

WILD WEST WORDS FROM THE SPANISH

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The history of the American West is full of the adventures of the Spanish explorers. They have left their mark on the American language in both words from the Spanish and words via the Spanish from the Amerindians; for instance, barbecue is from the Spanish version of Taino Indian for "a structure of sticks." In these pages, I often confront readers with rather difficult quizzes about words. This time the quiz may be easy for you, no problema, for these are ordinary American words and Spanish is the language of a large and growing minority in this country, familiar in everyday speech, from aficionado to macho. Here are the definitions of some Wild West words. What are the words themselves? Answers can be found in Answers and Solutions at the end of this issue.

1. From the word for a pit in a mine, a dry gully.
2. From a crash or an uproar, a headlong flight.
3. From a reckless state, a bold outlaw.
4. From shade, a broad-brimmed hat.
5. From a court of justice, a jail.
6. From Nahuatl via Spanish, a thorny tree.
7. From small huts to a small farm.
8. From a circle to a place for collected livestock.
9. From crazy (from Latin for owl) in Spanish to crazy in American slang.
10. From "let us go" to fleeing rapidly.
11. From a cowboy to a cow puncher.
12. From rough to a roughly tamed horse.
13. From riding in a circle to an exhibition of bronco-busting, etc.
14. From an Amerindian legend to a fabulous place.
15. From painted to a horse of a different color.
16. From evergreen oak (maybe Basque) to protection for the legs.
17. From a tube to a narrow valley.
18. From a container for drink to a saloon.
19. From stranger (in Ute Indian language) to an Amerindian tribe.
20. From people to a settlement or town.