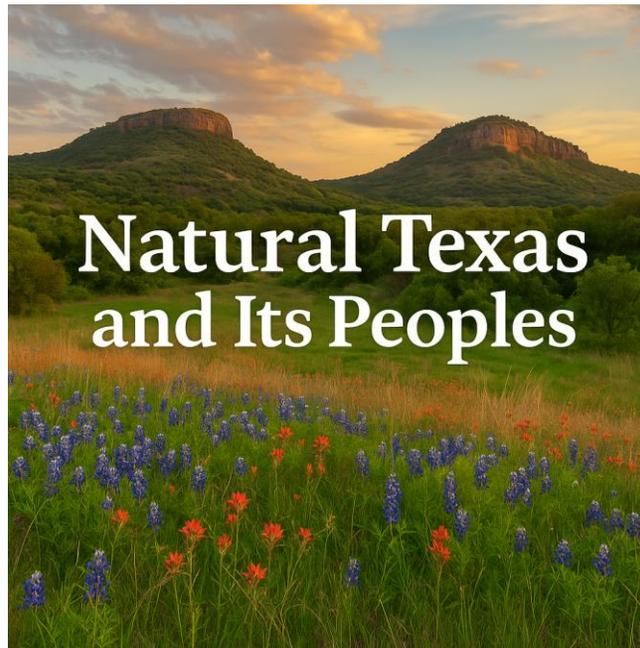
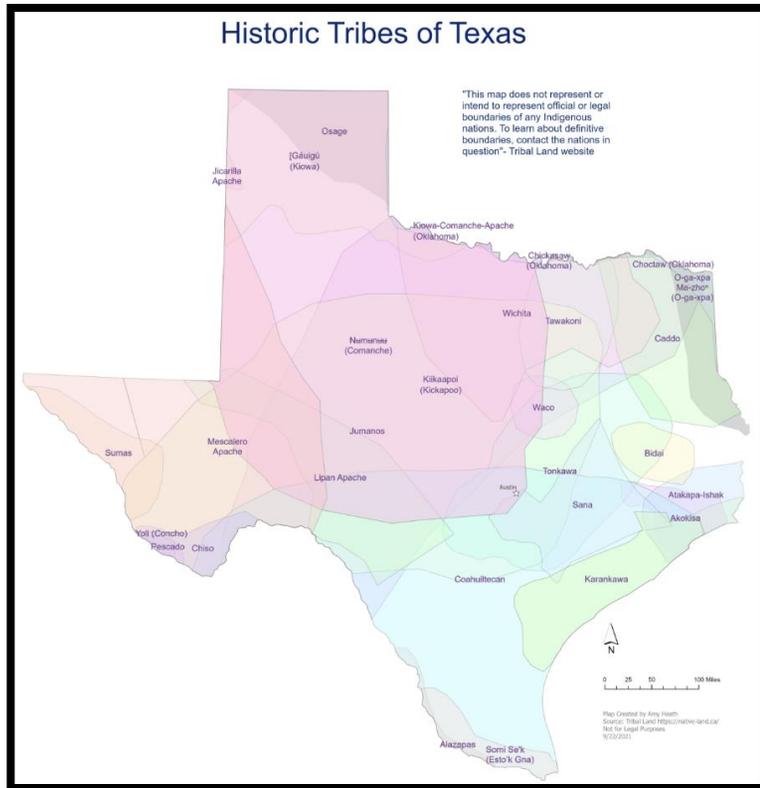


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UNIT NARRATIVE



In **Unit 1: Natural Texas and its People** (prehistory to 1528), students examine Texas' geographic features and explore how the Native peoples in Texas interacted with the natural Texas environment before European colonization.

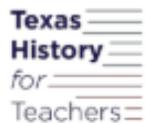
The geographic differences between the many regions that would come to be known as Texas were vast, stretching from the rich soils and lush vegetation of East Texas' piney woods, to the swampier coastal plain along the Gulf of Mexico, to the drier and starker valley of South Texas, to the grasslands of the Texas central and high plains, to the arid and mountainous vistas of West Texas.

The first people of Texas were intimately connected to the physical geography of where they lived, with some groups prospering because of ample local resources while others struggled in challenging environments. Over many centuries, various native groups adapted themselves to all of Texas' major geographic zones.

- ◆ The **Caddo** thrived in the fertile eastern piney woods, where they built large-scale villages and extensive trading networks.
- ◆ The **Atakapa** and **Karankawa** hunted, gathered, and fished in seasonal villages along the Texas coast.
- ◆ Various **Coahuiltecan** tribes often struggled in the more arid conditions of South Texas, while the **Apache** roamed the Plains on foot in search of bison.
- ◆ The **Jumano** in West Texas moved between established villages and hunting along the Plains, while the **Wichita** grew crops in the cross-timbers region that would become North Texas.

Esri. (n.d.). *Texas Regions* [Map]. ArcGIS StoryMaps. Retrieved May 1, 2025, from <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/ffeee03d10a043409b550b4617937428>

By the time the first Europeans arrived in Texas in 1528, each American Indian group had carefully adapted themselves to the particular regions in which they lived.



This unit is adapted from the Texas History for Teacher Curriculum. For additional resources, check out: Texas History for Teachers.

CONTENT STANDARDS

Below are the standards **taught** and **assessed** in this unit.

Natural Texas and Its People: Geography and Native Texans		Connected Knowledge and Skills 7.1, 7.2, 7.9
7.8 Geography. The student understands the location and characteristics of places and regions of Texas.		
Readiness Standards	Supporting Standards	
7.1(A)^ identify the major eras in Texas history, describe their defining characteristics, and explain the purpose of dividing the past into eras, including Natural Texas and its People ...	7.2(A) compare the cultures of American Indians in Texas prior to European colonization such as Gulf, Plains, Puebloan, and Southeastern	
7.8(B)^*^ locate and compare places of importance in Texas in terms of physical and human characteristics such as major cities, waterways, natural ... landmarks ... and local points of interest	7.8(A)^ locate and compare the Mountains and Basins, Great Plains, North Central Plains, and Coastal Plains regions	
7.9(A)^*^ identify ways in which Texans have adapted to and modified the environment and explain the positive and negative consequences of the modifications		

UNDERSTANDINGS AND QUESTIONS

Key Understandings

- 1. Geography shapes human life.**
The physical features, climate, and natural resources of each Texas region significantly influenced how early American Indian groups lived, traveled, and survived.
- 2. Texas is made up of distinct geographic regions.**
Each region of Texas—Mountains and Basins, Great Plains, North Central Plains, and Coastal Plains—has unique characteristics that affected patterns of human settlement and activity.
- 3. Early American Indian tribes adapted to their environments.**
Native peoples developed diverse cultures and ways of life based on the specific environmental conditions of the region they inhabited.
- 4. Historical knowledge is shaped by sources and perspectives.**
Our understanding of the past is influenced by the types of sources available (e.g., artifacts, pictographs, oral histories) and the perspectives or biases they may carry.
- 5. The legacy of Indigenous peoples remains a vital part of Texas today.**
Native American tribes continue to contribute to the cultural, political, and economic landscape of Texas, demonstrating both continuity and change over time.

Key Questions

- ◆ **How does geography influence how people live, work, and survive?**
↳ Encourages students to connect physical features to patterns of human activity and settlement.
- ◆ **What makes each region of Texas unique?**
↳ Promotes analysis of environmental, economic, and cultural differences across regions.

◆ **How did early American Indian tribes adapt to their environments?**

↳ Guides students to examine the diverse ways Indigenous peoples used natural resources and shaped their communities.

◆ **What can maps, artifacts, and oral histories tell us about the past?**

↳ Supports development of disciplinary literacy skills like source analysis and historical inference.

◆ **What legacies of early Indigenous people can still be seen in Texas today?**

↳ Encourages students to make historical-to-contemporary connections and understand cultural continuity.