

# Cowboy Clothes

By the 1870s, a distinctive cowboy outfit had become common gear. Cowboys wore a comfortable, loose-fitting cotton shirt and woolen pants. The pants might have had buckskin on the seat and inner thighs, where they would have rubbed against the saddle. The jeans that most people associate with cowboys weren't used until the 1890s. Leather leggings, called chaps, helped protect the cowboy's legs from thorns when riding through thickets. Because it was hard to reach into pants pockets while on a horse, the cowboy wore a vest with deep pockets. A bandanna protected the cowboy's neck from sunburn. It was also used to cover the face when riding through dust storms.

A cowboy's boots were pointed so that they could easily slip into the stirrup of a saddle. The boots had thin soles to give the cowboy a feel for the stirrup. Raised heels kept the boots from slipping through the stirrup. Most boots were almost knee-high to keep out dirt and pebbles. The cowboy would pull on a boot by pulling on floppy grips at the top of the boot.

A cowboy's hat had many purposes. It shaded the cowboy's face from the sun. It caught rain and kept water from running down the cowboy's back. The cowboy could use the hat to fan a flame and swat mosquitoes. He could also use it to carry water!

Name \_\_\_\_\_