In 1866, cowboys began herding cattle up the trails from Texas to Kansas. Cowtowns such as Abilene, Ellsworth, and Dodge City became well known for being the end of the trail. Before reaching Kansas, cowboys spent many days in their saddles. The days were long and the work was hard. Cowboys often wrote poems, songs, and jokes to occupy their minds and pass the time.

The following poem contains topics found in most cowboy poems. They tell us what it was like to be a cowboy. Read the poem then read the list of topics. Draw a line between the words in brown and the correct topic.

**Headin' North**

They were **rugged men** who ventured forth,  
With a herd of **longhorns** headin' North,  
**Wind** and **rain**,  
Far off train.  
**Laying rails**,  
**Blazing trails**,  
On the South they came,  
Both hard to tame.

Into **Dodge City**, **many thousand head**,  
**Beef** for a nation crying to be fed.  
Pushed by restless men who were seldom still,  
Except those laid out on old **Boot Hill**.

Men and cattle of a bygone age  
In Western history wrote a **colorful page**.  
Some of it bad, some of it good,  
But they left their mark where'er they stood.  
--- Harold Carpenter

**Topics**

- Railroads
- Name of cattle town
- Interesting history
- Cattle trail
- Tough cowboys
- Use for the cattle
- Number of cattle in a herd
- Spanish cattle with long horns
- Terrible weather

Cowboys prepare to hit the trail.