

IX. How People of the Past Have Helped Our Town

WHAT?

Students will determine the various contributions people make to the growth or the quality of life of a town. They will examine how other towns have benefited from people of the past and investigate the contributions of historical personages in their own town.

WHY?

- To identify various ways people make contributions to a town's heritage
- To identify certain people as examples of contributors to a town's heritage
- To describe how individuals, events, and ideas have changed communities over time
- To explain how local people and events have influenced local community needs
- To relate incidents that exemplify contributions of historical personages
- To compare similarities and differences among the lives and activities of historical figures who have influenced the students' town and other towns
- Identify examples of community changes that result from individual or group decisions
- To identify how people have modified the environment of given towns over time

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills addressed in this lesson:

History

- Understand how historical figures have influenced a community
- Understand important issues, events, and individuals of the 19th and 20th centuries in Texas

Geography

- Understand the relative location of places
- Understand how humans adapt to and modify the environment
- Understand the locations and patterns of settlement and the geographic factors that influence where people live

Citizenship

- Understand the characteristics of good citizenship as exemplified by historic figures and ordinary people
- Understand the impact of individual group decisions on communities in a democratic society

Culture

- Understand the role of heroes in shaping the culture of communities
- Understand the contributions of people of various racial, ethnic, and religious groups to Texas

Social Studies Skills

- Apply critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources

- Communicate in oral, written, and visual forms

TAKS:

- Objective 1: Issues and Events in U.S. History
- Objective 2: Geographic Influences on Historical Issues and Events
- Objective 3: Economic and Social Influences on Historical Issues and Events
- Objective 4: Political Influences on Historical Issues and Events
- Objective 5: Critical-Thinking Skills

HOW?

Materials needed:

- Handout titled “Relative Time Represented by Transportation”
- Copies of the data retrieval chart titled, “People of the Past”
- Copies of the handout titled, “People Who Contributed to their Texas Towns”
- Copies of the handout titled, “Contributions of People of the Past”
- Copies of the handout titled, “Tell About a Person of the Past”
- Wall map of Texas
- Sticky flags labeled, “Fort Davis, Bandera, Fredericksburg, Victoria, Dallas, Austin, San Antonio, San Augustine, Waco, Alabama-Coushatta Indian Reservation, Amarillo, Fort Worth, Alice, Galveston, Houston, and George West

Suggested teaching time: 1 or 2 days

Suggested Resources: Internet, field trip to a museum, or guest speaker for the purpose of acquainting students with significant historical figures of the their town.

Suggested Procedures:

1. Attach the pictures from the handout titled “Relative Time Represented by Transportation” to the wall for display during the lesson.
2. In a group discussion, ask students to name people of the past who made helpful contributions. Ask them to tell what the people did that was important. Students might name people like George Washington, Sam Houston, or Martin Luther King. Relate their people to the pictures in “Relative Time Represented by Transportation.” For example, George Washington lived during the time of the wagon picture, Sam Houston lived during the time of the train picture, and Martin Luther King lived during the time of the truck picture.
3. Tell students that every town has important people who got the town started and others who helped it grow. They will look at ways people of the past have helped some of the towns in Texas grow, and they will discover people who have helped their own town grow.
4. Form six groups. Distribute a copy of “Contributions of People of the Past” to each group. Distribute copies of “People of the Past” data retrieval chart and “People Who Contributed to their Texas Towns” to appropriate groups.
5. Have students complete the data retrieval chart by reading the handout titled “People Who Contributed to their Texas Towns.”

6. Check to see if each chart is completed correctly. (See the answer key.)
7. Distribute the handout titled “Tell About a Person of the Past” and have students follow directions on the handout. Students read about the individual for their group, and each student draws a picture to illustrate their person’s contribution.
8. As students are completing their drawings, one or two students from each group attach sticky flags labeled with their group’s towns on the Texas wall map.
9. Tell students that they will present their information and show their pictures to the class. As students listen, they should think about the kinds of contributions people make to a town and all the different people who have helped a town be a good place to live. Emphasize that they do not need to remember the names of the people, but by looking at these people, students can form ideas about how people contribute to the well being of other people.
10. Students report to the class about their towns and people. They point out the location of their towns on the Texas wall map, tell the story of their group’s individual, and show their pictures. Students point out where their people fit on the transportation relative time pictures.
11. Have students attach their drawings to a wall in the classroom, exhibit them in the library, or a hallway of the school.
12. Discuss contributions of people in general. Lead students to conclude the following:
 - There are many ways people can contribute to a town.
 - Both men and women and people of all races and background are contributors.
 - Some contributions are large, some are small, and all are important.
13. Through a guest speaker, a student Internet search, or a teacher presentation, acquaint students with a variety of people of the past who have made a variety of contributions to their own town. If the students live in a town that was presented in their lesson, have them discover other contributors as well as the people mentioned in the lesson.

Evaluation: Students write a paragraph titled “Why Contributions of People of the Past are Important to a Town.”