

What Is a Brand?

by William C. Wertz



- 1 Suppose you owned cattle. You would live on a ranch. The people next door might own cattle too. You would have a fence. What would happen if the neighbors' cattle got loose? What if your cattle got mixed with theirs? How could you tell which cattle were yours? You could tie ribbons to their tails, but ribbons might fall off.
- 2 Ranchers and cowhands solve this problem by branding each animal on its side. A brand is a mark made with a red-hot iron. The iron burns the mark into the animal's hide. This hurts, but not for long. Cattle have tough hides.
- 3 Each ranch has a different brand. Some are made of letters, like JK. Sometimes the J and K are stuck together: \mathcal{JK} .
- 4 A leaning letter is called tumbling. Here's a Tumbling T brand: λ .
- 5 A letter on its side is called lazy. This is the Lazy J brand: ζ .
- 6 A curve like this \smile makes a letter rock like it is in a crib. Here's the Rocking R brand: \mathcal{R} .
- 7 A line like this — is a bar. Can you name this brand: \overline{BQ} ? If you said Bar BQ, you're right!
- 8 Little wings make a brand fly. Here's the Flying W brand: \mathcal{W} . Little feet make them walk: \mathcal{Y} . That's the Walking Y brand.
- 9 A brand can be any sign — not just letters. Here's the brand of someone who always lends a helping hand: \mathcal{H} . What would you pick for your brand?

COMPREHENSION

A Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write *a* or *b*.

- This story shows that cowhands brand their cattle
 - when the cattle get loose.
 - to show which cattle they own.
- Branding is a good way to mark cattle because
 - the brand won't come off.
 - everyone can read letters.
- Before the branding iron can be used,
 - two letters have to be stuck together.
 - a cowhand has to get it very hot.

- A letter on its side is called lazy because
 - it looks as if it is moving around.
 - it looks as if it is lying down.
- A brand can be any sign except one
 - with a walking letter and a lazy letter.
 - that looks just like another rancher's brand.

LEARN ABOUT WORDS

B Often you can find out the meaning of a word by seeing how it is used in a story. The other words in the story give you clues.

Find the word in the story that best fits each meaning. (A paragraph number tells you where to look.)

Write the word.

- bulls, cows, steers (1)
- burning a mark on (2)
- thick skin (2)
- falling down; stumbling (4)
- move from side to side (6)

C Read the words you wrote. Which one best fits in each sentence? Write the word.

- The cowhand will sit back and _____ in his chair.
- A red-hot iron is used for _____ an animal.
- Some letters seem to be flying, but others seem to be _____ over.
- All the _____ on a ranch must be branded.
- The animal's _____ is so thick that branding doesn't hurt for long.

THINK ABOUT IT

D The man is **big**.
Sarah is **small**.

A word that has the opposite, or nearly the opposite, meaning of another word is called an antonym. *Big* and *small* are antonyms.

straight	right	lost
ice-cold	different	

Read each pair of sentences below. To complete the second sentence, write the antonym for the underlined word. Use the words in the box.

- 1 These cattle have the same brand. Those cattle have a _____ brand.
- 2 Some brands are curved. Others are _____.
- 3 Get the red-hot iron. Then dip it in _____ water.
- 4 Tying ribbons is wrong. Branding is _____.
- 5 A rancher won back her prize cattle. She had _____ them.

E brown clear floor glass steer

These five words begin with consonant blends. The letters *br*, *cl*, *fl*, *gl*, and *st* are consonant blends. Each pair of letters stands for two sounds.

Try the blends *br*, *cl*, *fl*, *gl*, and *st* in each unfinished word. Which blend gives you a word that makes sense in the sentence? Write that word.

- 6 A red-hot iron is used to ____ and cattle.
- 7 Cowhands wear ____ oves on their hands when they work.
- 8 Brands are made by ____ ever people.
- 9 Sometimes a brand is two letters ____ uck together.
- 10 A letter with little wings is a ____ ying brand.