

## Lesson 12

## READ THIS STORY #1, Advanced

# Horses

There were no horses in America until Cortez and his soldiers arrived in Mexico in 1519, along with ten stallions and six mares. After Mexico was defeated, an increasing number of settlers arrived from Spain. As they pushed northward, they founded missions and established ranches. They brought horses to use as mounts and to carry supplies.

Imagine the Indians' amazement when they first observed a horse. Until then, Indians were limited to foot travel. Spanish policy did not allow selling guns or horses to Indians. But the Spanish ranchers trained Indians as cowboys to manage their cattle herds. From time to time, horses would stray from their ranches, and the Indians gradually gained possession of a few of these animals.

In 1680, the Indians grew tired of being oppressed. Many tribes joined together in a violent uprising. Every Spanish person was killed or driven out of the area. Thousands of "owner-less" horses remained, free for the taking.

Those horses changed the way many Indian tribes lived. They could now pursue buffalo so efficiently that they had a surplus of meat and hides. They could ride their horses hundreds of miles and trade with other Indian tribes and white men.

Eventually, the wealth of a tribe was measured by the number of horses it possessed.