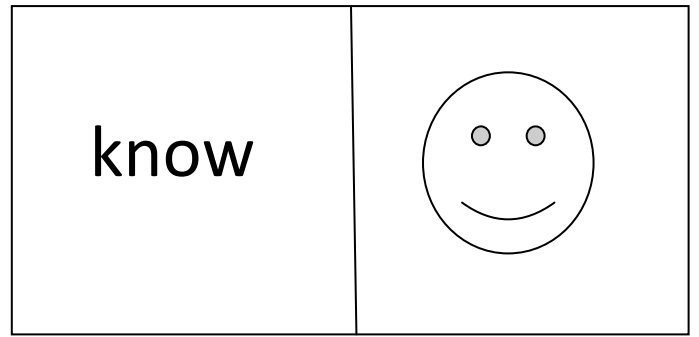
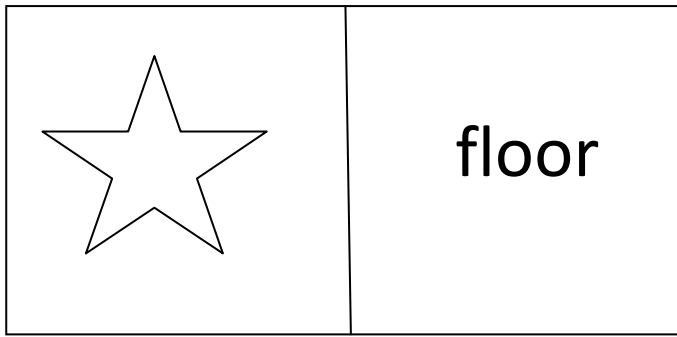
feet

show

go

sweet

hand





band

night

right

gum

glum

Buck

truck

today

away

girl

twirl

skiddle

fiddle

pop

stop

hall

Y'all

alone

telephone

Beau

## A Conversation with Author Kelly Bennett

Kelly Goldman Bennett writes books for children, both fiction and non-fiction. She had been writing professionally since 1986. Her work has also appeared in national magazines and newspapers.

At the moment, Kelly is obsessed with creating picture books. “Picture books are like icebergs,” she notes, “so much of what goes on goes unseen. And revising picture book text is a lot like carving an ice sculpture.”

“I start with a big, messy jumble of words, pages of words, a block of words and just start chipping away. When I am finished, I hope what’s left is as pure and simply stated as I can write it.”

While she’s chipping away, Kelly imagines pictures to go with her words , but she never shares them. Instead she strives to leave lots of space in her stories for the illustrator to fill with art.

*What inspired this fun story about a Saturday night romp?*

As a family activity, my husband Curtis, and children, Max and Alexis, (along with their two friends) took Country Swing dance lessons. For eight weeks we danced circles around each other. You can imagine how much fun it was, and the sore toes we got from trying to do moves like “the pretzel.” While I was writing the book I played country music non-stop and made Curtis Texas Two-Step me around the house while I recited the story, so I could be sure to get the rhythm right.

*How do you know an idea is worth working on?*

A good story idea makes me tingle. It’s like an electric current zips through me. It gets me asking questions. If I want to find out more about something , especially how a story turns out, I know readers will, too. When a story idea zaps me, I check the library and book sellers first to see if other books on the same topic are already out there. If the story I am imagining has already been published, I have to consider whether or not the world “needs” another book on the same topic.

Sometimes the answer is “No, silly, read those other books.” Sometimes a story idea just won’t let me go. It niggles me saying, “Tell me! Write my story, Kelly! You need to write this!”

Each of us has our own voice, our own way of looking at things. The key is to infuse our stories with our unique personalities and viewpoints. It means digging deeper, exploring different characters and new ways of looking at a topic, which isn’t always easy. But, if I can find a way to make a story idea fresh and exciting to me, then it’s worth working on.



*What types of revision do you do?*

Each of my stories goes through many, many, many, many revisions, at least 10 to 20 per picture book. And I'm talking about true revision: rewriting scenes, adding and deleting characters, moving lines around, not just fixing spelling errors and punctuation.

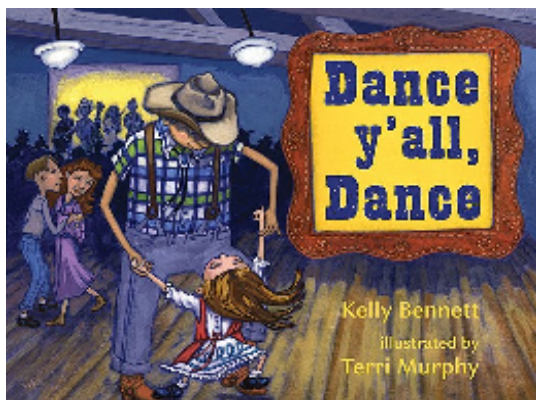
I begin with lists: lists of words, lists of characters, lists of possible scenes. This fills me with ideas. Next, I sit down and write. I write the complete story, from beginning to end. The next few times, I'll work on story structure. Making sure the story makes sense. That it has a beginning, a middle, and a great ending. I can't move ahead with the story until I love the ending.

Once the story feels good, I begin cutting words. They say that writers "have to tell themselves the story first," which means writing much more than needs to be in the story. The manuscript for a picture book, like *Dance, Y'all, Dance*, may have only 400 words in the end, but an early version had more than 1200 words. I examine every word, and delete every single one that isn't needed. I revise with illustrations in mind. I cut out descriptions, adjectives, everything I think will be "told" in the pictures.

The almost-last revision is especially fun. I "dummy" my story. I print my story and cut it into scenes and lines which I tape into a book of blank pages. I am not good at drawing, but I do draw little line sketches to go with each page. Then, finally, even after the story is going to be published and the illustrator is working on the art, I make more revisions with my editor, and sometimes more, after the copyeditor goes through and double-triple-quadruple checks spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

*What can your fans look forward to next?*

Spring 2010 is a celebration of Fathers! Two picture books featuring fathers and kids will be in bookstores: *Dad and Pop* (Candlewick Press) and *Your Daddy is Just Like You* (G.P. Putnam & Sons).



**Answers to Boot Scootin' Lingo**

- Sweetheart Surprise
- Texas Two-Step
- Western Swing
- Pretzel
- Side Travel
- Wild West Shuffle
- Conversation
- Pistachio
- Country and Western
- Dance Y'all Dance

## A Chat with the Illustrator Terri Murphy

Terri Murphy has been drawing ever since she could hold a crayon. After working as a graphic designer and a portrait artist, she found her heart's home as a children's book illustrator. Terri says "The characters I make up feel like real children to me after a while. We play together in color and form and humor, and then, when the book is done, they fly off into the world." She also writes poetry and short stories, and has won awards for her writing and art. Terri lives in Chicago with her husband, two sons, many flying children, and a dog named Rosie. You can see more of her illustrations at [www.terrimurphyart.com](http://www.terrimurphyart.com).



*Your illustrations really brought Kelly Bennett's book Dance, Y'all, Dance to life. Why do you think you were selected as the illustrator?*

It surprised me. Kelly is a Texan, and Bright Sky Press is a Texas publisher. In the end, I think what was most important was matching Kelly's words with someone who could visually convey the excitement and tight-knit community of the Old West dance halls. The publisher looked at art on my website and chose me, a snowbird who just happens to love cowboys, the homespun frontier, and dance.

*What challenges did you find in illustrating Dance, Y'all, Dance?*

Kelly captured the feeling of arriving at a dance hall so well. Attention is drawn to a large cast of characters right from the beginning. As the illustrator I knew that within this big group of folks, I wanted to have a thread of characters reappear throughout the book in art, if not in words. So I have Buck the dog with his attempts to get into the dance hall, and Grams all gussied up to meet her secret someone throughout the pages.

*Did you have to do any research for the book?*

Tons! There is a mention of Charles Lindbergh flying over the dance hall in a plane, so I knew I'd have to stick to the era of the late 1920's in fashion, furniture, transportation, farm machinery, and gadgetry. I looked up to see if plaster casts were used then (they were) since a boy and girl dance with mended broken legs. Also, many different types of traditional country western dances were named, and I had to make sure I illustrated them correctly.

*What medium do you use in your art?*

Gouache (pronounced *gwash*). It comes in tubes. It's like watercolor, but thicker.

*Is it hard to illustrate a whole picture book?*

It's not hard, but it takes a long time. A lot of time is spent in imagination and sketching, constantly investigating the "what ifs?" The art director at the publishing house has input too and sometimes makes changes to the sketches. There is a lot to figure out, like where the type will go on each page and how best to illustrate the author's words. After many months it's all finished and we send it off to the printer!

*What do you like most about being a picture book illustrator?*

I love playing with colors and paint and design, but mostly I like viewing the world again through the eyes of a child. I'm so happy if my illustrations make kids laugh, or wonder about something, or pick up a paintbrush themselves!

*Is there anything you like least about your job?*

Sometimes the tight deadlines means I have to give up doing other things. But I love creating art, so it doesn't make me too sad. I may miss a party or two, and the dust bunnies sometimes threaten to take over my house. In the end, there is a book where there once was none!

*What's next? Another picture book?*

Part of a freelance illustrator's job is always to find the next job. I also illustrate for children's magazines and educational publishers. I write too, and would love to be both author and illustrator for my own picture book. So I mock-up picture book dummies and send those out to publishers. Then I wait, run out to the mailbox every day, check email and phone messages....and look for my next chance to dance!

## Dance Hall Diorama

### Materials:

- The book *Dance, Ya'll, Dance*
- A sizeable box of some kind (e.g., a shoe box, a shirt box, a large gift box, etc.)
- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- Tape
- Construction paper
- Computer paper
- A pencil
- Markers, crayons, or tempera paint
- Dancer cut-outs
- Some good ol' Country and Western background music

### Procedure:













- Open one end of your Dance Hall Diorama by cutting down the side corners of one of the wide sides of your box. Study the illustrations in the book. See the big horseshoe arch welcoming the dancers? Can you create something welcoming like that with construction paper, scissors, markers, tape, and glue?
- Decorate the inside of the dance hall. Look at the illustrations in the book. Where will you put the stage? Windows? What sorts of things are hanging on the walls inside? Set a festive mood with your decorations.
- Now...crank up the music! Let's get ready for the folks to arrive!
- Cut out the dancers printed on the next page. Be careful to make sure you leave a tab at their feet. Crease the tab back under the cut-out's feet. Curve the tab just a little before taping it to the dance hall floor. By doing this you make sure that the cut-out will stand up.
- With the computer paper and pencil, to add more dancers and musicians to the dance floor trace anything you'd like in the book. Or, better yet, draw some boot scooters of your own. Why not draw yourself? Put you and few friends on the dance floor. Kick up your heels and have some fun!

*Note: Author Kelly Bennett and illustrator Terri Murphy would LOVE to see your Dance Hall Diorama! Why don't you take a digital picture and send it them via email. You can contact Kelly at [www.kellybennett.com](http://www.kellybennett.com) and Terri at [www.terrimurphyart.com](http://www.terrimurphyart.com). Yee Haw!!!!*



## A Matching Game: Research Topics

Cut out labels and match them with the corresponding picture or further challenge the child by having them write the correct term beneath the appropriate picture. A manipulative matching game can be made by printing this sheet on cardstock. Cut out labels. Trim game board. Laminate pieces and enjoy!

- Yellow Rose of Texas
- RCA Victor
- The Spirit of St. Louis
- Fiddle
- Tin Lizzie
- Map of Texas
- Mockingbird
- State Flag
- Cowboy Hat
- The Texas Star
- Bluebonnet
- Cowboy Boots



## Further Study: Research Topics

The incredible historical references in *Dance, Y'all, Dance* are perfectly adaptable for the development of research skills. One effective research methodology is to pose a question regarding the topic. The research questions below pertain to the topics presenting in this guide's matching game. A strategy for classroom adaptation is to form 12 small groups. Give each group one of the prescribed topics, or allow the students to come up with their own topics of interest. Once research is completed, encourage the children to present their findings publically. Some sample questions are listed below. This activity can be as elaborate or as simple as your time allows.

### The Yellow Rose of Texas

- What are the words of this famous song?
- The Yellow Rose of Texas is very important to the history of Texas. Why is this so?

### The Bluebonnet

- Why is the bluebonnet important to the state of Texas?

### The Tin Lizzie

- Another name for the Tin Lizzie was the Model T Ford, and was built by a man named Henry Ford. Have you ever heard of an automobile named *Ford*?
- Compare and contrast the Tin Lizzie to the cars of today.
- How are they the same?
- How are they different?

### The Spirit of St. Louis

- How did this plane get its name?
- Who was Charles Lindbergh?
- Compare and contrast the Spirit of St. Louis with today's small aircraft.
- How are they the same?
- How are they different?

### The RCA Victor

- Look closely at the RCA Victor advertisement. Interpret the message, "His Master's Voice." What does that mean?
- Compare and contrast this old fashioned record player to an ipod.
- How are they the same?
- How are they different?

**The Fiddle**

- Is there any difference between a fiddle and a violin?
- How does fiddle music differ than violin music?
- Can you find some fiddle music to play for your class?

**Map of Texas**

- Where is Texas located on the map of the United States?
- Can you find where Greene, Texas is located?

**Mockingbird**

- Why is the Mockingbird important to the state of Texas?

**State Flag of Texas**

- Texas is known as the Lone Star State. Why is this so?

**The Texas Star**

- Texas is known as the Lone Star Republic. What does that mean?

**Cowboy Boots**

- Study the construction of the cowboy boot.
- What is the purpose for the high insole?
- What is the function of the sharp toes?
- What is the function of the raised heel?
- How are spurs attached to a cowboy boot?