



The Cowboy ABC – by Chris Demarest

Change up traditional scatter square dance with some fun skills related to cowboys. I use some common calls but then make up skills that follow letters of the alphabet. As students are doing the skills, I ask them to tell me what letter the skill ("call") starts with. I emphasize the beginning letter of the word so that students can identify the correct letter. This book and activity are perfect for a time when you are preparing for Pioneer Day, Rodeo Days, or Wild West Days. It's also a fun and easy activity to share on a parent night.

What is scatter square dance?

- Scatter square dance is a fun way to introduce children to the skills of square dance without the actual structure of square dance or the need for a specific kind of music.
- Children are scattered around a designated area and respond to the calls that the teacher makes. Calls can involve individuals, partners, combined groups of people, or the entire class.
- Calls are randomly made and children select new partners or groups with each new call. They must do this quickly, however, by taking the person/group closest to them when the call is made. Children are encouraged to move about on their own without following each other.
- If working with a large group of children, it is helpful to establish a "Lost and Found" area where children go if they cannot find someone close to them when the call is made. At the "Lost and Found" they will be able to find a friend quickly and begin the activity. As caller, you should allow partner or group skills to last longer to accommodate individuals in the "Lost and Found." (Note: I place a cowboy hat and bandana on a stick for my "Lost and Found" and place it inside the hole at the top of a cone.)
- If there is a child left without a partner: (1) the teacher may choose to temporarily partner with that student, (2) the student might use an "imaginary partner," or (3) the student may join in with the partner/group closest to the "Lost and Found" and share the skill responsibility among all participants.

Examples of skills:

A – Allemande left – take the left hand of a partner and turn in a circle

B – Bow or Curtsy to your partner

Bull stomp – place fingers above head like horns and brush one foot down and back against the floor like a bull

Horse and **Buggy** – one person stands behind a partner and places his hands on his partner's shoulders and they walk. After a while, switch places.

C – Circle two – hold hands with a partner and circle around (can also be done as circle four, with two circles of two joining together to make a group of four.)

Cactus balance – stop moving and balance on one foot with fingers pointed towards ceiling

Coyote Howl – get down on one knee, place hands by mouth and howl

Chuck Wagon bell – Do a bell jump, jumping continuously forward and back on two feet

Circle up the Wagons – Several wagon trains get together and connect to move in a circle

D – Do si do – Circle around a partner other, always keep stomach facing same way

Dust off your Chaps – brush the sides of your legs with your hands

Dive into the water and **Duck** behind a rock - from a circle four, one set of partners makes an arch with their joined hands while the other two dip under the arch and back out – other partners do the same

Lame **Dog** – Hop on one foot

E – Elbow Swing - hook elbows with a partner and turn in a circle

F – Fiddle – pretend to play a fiddle

Around the American **flagpole** – one person down on one knee with pointer finger in air – second person gently holds finger and walks in circle around partner

G – Guitar – pretend to play a guitar

Goodbye – Wave

H – Howdy – Do a big circular wave and say Howwwwwwdy

High 5 – Give a high five to each person you pass or after completing a partner skill

Harmonica – Pretend to play

Tip your **Hat** to a Friend – While moving about, pretend to tip your hat to a person you are passing

I – Indian teepee – Four people get together in a circle and put their right hands high into the middle to make a teepee. (This can transition into a right hand start which has students walking around in a circle with their hands in the middle.)

Independence Day – Walk and wave a pretend flag

Iron Horse – Students walk with arms moving like a train. A longer train can be made by shouting "Hook up the Cars"

J – Jackrabbit Jump – Jump up and down like a rabbit

K – Keep time to the music – Clap hands to the beat of the music

Kick up your heels – jump and kick heels together out to right and left sides

L – Lasso – Move arm above head in a lasso action

Longhorn – Place wide arms out to sides away from head (horns) and say "Moo"

M – Meet and Greet – Shake hands and say "Hello" or "How you doing?" to each person you pass

- N** – **Nighthawk** – move about in a flying motion with arms extended
- High **Noon** – Point straight up to sky with one hand and fan yourself with the other
- O** – Barn **Owl** – Hoot like an owl
- P** – **Play Piano** – pretend to play piano
- Play Pots and Pans** – pretend to bang on pans like drums
- Promenade** – facing same direction, stand shoulder to shoulder with partner – hold right hand to right hand and left hand to left hand – walk
- Q** – Ride your **Quarter** Horse – gallop around the room
- R** – **Rope** a Steer – This follows the “lasso” call. Throw your rope out as if to rope a steer and pull back on the rope.
- Ride** em, cowboy! – Shout this out
- S** – **Slap** and Tap – Slap the leg with the hand while tapping the toes of the foot
- Star** right or **Star** left – With a partner, place palms together of same hand and turn in a circle
- Spurs** – Do alternating heel taps on the floor in front of you
- Saddle** up – Pretend to put foot in stirrup and mount the saddle
- T** – Hit the Lonesome **Trail** – walk
- Tumbleweed** – spin on your bottom
- Turn** one alone – turn one quick circle and keep walking forward
- U** – **Under** the Stars – Lay down on the floor, place hands under head, and look up
- V** – Check out the **View** – Place the hand above the eyes and look around
- Rattlesnake **Venom** – Place hand on floor and wiggle it like a snake
- W** – **Wagon** Train – Several Horse and Buggies hook up together to make a longer wagon train
- Washboard** – pretend to wash clothes by moving both hands together up and down in front of the body
- Wring** the dishrag – partners hold hands and turn a complete circle bringing their hands over their heads without releasing hands
- X** – Mark your spot with an **X** – Place arms above head and cross them to make an X
- Y** – **Yell Yippee, Yahoo, or Yeehaw**
- Z** – **Get some Z’s** – Lay down on the floor and pretend to sleep