

VI. Comparing Cities in Texas

Activity 6

WHAT?

Students will read and interpret charts, make graphs, and draw conclusions about trends in Texas municipal government.

WHY?

- To compare places and regions of Texas in terms of physical and human characteristics
- To explain ways in which geographic factors have affected the political, economic, and social development of Texas
- To develop an orderly way of categorizing issues and seeing interrelationships among ideas
- To analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions
- To use a decision-making process to identify a situation that requires a decision, gather information, identify options, predict consequences, and take action to implement a decision



Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills addressed in this lesson:

Government:

- Understand the basic principles reflected in the Texas Constitution
- Understand the structure and functions of government created by the Texas Constitution

Social Studies Skills:

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

Communicate in written, oral, and visual form

- Uses problem-solving and decision-making skills, working independently and with others, in a variety of settings

TAAS:

- Objective 1: Civic Values and Responsibilities
- Objective 7: Interpret Social Studies Data
- Objective 8: Critical-Thinking Skills

How?

Materials needed:

- Copies of worksheets for students:
 1. a class set of the two charts will be enough (Home Rule Cities in Texas, and 35 Home Rule Cities Chartered in Texas between 1983 and 1993) or
 2. one copy of each chart for each student
- Either graph paper, rulers, and compasses enough for all students to use or share or copies of the blank pie graphs on the attached worksheet, one per student or group of students
- Transparencies of the two charts

Suggested Teaching Time: about one class period, depending upon the skills of your students

Suggested Procedures:

1. Assess the ability of your students to read and interpret charts. Go over the basics of the first chart you will have them use.
2. Give them the worksheets and have them complete the questions. It may be productive to have students begin working on it in class.
3. You may wish to have the second chart be homework, or you may prefer to have students begin working on it in class.
4. After students have finished working, debrief the process of working with the charts. What went well? What was hard? What did they learn about chart reading? What could be done to improve the charts themselves?

Follow-up possibilities: Ask questions about the transparency of the chart the day following the assignment. (Which city is older, B or Y? What form of government does H use? How long has it used this form? and so forth)

Evaluation: You may choose to grade one or both sets of answers. Application of the skill of reading charts is easily tested. You may wish to use one of the charts again, or to save one of the charts to use as a part of the test.

Answer Key-Chart A

1. The columns show the cities studied, the kind of city government used in each town, the year each town started using the form of government it now uses, and the year the town first became a home rule city.
2. If you want to know when a city was originally started, use the last column, 'year of first charter.'
3. If you want to know how long a city has had a form of government, subtract 'year current form adopted' from 'year of first charter.'
4. If you want to tell if a town has changed the kind of government it uses, look to see whether the 'year current form adopted' and 'year of first charter' are the same.
5. Palestine was chartered first, in 1871.
6. Seven still have the same form of municipal government.
7. Yoakum, chartered in 1915, has had the same form of government for the longest time.
8. Cities that changed form of government within five years of the original charter include Eastland, Mercedes, and New Braunfels.
9. Ballinger, Gorman, Texas City, and Vidor do not have a city manager.
10. Vidor switched to a mayor-council form in 1969.

Answer Key-Chart B

1. 29 of the 35 cities use a council-manager form of government.
 2. 82.85% (or 86%) of all cities on the chart use the council-manager form.
 3. 5 cities use a mayor-council form of government.
 4. 14.28% (or 14%) use the mayor-council form.
 5. Mayor-Commission is also used.
 6. More than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the pie graph should show the council-manager form.
 7. 8 cities have changed their form of municipal government.
 8. 22.85% (23%) have changed their form of government.
 9. 77.15% (77%) have not changed their form of government.
 10. A bit more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the pie graph should show cities that have kept the same form of government.
- ** The patterns seem to be that recently-chartered cities tend to use the council-manager form of government. Most recently-chartered cities have not yet changed the form of their municipal government. Some students may assume that the lack of change of form shows satisfaction with the current form. Some students may state that there are more jobs for city managers today than there were 50 years ago, since there are both more cities and more cities using city managers.