

Try It

Read the passage. Underline ideas, dates, people, and events that you find in the historical text. Use the questions to help you.

The Pony Express

In 1860, something new came to the West. It was a new way of delivering the mail, known as the Pony Express. Young men began to carry mail on horseback across the frontier. It was an exciting job, but it could be extremely dangerous, too.

Pony Express riders galloped from the East to the West. It was a journey of about 1,900 miles. They carried mail on their saddles. Riders changed horses every 10 to 15 miles. New riders took over after every 75 miles.

The Pony Express route was dangerous. Some riders were killed or wounded by bandits. Others were injured or became ill. Riders were slowed down by blizzards and snowstorms. Floods were a danger on the journey, too. Despite all of this, only *one* sack of mail was ever lost by the Pony Express!

The first Pony Express trip took 10 days. Later trips averaged between 8 and 10 days. Before the Pony Express, people waited months for their mail to come. It was hard for them to believe that the Pony Express could be so fast! The fastest time ever recorded was 7 days, 17 hours. That was in 1861, when the Pony Express delivered copies of a speech made by President Lincoln.

The Pony Express lasted only 18 months. It ended in 1861, when the first telegraph line to the West was completed. Two days later, the Pony Express made its last trip. Now, people could send messages across the nation in minutes. The Pony Express became part of history.

