



1 Get ready

First, read the introduction to the text and imagine Ross's father's reaction when he found his son. Then, imagine what happened to Ross afterwards.

Robert Lindneux,
The Stampede, 1932

Red-nosed kid



*Since he was a kid, Ross, 14, has always dreamt of being a cowboy.
One day he leaves the family farm in Texas and runs away to go West.
A few days later he is recognized by the sheriff, who gets in touch with his father.*

When the sheriff shook hands with dad he says that if it's in the breed¹ to go, there's no use tryin' to keep a kid at home, for he'd left, himself, that way.

The only thing dad said about my runnin' off was that I ought to be ashamed to worry mother as I had. An' when mother cried an' said how glad she was to see me back, it made it tough on me. For
5 what the sheriff said about it bein' in the breed to go was right: the thing was always on my mind.

I had one sister a year older than I was and I used to tell her my troubles, for no matter what I told her, she'd never tell the folks. So I finally told her that I was goin' to leave.

"Don't you run off again," she says, "for just the other night I heard mother talkin' to dad. An' dad said next time you wanted to leave he was goin' to let you go."

10 That put things in an altogether² different light. Only a day or so later dad spoke to me. We was eatin' supper at the time. An' without a hint of warnin'³ he cleared his throat an' asked me when I planned to go out West again. I didn't expect he'd put it up to me that way. But I says, "Pretty soon."

"Now, don't go runnin' off," he says, "an' worry your mother as you did before. For if you're dead-set on goin' West, I'll get you an outfit an' let you go."

15 That was all dad ever said, but he bought me a second-hand saddle an' a little white pony that one of the neighbors owned.

Now that the thing was really set for me to go, I could hardly wait.

Dad gave me forty dollars to go with the two I had, an' he said it ought to be enough until I got a job.

20 "Now, don't coyote along the way," he says, "but stop at some farmhouse an' spend the night, an' pay for what you get. We'll be glad to see you when you get ready to come home." With that he ups an' shakes hands with me, just as if I was a man. My sisters all just stood around, an' I grinned at them. But mother called me in the house to say goodbye to her. It was just as well she did, I guess. For I was no cowboy leavin' home to her, but a little red-nosed kid.

Ross SANTEE, *Cowboy* (1928)

1. breed: *espèce, race* – 2. altogether: *complètement* – 3. without a hint of warning: *de but en blanc*

2 Understanding the text

Check your understanding of the text with the help of the worksheet your teacher will give you.

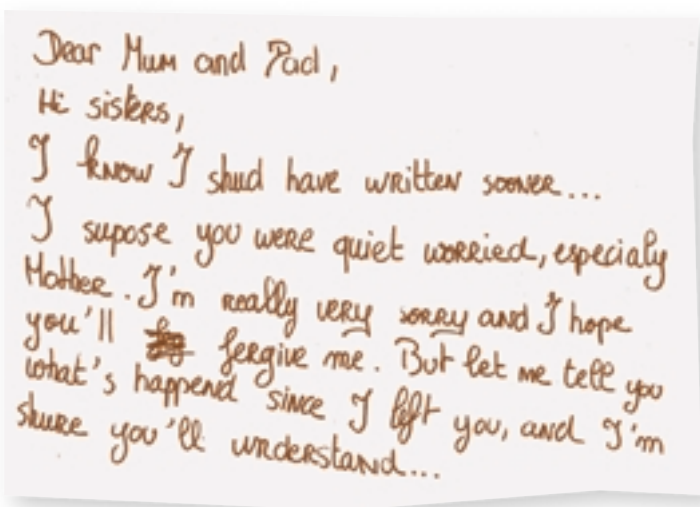
3 Going further

1. Imagine all the reasons which may have urged Ross to go West.
2. How did Ross's parents react to their son running away at the beginning? What explains the change in their attitude?
3. Why did Ross's mother call him inside to say goodbye? Compare her attitude to that of his father and sisters.
4. What can you imagine about Ross's life in the West?

4 Ross's first letter

This is the beginning of the first letter Ross sends home after several weeks in the West. Correct the mistakes, then imagine and write the rest of the letter (about 150 words).

Hints: Ross tells his family why he couldn't write earlier, what he does all day long, where he sleeps, what kind of people he meets... Of course, he also tells them about his feelings. Use the *Toolbox* and be careful with the tenses you use!



Dear Mum and Dad,
Hi sisters,
I know I shud have written sooner...
I suppose you were quiet worried, especially
Mother. I'm really very sorry and I hope
you'll ~~be~~ fergive me. But let me tell you
what's happened since I left you, and I'm
skure you'll understand...

5 Somewhere else...

Would you like to settle somewhere else when you are older? Explain where and why (about 150 words).

Toolbox

Nouns: runaway *fugueur* • argument
dispute = row [rəʊ], urge [ɜ:dʒ] *désir violent*,
will *volonté* • cowboy, six-shooter, rope
[rəʊp] *lasso*, boots, *campfire*, *cattle* *bétail*,
herd [hɜ:d] *troupeau*, ranch, *saloon*, the
Prairie ['prɛəri] • *imagination* = fancy, myth
[mɪθ], the Wild West.

Adjectives: mad = furious, upset *contrarié*,
relieved *soulagé*, stubborn ['stʌbən] *têtu*,
strong-minded *résolu* • strict ≠ lenient
[ˈli:niənt] *indulgent*, powerless • motherly,
loving • lonesome ['lʌnsəm] = lonely •
imaginative.

Verbs: tell off *gronder*, blame sb for sth /
V-ing, punish, keep an eye on, forbid sb to
V ≠ allow sb to V • idealize [aɪ'diəlaɪz],
attract, fascinate [fə'sɪneɪt], dream of V-
ing, look forward to sth / V-ing *avoir très*
envie de qqch. / V, try one's luck *tenter sa*
chance, achieve / reach one's goal *réaliser*,
atteindre son but, change horizons
[hə'reɪzns] • drive (cattle), ride, rope *prendre*
au lasso.