



The Origins of Texas

UNIT ADDENDUM

4th Grade Social Studies
Unit 2
Suggested Duration: 20 days

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UNIT SYNOPSIS



Image depicting Essa-Queta, an Apache Chief, taken from Wikipedia.

The Lone Star State, the second largest state (both by population and by area), one of the most diverse regions—both ethnically and geographically—in the nation: Texas is a state unlike any other in the United States. To understand how Texas became the state it is today, it is necessary to uncover its earliest history, including the stories of Indigenous people who first lived in the region now known as Texas as well as those of the explorers and colonizers who violently displaced these Indigenous communities. Before the arrival of Europeans, many Indigenous people lived in Texas, from plains tribes such as the Apache to nomadic seafaring tribes such as the Karankawa. As these tribes developed civilizations across modern-day Texas, in Europe, the Age of Exploration sent countless explorers to the Western Hemisphere in search of “God, gold, and glory.” As a result, both Spanish and French explorers arrived in Texas in the hopes of bringing wealth back to Europe. Though the French did not stay long in Texas, the Spanish established missions throughout the region that attempted to convert and, in their view, “civilize” the Indigenous people of Texas. The Spanish efforts to colonize Texas faced strong resistance from Indigenous tribes, especially the Apache and Comanche, two powerful warrior tribes in the region. Despite Indigenous resistance, the colonizers remained in Texas and eventually joined forces with other Spanish colonies in the Americas to declare their independence from Spain, forming a new country: Mexico.

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills standards for social studies call for elementary students to understand “the origins, similarities, and differences of American Indian groups in Texas before European exploration” and “the causes and effects of European exploration and colonization of Texas.” In this unit, you will first introduce your students to the cultures and civilizations of the many tribes indigenous to Texas. Then, as you continue to guide students through this unit, they will learn about the key motivations for European exploration to the Americas, how the Spanish and the French first landed in Texas, and how the arrival of the Spanish and French affected the lives of the Indigenous people living there. The study of the Indigenous people of Texas and European colonization outlined in this unit will ensure your students understand the essential peoples and cultures that have shaped, and continue to shape, the history and culture of present-day Texas.

This unit is designed to dispel the “civilizer and savage” dichotomy that often dominates narratives about European colonization: namely, that the Europeans brought culture and civilization to the supposedly “uncivilized” peoples of the “New World.” Though the world was new and unfamiliar to Europeans, the Indigenous people of the Americas had established complex cultures and civilizations that had thrived for thousands of years before European arrival. Often, the raids and confrontations led by Indigenous tribes against European colonists are painted as “savage” and used as a justification for the subsequent genocide of Indigenous people in the United States in the centuries to come. In this unit, we more accurately frame such violence as resistance, as an

expression of the agency of a people fighting back against invasion. Finally, although the Apache's and Comanches no longer control the plains of Texas, it is important not to perpetuate myths of Indigenous extinction; Apache and Comanche communities still live throughout the Southwestern United States.

To develop these ideas throughout this unit, you will use highly engaging, rich, resources, articles, and books to introduce and reinforce key ideas about the Indigenous people of Texas and European colonization. Students will then showcase their knowledge through project work throughout the unit.

The Texas Bullock Museum has an interactive timeline of Texas that can be referenced throughout the Texas history course. This is an optional extension resource for content building. [History of Texas Timeline](#)

CONTENT STANDARDS

Content Standards

SOCIAL STUDIES SKILLS

4.19 Social Studies skills. The student applies critical-

thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including technology.

4.20 Social Studies skills. The student uses geographic tools to collect, analyze, and interpret data.

(A) apply mapping elements, including grid systems, legends, symbols, scales, and compass roses, to create and interpret maps.

(B) interpret geographic data, population distribution, and natural resources into a variety of formats such as graphs and map.

4.21 Social Studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms.

HISTORY

4.1 The student understands the origins, similarities, and differences of American Indian groups in Texas before European exploration:

(A) explain the possible origins of American Indian groups in Texas

(B) identify and compare the ways of life of American Indian groups in Texas before European exploration such as the Lipan Apache, Karankawa, Caddo, and Jumano

(C) describe the cultural regions in which American Indians lived such as Gulf, Plains, Puebloan, and Southeastern

(D) locate American Indian groups remaining in Texas such as the Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo, Alabama Coushatta, and Kickapoo

4.2 The student understands the causes and effects of European exploration and colonization of Texas:

(A) summarize motivations for European exploration and settlement of Texas, including economic opportunity, competition, and the desire for expansion

(B) identify the accomplishments and explain the impact of significant explorers, including Cabeza de Vaca; Francisco Coronado; and René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle, on the settlement of Texas;

(C) explain when, where, and why the Spanish established settlements and Catholic missions in Texas as well as important individual

(D) identify Texas' role in the Mexican War of Independence and the war's impact on the development of Texas

(E) identify the accomplishments and explain the economic motivations and impact of significant empresarios, including Stephen F. Austin and Martín de León, on the settlement of Texas.

Economics

4.9(A) explain the economic activities various early American Indian groups in Texas used to meet their needs and wants such as farming, trading, and hunting.

4.12(A) compare how various American Indian groups such as the Caddo and the Comanche governed themselves

GEOGRAPHY

4.6 Geography. The student understands the concept of regions.

(A) identify, locate, and describe the physical regions of Texas (Mountains and Basins, Great Plains, North Central Plains, Coastal Plains), including their characteristics such as landforms, climate, vegetation, and economic activities.

(B) compare the physical regions of Texas (Mountains and Basins, Great Plains, North Central Plains, Coastal Plains)

4.7 Geography. The student understands the location and patterns of settlement and the geographic factors that influence where people live.

(A) explain the geographic factors such as landforms and climate that influence patterns of settlement and the distribution of population in Texas, past and present

4.8 Geography. The student understands how people adapt to and modify their environment.

(A) describe ways people have adapted to and modified their environment in Texas,

(B) explain reasons why people have adapted to and modified their environment in Texas, past and present, such as the use of natural resources to meet basic needs, facilitate, transportation, and enhance recreational activities.

(C) compare the positive and negative consequences of human modification of the environment in Texas, past and present

Unit 2: The Origins of Texas

Focus: Explore Texas geography and Indigenous history, including early peoples, cultural regions, and interactions with European explorers. Students will understand how geography shaped settlement and how Indigenous communities adapted to and influenced life in Texas.

Lesson #	Content Focus	TEKS
1	The Regions of Texas	4.6(A), 4.6(B), 4.7(A)
2	The First People in Texas	4.1(A), 4.1(C), 4.7(A)
3	Historic Tribes of Texas	4.1(B), 4.1(C), 4.1(D)
4	Mapping the Indigenous Tribes of Texas	4.1(B), 4.1(C), 4.8(A)
5	Daily Life of Texas Indigenous Tribes – Gallery Walk	4.1(B), 4.17(A)
6	The Stories of Texas Indigenous Children– Writing Project	4.1(D), 4.2(A)
7	Indigenous Texas– Virtual Field Trip	4.2(A), 4.2(B)
8	Motivations for European Exploration	4.2(B), 4.2(C)
9	Spanish and French Exploration in Texas	4.2(C), 4.2(D)
10	Spanish Mission System	4.2(D), 4.8(C)
11	Missions in Texas – Virtual Field Trip	4.2(D), 4.11(C)
12	Gold, God, Glory – Poster Project	4.2(C), 4.14(A)
13	Indigenous Resistance to Spanish Colonization	4.1(D), 4.17(B)
14	The Stories of Texas Indigenous Tribes: Post Colonization – Writing Project	4.1-4.2, 4.8(C), 4.17(A)
15	The Origins of Texas – Trading Card Project	4.6(A), 4.6(B), 4.7(A)

VERTICAL STANDARDS

3rd Grade Social Studies	4 th Grade Social Studies	5th Grade Social Studies
Students will engage in a course about ancient world communities and how they were created and functioned.	Students will engage in a course about Texas history and how the communities have changed over the history of Texas.	Students will engage in a course about US history and how the United States was colonized and the change over the course of time.

VOCABULARY GLOSSARY

Key Content Vocabulary	
Related Vocabulary	
Texas Geographic Regions	Mountain and Basin , North Central Plains, Great Plains, Gulf Coastal Plains.
Indigenous People of Texas	The First Peoples of Texas. We do not use the word Indians when we refer to Native Americans because it is an inaccurate representation of the people. Columbus called the natives, "Indians" because he thought he reached India and met the people of India. Instead of using Indian, we should use the word Native, Indigenous, or even better the name of actual tribe the person belongs to.
Comanche	The Comanche tribe was one of the most powerful and feared tribes in Texas. They were skilled horsemen and fierce warriors who controlled a vast territory in the southern plains. The Comanche people were known for their raids on other tribes and settlers, as well as their resistance to Spanish and later American expansion.
Lipan Apache	The Lipan Apache tribe was a nomadic group that roamed the plains of Texas. They were expert horsemen and hunters, relying on buffalo for food, clothing, and shelter. The Lipan Apache people were known for their fierce warriors and their ability to adapt to different environments.
Karankawa	The Karankawa tribe lived along the Gulf Coast of Texas. They were expert fishermen and hunters, relying on the resources of the coastal marshes and bays for their survival. The Karankawa people were known for their nomadic lifestyle, moving with the seasons to follow the abundance of food sources.
Caddo	The Caddo tribe was one of the largest and most powerful tribes in Texas. They lived in villages along the rivers and streams in the Coastal Plains. The Caddo people were skilled farmers, growing crops such as corn, beans, and squash. They also had a rich culture that included beautiful pottery and intricate basket weaving.

Jumano	The Jumano tribe was a group of Native Americans who lived in the western part of Texas. They were known for their trading skills and often served as middlemen between different tribes. The Jumano people were also skilled farmers, growing crops like corn, beans, and squash. They were peaceful and friendly towards other tribes.
Buffalo	The buffalo was central to the survival and culture of many Indigenous tribes, providing them with food, materials, and spiritual value.
Nomadic	A nomad is a member of a community without fixed habitation which regularly moves to and from the same areas. Such groups include hunter-gatherers, pastoral nomads, and tinkers or trader nomads.
Sacred history	History that is retold with the aim of instilling religious faith and which may or may not be founded on fact.
Colonization	If people colonize a foreign country, they go to live there and take control of it.
Exploration	If you explore, or explore a place, you travel around it to find out what it is like.
Spanish colonization	Spanish Colonization happened with the goal of claiming riches, land, and converting religion. When explorers from Spain traveled to the Americas they claimed land, built missions, presidios towns and brought their language, religion, and customs with them. Spanish colonization changed the lives of the indigenous people who already lived there and had a big impact on the history of these regions.
Cabeza de Vaca	Cabeza de Vaca was a Spanish explorer who traveled to the Americas and had many adventures exploring new lands. He is famous for surviving a shipwreck and befriending the Karankawa tribe. He explored what is now Florida, Texas and Mexico.
French colonization	French colonization in the Americas was backed by three main goals, namely shifting the excess population of France to the colonies and giving settlers greater opportunities for success, making money, especially through the fur trade, and spreading the Catholic faith through missionary activities among the Native Americans.
La Salle	La Salle, whose full name was René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, was a French explorer. He is known for exploring the Great Lakes region, the Mississippi River, and the Gulf of Mexico. La Salle claimed a large area of land for France, which he called Louisiana. He wrecked his ship off the Gulf Coast and explored present day Texas land.
God, Gold, and Glory	Historians use a standard shorthand, “Gold, God, and Glory,” to describe the motives generating the overseas exploration, expansion, and conquests that allowed various European countries to rise to world power between 1400 and 1750. “Glory” alludes to the competition between monarchies.

Conquistadors	any of the leaders in the Spanish conquest and exploration of America, especially of Mexico and Peru, in the 16th century.
Mission	Religious buildings built to house explorers and Indigenous people and teach them Christianity and the Spaniard culture. There are 35 in Texas and colonized the land of Texas for Spain.
Missionaries	A person sent to teach and convert people into the religion of Christianity.
Presidio	Spanish military forts built near missions used for protection and to control the people and land.