

2025 SPURS WRITING COMPETITION

Essay Winners

1ST PLACE

Once upon a time, I went to the rodeo and watched people swinging lassos and riding horses. They looked so cool, and I wanted to try it, too! I didn't have a horse, but I remembered my grandpa had some on his farm. I asked my dad if we could visit, and we headed there together. When we arrived, I asked Grandpa if I could borrow a horse. He smiled and said, "Not only can you borrow a horse, but I have something else for you." He went into the barn and came back holding an old, deep blue lasso with a hint of sparkle in the rope. "This lasso has been passed down in our family for generations," he said, handing it to me. "It's special. Take good care of it." I thought it was just a cool family heirloom, but I thanked him, feeling proud to carry on the tradition.

My dad spent the next few days teaching me how to ride and use the lasso. It was harder than I thought, balancing, controlling the horse, and swinging the lasso all at once was no joke! But I practiced every day, determined to get it right. Then, I saw on TV that a big rodeo competition was coming up. I had one week to prepare! I practiced day and night until I felt ready to compete. When my turn finally came, I rode out with Grandpa's lasso, swinging it like I'd practiced. But something amazing happened. As I spun the lasso, colors exploded from it some I had never seen before. The entire rodeo arena lit up like a rainbow! Everyone gasped; they'd never seen anything like it. The once dull rodeo now sparkled with swirling colors.

Grandpa's lasso wasn't just a family treasure—it was truly magical! When the competition ended, they announced that I'd won! They handed me a huge trophy, and I thanked my dad and grandpa. I'll never forget the look on everyone's faces as I turned the rodeo into a world of color with my family's enchanted lasso.

Richard, Houston, TX

2ND PLACE

One day started just like any other — all black and white. My friends and I went to the carnival, looking for some fun. As I wandered back to my car to grab my phone, I noticed something strange. A bright light was coming from the bushes.

It was the only color I'd ever seen! I crept closer and found a shiny blue lasso lying there, glowing like magic. I picked it up, gave it a little twirl, and accidentally hit a tree. Instantly, the tree turned a deep green! I gasped, hiding the lasso before my friends noticed. I didn't want anyone to know, not even my family — they'd have way too many questions.

Soon, I started sneaking around, painting the town with colors nobody had ever seen. I even lit up the rodeo one night with bright reds, yellows, and blues. People were in awe; it was like a dream come true. It was on the news, but no one could figure out who was behind all the colors.

But then, the government stepped in. They liked the world in black and white and didn't want anyone messing with it. They offered a huge reward to anyone who could turn me in. That night, I overheard my parents talking about it. They said they'd love to have the reward for their dream house, not realizing their own kid was the "color bandit." I felt a mix of anger and sadness, but I knew I couldn't stop. Finally, I turned myself in. The government was shocked to see it was just a kid, but in the end, they let me keep spreading color. And from that day on, the world was never the same.

Jaelyn, Houston, TX

TRAILBLAZER CHOICE

My name is Jesse and I come from a long line of wranglers. In case you don't know, a cowboy's best friend is his horse and his prized possession is his lasso. My lasso is magic and has been passed down through generations. It was gifted to my great grandfather from an old Indian chief. On a cool, crisp spring afternoon Buttercup, my trusty quarter horse, and I raced to the Houston Livestock Show to watch the rodeo. We look forward to the excitement of the rodeo every year. Something was different this year. The rodeo was dull and colorless. Buttercup and I stared at each other. We knew something had to be done! Luckily, I brought my magic lasso. I will transform this dull rodeo into a brilliant and colorful extravaganza! I told Buttercup, "Let's turn these frowns upside down!" Buttercup neighed in agreement. The horses trotting around were a gloomy gray. I twirled my lasso and whipped it towards the horses. The horses magically turned a sparkling shade of snowflake white. I twirled my lasso again and whipped it towards the bull pens. The bull's gray color transformed into a fierce black and the bull riders were then wearing deep purple chaps and matching hats that shimmered in the bright rodeo lights. The bull riders cheered but something still wasn't right. Buttercup stomped his hoof. "What's the matter Buttercup?" He cantered over to the crowd that was there to watch the rodeo. He reared up on his back legs. That's when I saw it! The crowd was also the dullest of grays. I twirled my lasso again and threw it towards the crowd. The crowd magically turned a magnificent variety of colors. I twirled my lasso one last time and when I did, colorful rainbow confetti fell from the ceiling. The crowd went wild! My sidekick, Buttercup, and my magic lasso helped me save the rodeo! That's the day that I was named "The Wrangler of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo!" I can't wait to return next year!

Kaitley, Boling Lago, TX

3RD PLACE

This is a story of the most extraordinary rodeo in the history of Texas! It started like any normal rodeo, but when my mom and I arrived, I asked her, "Are we in the right place?" Everyone was not in color, not even the little girl with the flowery dress. The whole place was so plain and dull, sad and gray...and eerily quiet. And I wondered if somehow I could fix the plain and dullness and make it more... well... more bright. So I unloaded my horse and entered the arena myself.

Then my horse Justice was acting funny so I looked all over her and saw my lasso was as bright as a diamond. As soon as I unlatched my lasso and began to swing it over my head, the rodeo came alive with color! Out of nowhere there was music playing. The crowd was dancing and laughing. I was so happy to see everyone as happy as can be. And the funniest thing was the animals were dancing to the beat too! Then a little girl said thank you for making this day better, and then I realized that that little girl was the one with the flowery dress. I was happy that her dress was colorful and it smelled like real flowers. That girl made me feel like I could do anything I put my mind to. She was so sweet.

From that point on, the whole rodeo was filled with life. It had color, music, dancing, laughter, and joy. The crowd was on its feet. It was all because of my magic lasso. I'll never forget that day that the crowd was shouting my name. I will never forget the little girl that was so encouraging and that exciting day at the rodeo.

Charis, Anderson, TX