

# Western riding

## ■ What is Western riding?

**Western riding** is a riding style typical of some rural areas of the USA, whose popularity is spreading in Italy, too. In western riding, the horse is trained to respond to slight commands given by the rider; this way of riding emphasises the partnership between the horse and the rider.

## ■ A bit of history

Western riding originated from ranching and **warfare** traditions brought to the Americas by the Spanish colonisers and further developed by the American cowboys in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As American settlers moved west and built large **cattle** ranches, the riding style evolved to become a means of driving and **herding** their cattle over the rough ground of the ranch.

## ■ Modern west riding disciplines

Over time, the skills needed for ranch work became competitive events. Today, western riding includes many disciplines like **reining**, in which the horse has to perform some specific movements commanded by the rider; **cutting**, which is separating a cow from the herd; or **barrel racing**, which is a timed speed event.

**cattle:** *bestiame*  
**herd:** *radunare (v.);*  
*mandria, gregge (n.)*  
**horn:** *cornio,*

*protuberanza*  
**lope:** *galoppo*  
**to slide:** *scivolare*  
**warfare:** *bellico*



## ■ The equipment for western riding

Western riding requires specific equipment, such as:

- a western saddle, which is large, heavy, and has a prominent saddle **horn**, whose function was originally to fasten a rope to it when catching cattle. The saddle is designed to give comfort and stability to both the horse and the rider when riding for a long time;
- reins: originally, cowboys controlled the horse with one hand, using the free one to handle ropes; today, in modern western riding, horses are still controlled using one hand and neck reins.

Riders use their seat, weight, and rein contact to give instructions. The standard gaits are walk, jog (a slow trot), and **lope** (a light canter).

**1**  Search the text and find the information required.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1. The country where Western riding is typical of. ....</p> <p>2. The aspect of riding that western riding emphasises. ....</p> <p>3. The populations who brought the discipline to America. ....</p> | <p>4. What they employed it for. ....</p> <p>5. When the American cowboys started to develop this discipline. ....</p> <p>6. What ranch owners used this discipline for. ....</p> |
|--|---|

**2**   Unscramble the words and match them with their definitions.

- |                        |                          |  |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| 1. braler gnicar ..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>a.</b> A seat fastened on the back of a horse or other animal for riding. |
| 2. einrs .....         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>b.</b> Actions related to war or battle.                                  |
| 3. elasdd .....        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>c.</b> A timed speed event in Western riding competitions.                |
| 4. gjo .....           | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>d.</b> A slow trot gait.  |
| 5. erafraw .....       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>e.</b> The discipline that involves separating a cow from the herd.       |
| 6. pelo .....          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>f.</b> In Western riding competition, the light canter gait.              |
| 7. talctel .....       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>g.</b> Long, narrow straps attached to a horse's neck.                    |
| 8. tigtucn .....       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>h.</b> A group of animals reared in farms or ranches.                     |

**3**    **GROUP WORK** Prepare a presentation on one of the disciplines of western riding.