

Lesson Plans

The Puncher

Frederic Remington

1895

Oil on canvas, 24 X 20 1/8"

CONCEPT

Students will view, analyze and interpret the work of art. Students will learn that artists can portray a person as a heroic ideal.

TEKS

The SRM Educator Guide lessons support inquiry-based discussion and align with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for art, history and English language arts. To select correlations for your grade level visit the [Texas Education Agency TEKS website](#).

VOCABULARY

- **Puncher** - a cowboy, a hired hand who tends cattle and performs other duties on horseback.
- **Hero** - a person admired for courage, good deeds, or noble qualities.
- **Myth** - a traditional or legendary story, usually concerning a hero or event.



DESCRIBE

What is the main focus of this painting? How do the positions of the horse and rider compare? Where is the rider looking? What clues has the artist given you as to the role of the rider? How many clues can you identify? What is the setting of the painting? What time of day might the painting depict? How realistically do you think the horse and rider are portrayed? Do you think a real person and horse served as models for this painting? Why?



Additional Lessons
Sid Richardson Museum

Lesson designed for use with *Heroes of the Old West: An Educator's Guide* written by Nancy Walkup, Director of North Texas Institute for Educators of the Visual Arts, 2012.



INQUIRE

One of the myths or stories of the American West suggests the cowboy is a folk hero. Why could the artist have considered this rider to be a hero? How could this painting represent the myth of the cowboy in the American West?

SUPPOSE

The artist painted this particular artwork to exchange with Howard Pyle, another artist who was also a painter and illustrator and who portrayed heroic characters. Why do you think Remington chose this subject to paint? What other subjects could represent the myth of the American West?

INFORM

A puncher is another name for a cowboy, a hired hand who tended cattle and performed other duties on horseback. James McCauley, a working cowboy, once wrote, "All I got out of cowpunching is the experience. I paid a good price for that. I wouldn't take anything for what I have saw, but I wouldn't care to travel the same road again, and my advice to any young man or boy is to stay home and not be a rambler, as it won't buy you anything. And above everything stay away from a cow ranch, as not many cowpunchers ever save any money and 'tis a dangerous life to live." The reality of the West was often much different than how it is portrayed now.

EXTEND

Both Frederic Remington and Charles Russell depicted images that portray the myth of the American West in their artworks. They wanted to record and preserve a way of

life they believed was disappearing. Horses were favorite subjects and "both knew the West as thoroughly as they knew the horse, and our own knowledge of the West has been shaped indelibly by their genius, enlarging the myth but enriching the heritage." (*The Art of Remington and Russell*, Edward Hake Phillips, Austin College)

Compare Frederic Remington's painting, *The Puncher*, with Charles Russell's *The Scout*. How are the horses different? Do they have any similarities? What differences and similarities do you see in the riders? How do the two paintings differ in their portrayal of the American West?



C. Russell, *The Scout*, 1907



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