



## DISCUSSION & ACTIVITY GUIDE

Developed by Kate Narita, fourth grade teacher at  
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# About the Author: Heather Lang



“The story of famed rodeo queen Lucille Mulhall is retold as a lesson in girl power and following one's dreams.”

*-Kirkus*

Heather Lang first started writing in fourth grade after she read HARRIET THE SPY by Louise Fitzhugh. For years she kept a top-secret journal, just like Harriet. At Duke University, she loved researching and solving mysteries in her science classes and earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology. Later she put her passion for research and writing to use as a public health attorney. Heather now writes fiction and nonfiction for children. She is especially drawn to nonfiction stories about men and women who overcame great obstacles and fought for their dreams. She is the author of QUEEN OF THE TRACK: Alice Coachman, Olympic High-Jump Champion (Boyd's Mills Press 2012), illustrated by Floyd Cooper.

When she is not writing, Heather is busy with her four children. She loves sports, taking art classes with her daughters, and going on family adventures. You can learn more about Heather on her website at [heatherlangbooks.com](http://heatherlangbooks.com).

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## Grades 2-3

### Before You Read Discussion Questions

1. Who knows what a cowboy is?
2. What do cowboys do?
3. Do you think girls can do what cowboys do? Why or why not?
4. Would someone read the title please?
5. This book is about the original cowgirl Lucille Mulhall. What do you think Lucille will do in this book?  
-Have students do a think, pair, share and write their answers on the board.

### While You Read Discussion Questions

1. When does this story take place? About how many years ago was that?
2. What were girls expected to do in the 1890's?
3. Do you think boys were expected to do the same activities?
4. "Wild animals didn't scare Lucille." What does this tell you about Lucille?
5. Look at the bystander's faces when Lucille, at age thirteen, enters the rough-riding competition. How do you think they were feeling?
6. What does envy mean?
7. Mrs. Mulhall agrees to let Lucille perform for Vice Presidential Candidate Teddy Roosevelt if Lucille promises it will be her last public appearance as a cowgirl. Do you think it will be Lucille's last public performance? Why or why not?
8. What did most states prevent women from doing in the early 1900's?
9. Lucille could rope 1,200 pound steers. What does this tell you about Lucille?
10. Look at Lucille's face when she ropes the steer in 29 ½ seconds? How do you think she's feeling?

### After You Read Discussion Questions

1. Does anyone know what the word discrimination means?  
Define discrimination-the unfair treatment of different categories of people based on religious beliefs, skin color or gender.
2. Ask students to think/pair/share on how Lucille proved that discrimination isn't based on facts.
3. Lucille overcame the obstacle of discrimination to reach her goals. What obstacles have you overcome to reach your goals?

## Grades 4-5

### Before You Read Discussion Questions

1. Should girls participate in the same sports as boys? Why or why not?
  - Have students do a think, pair, share
  - Make a T-chart with reasons for and against girls participating in the same sports as boys
2. Ask a volunteer to read the title. Lucille Mulhall, the original cowgirl, had to overcome discrimination to become a cowgirl. What kind of discrimination do you predict Lucille had to ignore to reach her goal?
  - Have students do a think, pair, share
  - Record predictions on board and/or in literature notebooks.

### While You Read Discussion Questions

1. What were girls expected to do in the 1890's?
2. Do you think it's fair that there were different expectations for boys and girls? Why or why not?
3. What character trait can you infer about Lucille from the fact that she cut herself free of her lariat while bouncing behind an unbroken horse?
4. Look at the bystander's faces when Lucille, at age thirteen, enters the rough-riding competition. What can you infer about how the bystanders were feeling? How do the bystanders' expressions contrast to Lucille's expression? How do you think Lucille was feeling?
5. Mrs. Mulhall agrees to let Lucille perform for Vice Presidential Candidate Teddy Roosevelt if Lucille promises it will be her last public appearance as a cowgirl. Do you predict it will be Lucille's last public performance? Why or why not?
6. What did most states prevent women from doing in the early 1900's?
7. Do you think Lucille was crazy for rough riding at a time when other women weren't? Why or why not?
8. Infer how Lucille and the bystanders are feeling when she ropes the 1,200 pound steer. Compare and contrast your inferences.

### After You Read Discussion Questions

1. What would be different today in the United States if women couldn't vote or own property? Students may be interested in knowing that many states had laws requiring women to quit teaching school once they married. Would it be against the law for you to be their teacher?
2. Heather Lang writes, "Lucille didn't give a lick about what other people thought." Is there something you care so much about that you would do it no matter what other people thought? Why or why not?
3. Have you ever been discriminated against based on your age, your gender, the color of your skin, or your religion? If so, explain how. If not, explain why you don't think you've ever experienced discrimination.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

### Comprehension Questions

Directions: Read each question and write your answers in complete sentences. Each question is worth two points. You will earn a point for the correct answer and a point for correct capitalization and punctuation.

1. Why was Lucille different from most girls in the 1890's?

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2. Did Lucille's mother want her to be a ranch hand? Explain why or why not.

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3. Did Lucille worry about the same things as her mother. Explain why or why not?

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4. Which Vice Presidential candidate did Lucille perform for?

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5. Lucille roped 1,200 pound steers. Would you want to do this? Explain why or why not.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

### True or False

Read each statement below. Write a "T" for true next to each correct statement. Write a "F" for false next to each incorrect statement.

1. In the 1890's, all women could vote and own property. \_\_\_\_\_
2. At age ten, Lucille could mend fences and brand cattle. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Both of Lucille's parents supported her rough-riding. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Lucille performed for Vice Presidential candidate, Teddy Roosevelt. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Lucille broke the world record for steer roping. \_\_\_\_\_

### Vocabulary Cloze Activity

Write the **bolded** word that best completes each sentence in the blank.

**astride**                      **brand**                      **lariat**                      **mend**                      **steer**

1. Lucille used a \_\_\_\_\_ to lasso an unbroken horse.
2. Instead of riding sidesaddle like most ladies, Lucille rode \_\_\_\_\_ like a cowboy.
3. Lucille roped a 1,200 pound \_\_\_\_\_ in 29<sup>1/2</sup> seconds.
4. Ranchers use hammers and nails to \_\_\_\_\_ fences.
5. Before Mr. Mulhall would give Lucille her own herd, she had to learn how to \_\_\_\_\_ cattle, so everyone would know the animals belonged to Lucille Mulhall.

## Comprehension, True or False, Vocabulary Cloze Answers Grades 2-3

### Comprehension Question Answers

1. Lucille was different from most girls because she didn't care about becoming a lady and rode astride like a cowboy.
2. Lucille's mother didn't want her to be a ranch hand because it wasn't considered ladylike.
3. Lucille didn't worry about the same things as her mother. Lucille worried about not being able to ride and rope, but Lucille's mother worried Lucille would get hurt.
4. Lucille performed for Teddy Roosevelt.
5. Answers will vary.

### True or False Answers

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. False
5. True

### Vocabulary Cloze Answers

1. lariat
2. astride
3. steer
4. mend
5. brand

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Comprehension Questions

Directions: Read each question and write your answers in complete sentences. Each question is worth two points. You will earn a point for the correct answer and a point for correct capitalization and punctuation.

1. When Lucille gets tangled up in her lariat while roping an unbroken horse, she cuts herself free. When she ropes a steer and her first rope breaks, she lassos the steer with a second lariat. What can you infer about Lucille from these actions?

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2. When Lucille was growing up, what future do you think Mrs. Mulhall envisioned for Lucille? What evidence supports your inference?

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3. Do you think this was the future most mothers desired for their daughters in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries? Why or why not?

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4. In the back matter Heather Lang writes that Lucille, “was determined to do what she loved, despite the challenges.” What are you determined to do despite the challenges?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Multiple Choice Questions

Read each question and circle the correct answer. You may only circle one answer.

1. Which of the activities did Lucille Mulhall love?
  - a. Sewing
  - b. Cooking
  - c. Riding
  - d. All of the above
  
2. Which of these items did Lucille rope?
  - a. Fences
  - b. Horses
  - c. Steer
  - d. All of the above
  
3. Which of these *The Original Cowgirl* phrases is a simile?
  - a. "Governor was smart and sweeter than a lump of sugar."
  - b. "Her rope sang for the crowd."
  - c. "She stuck like a burr to her galloping pony."
  - d. "She spotted the vicious varmint."
  
4. Which of these *The Original Cowgirl* phrases is a metaphor?
  - a. "Governor was smart and sweeter than a lump of sugar."
  - b. "Her rope sang for the crowd."
  - c. "She stuck like a burr to her galloping pony."
  - d. "She spotted the vicious varmint."
  
5. Which of these *The Original Cowgirl* phrases depicts personification?
  - a. "Governor was smart and sweeter than a lump of sugar."
  - b. "Her rope sang for the crowd."
  - c. "She stuck like a burr to her galloping pony."
  - d. "She spotted the vicious varmint."
  
6. Which of these two *The Original Cowgirl* phrases best depict alliteration?
  - a. "Governor was smart and sweeter than a lump of sugar," and "Her rope sang for the crowd."
  - b. "Her rope sang for the crowd," and "She stuck like a burr to her galloping pony."
  - c. "She stuck like a burr to her galloping pony," and "She spotted the vicious varmint."
  - d. "She spotted the vicious varmint," and "Governor was smart and sweeter than a lump of sugar."

## Comprehension and Multiple Choice Answers Grades 4-5

### Comprehension Question Answers

1. Answers will vary. Some possibilities are quick-thinking, prepared, and calm.
2. Lucille's mother probably envisioned that Lucille would become a housewife like Mrs. Mulhall did. One example of evidence from the text that supports this answer is, "But Mrs. Mulhall decided it was time for Lucille to become a lady. She sent her to a boarding school in St. Louis."
3. Answers will vary.
4. Answers will vary.

### Multiple Choice Answers

1. C
2. D
3. C-a simile compares two unlike objects using like or as.
4. A-a metaphor compares two unlike objects without using like or as.
5. B-personification attributes human characteristics to animals or inanimate objects.
6. D-alliteration is when two or more words in a word group begin with the same letter or the same sound.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Compute each problem and show your work. Write each answer on the line and be sure to include a label.

**Cowgirl Computations**

**Show Your Work**

1. There are four groups of cows in the pen. Each group has six cows. How many total cows are in the pen?

\_\_\_\_\_

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2. There are forty-eight pigs in the barn. They are divided equally into six pens. How many sheep are in each pen?

\_\_\_\_\_

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3. If a cowgirl had a herd of thirty-six cattle and she had already branded sixteen. How many cattle did she still have to brand?

\_\_\_\_\_

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4. If a cowgirl's first lariat was twenty-eight feet and her second lariat was thirty-five feet, how much longer was her second lariat?

\_\_\_\_\_

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5. If a cowgirl has an hour of time but she has to feed the horses before she can practice rough-riding, how much time will she be able to rough-ride if it takes her twenty-five minutes to feed the horses?

\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Compute each problem and show your work. Write each answer on the line and be sure to include a label.

**Cowgirl Computations**

**Show Your Work**

1. If a cowgirl wants to make a thirty-foot lariat, how many yards of rope will she need?

\_\_\_\_\_

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2. Governor was sixteen hands tall. A hand is equal to four inches. How many feet tall was Governor? \*

\_\_\_\_\_

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3. Lucille roped her steer in  $29\frac{1}{2}$  seconds. If her time is rounded to thirty seconds, how many steer could Lucille rope in an hour?

\_\_\_\_\_

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4. There were twenty-four cows in a pen. One-eighth of the cows were black. One-fourth of the cows were white. One-fourth of the cows were brown. The rest were piebald. How many piebald cows were in the pen?

\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

5. If Lucille's lariat was thirty-five feet long when she roped that unbroken horse and she was only holding five-feet of rope after she cut herself free, what fraction of the rope was tied onto the horse?

\_\_\_\_\_

\*A hand is a horse's height from the ground to the top of its withers/shoulders.

## Cowgirl Computation Answers for Second and Third Grade

1. Twenty-four cows
2. Eight sheep
3. Twenty cattle
4. Seven feet
5. Thirty-five minutes

## Cowgirl Computation Answers for Fourth and Fifth Grade

1. Ten yards of rope
2. Five feet and four inches tall
3. 120 steer in one hour
4. Nine piebald cows
5.  $\frac{6}{7}$  of the rope

## SUGGESTED BOOK PROJECTS

### HANDS-ON MEASURING

Interpersonal, Visual/Spatial  
Logical/mathematical

Find out how many hands tall each student is. In small groups, have students measure each student's height in inches from the floor to the top of their shoulder. Divide the total number of inches by four to figure out how many hands tall each student is. Have each student write his or her height in hands on a three-by-three sticky note and make a line plot on the board of your students' heights.

### EVERY HERO HAS A STORY AND A LOGO

Visual/Spatial

Lucille Mulhall is definitely a heroine, and Heather Lang told her story. Now it's up to you to design a logo for Lucille on a four-by-four square of white paper. Read about Lucille's nicknames in the backmatter and check out some superhero logos on the web for inspiration and get drawing.

### FIVE-PARAGRAPH PERSUASIVE PAPER

Verbal/Linguistic

Lucille had to persuade her mama to let her perform for Vice Presidential candidate, Teddy Roosevelt. Write a five paragraph essay persuading your parents or your principal for a privilege you think kids should have. Perhaps you think you should be able to choose your own bedtime or maybe you think if you had two recesses a day instead of one that you'd be able to concentrate better. Take a loop out of Lucille's lariat and remember to highlight your strengths in your essay.