Westward Expansion - The Pony Express

by ReadWorks

Before the Transcontinental Telegraph was completed, the Pony Express was the fastest way to send messages across the country. They used horses and riders to send news across 1,966 miles. The Pony Express **operated** through Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, and California. The riders rode as fast as they could. They carried mail in every type of weather. They traveled by day and by night. The Pony Express **operated** only from April 1860 to October 1861, but the organization and its riders became **legendary**.

Each rider earned about 100 dollars a month. This was a lot more money than most other jobs paid. According to one source, the text below was an **original** advertisement printed in a California newspaper. The ad was meant to recruit riders. Does your **spirit** of adventure call you to answer this ad?



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Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1. What did the Pony Express use to send messages across the country?

A. 100 dollars

B. horses and riders

C. advertisements

D. railroads

2. What does the author describe in the first paragraph?

A. how much the riders of the Pony Express earned

B. the purpose of the Pony Express

C. how many riders were in the Pony Express

D. where riders for the Pony Express were recruited from

3. Riders of the Pony Express worked very hard even in tough conditions. What evidence supports this conclusion?

A. "Each rider earned about 100 dollars a month. This was a lot more money than most other jobs paid."

B. "The ad was meant to recruit riders. Does your spirit of adventure call you to answer this ad?"

C. "The riders rode as fast as they could. They carried mail in every type of weather. They traveled by day and by night."

D. "Before the Transcontinental Telegraph was completed, the Pony Express was the fastest way to send messages across the country."

4. After reading the ad for recruiting Pony Express riders, you could predict that

A. it was a dangerous job.

B. it was a relaxing job.

C. anyone could be a Pony Express rider.

D. the riders were scared of heights.

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5. The passage "The Pony Express" is mostly about

A. different types of horses.

B. an old way to deliver mail.

C. the type of person that makes the best rider.

D. the Transcontinental Railroad.

6. Why did the author include the newspaper ad in the text?

A. to show readers where the Pony Express operated

B. to help the reader become a Pony Express rider

C. to give readers more information about who Pony Express riders were

D. to compare newspaper ads to current TV ads

7. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

The Pony Express was the fastest way to send messages across the United States _____ the Transcontinental Telegraph was finished.

A. until

B. after

C. unless

D. although

8. In what conditions would the riders for the Pony Express ride?

9. What kind of person would have chosen to be a Pony Express rider? Support your answer with at least 2 details from the text.

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