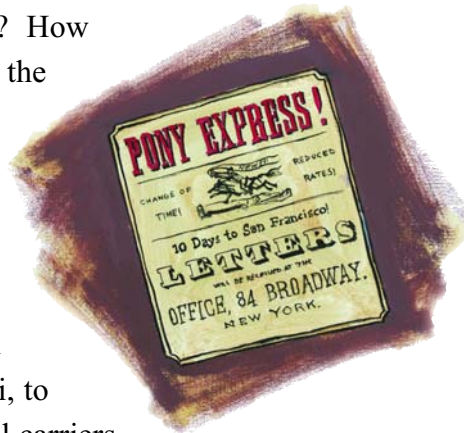


Special Delivery!

8 Have you ever gotten a letter? How
 18 long did it take to get to you? In the
 24 mid-1800s, a letter could take
 31 many months to get from east to
 38 west. All of that changed on
 45 April 3, 1860 with the **birth** of
 the Pony Express.



46 The Pony Express was a mail
 52 **service** from St. Joseph, Missouri, to
 58 Sacramento, California. The mail carriers
 63 were young men brave enough to make the trip. The owners
 74 **considered** the job so dangerous that they **preferred** to **hire**
 84 **orphans**.

85 The Pony Express riders traveled the nearly 1,900-mile **route** at
 96 about ten miles per hour. Every ten to 20 miles the rider would stop
 110 at a **relay station**, **mount** a fresh horse, and be on his way in less
 125 than two minutes. After riding for 75 to 100 miles, the rider stopped
 138 at a larger station and handed the mail **pouch** to another rider.

150 The Pony Express was only in business for a year and a half. In
 164 that time, Pony Express riders made 308 trips. They traveled a total
 176 of over 600,000 miles. They lost only one mail pouch.

186 In October of 1861, the **transcontinental telegraph** was
 194 completed. Now messages could travel from east to west **instantly**.
 204 People no longer needed the Pony Express, but they would always
 215 remember it.

217 words read
 - errors
 = score

Quick Quiz

13. What is the main idea of *Special Delivery!*?
 - p. Being a Pony Express mail carrier was a dangerous job.
 - q. Letters get from east to west more quickly today.
 - r. The Pony Express was an important mail service used long ago.

14. Where did the Pony Express mail carriers carry the letters?
 - a. from Missouri to California
 - b. from Massachusetts to California
 - c. from Missouri to Oregon

15. What does **pouch** mean in this story?
 - l. a bag or sack
 - m. a part of some animals
 - n. a purse for holding money

16. Why didn't people need the Pony Express after October of 1861?
 - t. People did not need to send letters after they got telephones.
 - u. The transcontinental telegraph was a faster way to send messages.
 - v. The United States Postal Service delivered letters.

Talk about what you learned

How has sending messages in the United States changed since the days of the Pony Express?



A Telegraph