



## LESSON PLAN

# CELEBRATE!: FESTIVALS ACROSS TEXAS

Social Studies, Grades 4 and 7

## OBJECTIVE

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the roles festivals play in communicating themes of importance in Texas agriculture, history, and culture through the creation of a festival celebrating an important feature of one of the seven Texas regions.

## PROCESS

### **Prior Knowledge**

Students should have a basic understanding of Texas culture and the festivals that are held to celebrate it.

Students should understand Texas' diverse cultures, traditions and state pride.

### **Hook A**

Ask students to share the names of festivals they have attended, preferably in Texas. Write the names of these festivals on the board.

Once you have a list, ask students who attended them if there was a specific theme the festival was celebrating or honoring; these could include fruits or food, historical events, ideas, cultures, etc. Record these answers next to the name of the festival.

Have students work with a partner to discuss similarities they see among the answers. Once they have noticed the similarities, have them create categories that these similarities could belong to – for instance noting that the Onion Festival and the Citrus Fiesta both celebrate foods native to Texas.

Leave these answers on the board as you will revisit the activity after the films have been viewed.

### **Hook B**

Ask students to think about the pride Texas' citizens have for their state. Ask them why Texas is such a unique state, exploring its history of state independence.

Ask students to recite or sing the song "Texas, Our Texas."

Texas, Our Texas! All hail the mighty State!  
Texas, Our Texas! So wonderful so great!  
Boldest and grandest, withstanding ev'ry test  
O Empire wide and glorious, you stand supremely blest.  
(chorus)



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Texas, O Texas! Your freeborn single star,  
Sends out its radiance to nations near and far,  
Emblem of Freedom! It set our hearts aglow,  
With thoughts of San Jacinto and glorious Alamo.  
(chorus)

Texas, dear Texas! From tyrant grip now free,  
Shines forth in splendor, your star of destiny!  
Mother of heroes, we come your children true,  
Proclaiming our allegiance, our faith, our love for you.

Chorus:

God bless you Texas! And keep you brave and strong,  
That you may grow in power and worth, throughout the ages long.  
God bless you Texas! And keep you brave and strong,  
That you may grow in power and worth, throughout the ages long.

Ask students to analyze the song, particularly the parts about San Jacinto and the Alamo and discuss the state's unique heritage and pride. Furthermore, you could also have your students read and explain the meaning of the Pledge to the Texas Flag. Honor the Texas flag; I pledge allegiance to thee, Texas, one state under God, one and indivisible. Discuss the importance of the Texas flag of 1836, as well as the symbolism of the flag and the pledge to it.

### Lesson

Pass out a full-page blank map of Texas to students. As you watch each of the videos (see Videos), have students complete the following process for each one:

- Label the city on the map of Texas
- Read students the description of each film

Underneath the city name, take notes of the events the students see in the video – this could include terms like, “Spanish dancing,” “grapefruit,” “pageant,” etc. Tell them if they do not have room to number each city and take notes on a corresponding page.

After viewing each film, reference the festival's Web site address in the Resources section (if provided) and review the Web site with students so they can add additional information to their video notes.



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After students have completed the films, revisit the activity you completed in the Hook by having students again work with a partner to discuss the similarities and differences they see among the notes they have taken over the films. Again, have them create categories that these similarities could belong to.

Have the partners share their answers and discuss how their perceptions are similar to or different from the beliefs they held at the beginning of class.

### Independent Practice

Assign students to groups of 3-4.

Have each group select one of the following regions (there may be repeats):

- Panhandle Plains
- Prairies and Lakes
- Piney Woods
- Gulf Coast
- South Texas Plains
- Hill Country
- Big Bend Country

Once the region has been selected, instruct students to research the agriculture, cultures, landforms, weather, animals, and events common or native to that area.

From their research, students will select one theme and a city to become the focus of a festival they will create.

Once students have decided upon their theme and city and cleared it with you, have students create a program and advertisement for the festival. These two documents should include the following:

- Clear indication of the theme of the festival
- Day(s), hours, and cost
- Supporting events including exhibits, music, games, parades, dances, etc. to demonstrate their understanding of the significance of the theme to their region and to the larger Texas culture and history
- At least one advertisement for a company that would (logically) financially support the festival



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Students will then present their parade to the class, ensuring they communicate the following:

- Why they chose this specific theme?
- What their festival will include
- And how these inclusions allow visitors to see the significance of the theme to their region and to the larger Texas culture and history

## Extended Learning

For bonus points or a learning extension, have students take their proposed festival and write a letter to the Chamber of Commerce to their chosen city or county attempting to persuade them to begin the festival. The letter should include explicit justification for why the festival would be of interest and benefit to the community.

## Videos



### Aqua Fest, Austin

07:27, silent

[https://texasarchive.org/2009\\_00752](https://texasarchive.org/2009_00752)



### Brownsville Charro Days (1947)

03:42, silent

[https://texasarchive.org/2008\\_00449](https://texasarchive.org/2008_00449)



### Brownsville Charro Days (1956)

03:36

[https://texasarchive.org/2016\\_00014](https://texasarchive.org/2016_00014)



### Clute Mosquito Festival

03:00, silent

[https://texasarchive.org/2009\\_01748](https://texasarchive.org/2009_01748)



### Cuero Turkey Trot

22:15

[https://texasarchive.org/2009\\_00741](https://texasarchive.org/2009_00741)



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### Hico Old Settlers' Reunion Parade

04:30

[https://texasarchive.org/2010\\_03399](https://texasarchive.org/2010_03399)



### Juneteenth Celebration, Harris County

21:02

[https://texasarchive.org/2009\\_03676](https://texasarchive.org/2009_03676)



### Juneteenth Celebration, Harris County

04:27

[https://texasarchive.org/2009\\_03675](https://texasarchive.org/2009_03675)



### Kerrville Folk Festival

26:27

[https://texasarchive.org/2009\\_00252](https://texasarchive.org/2009_00252)



### Luling Watermelon Thump, Spit Farther!

11:43

[https://texasarchive.org/2006\\_00020](https://texasarchive.org/2006_00020)



### Peach Jamboree, Stonewall

21:29

[https://texasarchive.org/2008\\_00310](https://texasarchive.org/2008_00310)



### Raymondville Onion Festival

00:52, silent

[https://texasarchive.org/2006\\_00053](https://texasarchive.org/2006_00053)



### Sam Houston Tribute at Texas Centennial Celebration, Huntsville

02:56, some sound

[https://texasarchive.org/2006\\_00059](https://texasarchive.org/2006_00059)



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### Spring Ho Festival, Lampasas

01:56, silent

[https://texasarchive.org/2010\\_00268](https://texasarchive.org/2010_00268)



### Splash Day, Galveston

04:12, silent

[https://texasarchive.org/2016\\_02763](https://texasarchive.org/2016_02763)



### Sun Carnival, El Paso

13:34

[https://texasarchive.org/2011\\_00285](https://texasarchive.org/2011_00285)



### Texas Citrus Festival (1939), Mission

00:50, silent

[https://texasarchive.org/2006\\_00007](https://texasarchive.org/2006_00007)



### Texas Citrus Fiesta (c. 1940s), Mission

03:43, silent

[https://texasarchive.org/2009\\_02226](https://texasarchive.org/2009_02226)



### Texas Folklife Festival, San Antonio

01:28, silent

[https://texasarchive.org/2010\\_00258](https://texasarchive.org/2010_00258)



### Tyler Rose Festival

10:46

[https://texasarchive.org/2010\\_00944](https://texasarchive.org/2010_00944)



### Washington's Birthday Celebration, Laredo

14:06, silent

[https://texasarchive.org/2009\\_01871](https://texasarchive.org/2009_01871)



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### **RESOURCES**

*Fun Texas Festivals and Events*. Gramon, Jim. Plano: Republic of Texas Press, 2001.

Aqua Fest, Austin, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austin\\_Aqua\\_Festival](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austin_Aqua_Festival)

Charro Days Fiesta, Brownsville, <https://www.charrodaysfiesta.com>

Clute Mosquito Festival, <https://www.mosquitofestival.com>

Cuero Turkey Fest, <https://www.turkeyfest.org>

Hico Old Settlers' Reunion Parade, <https://www.hico-tx.com>

Juneteenth Celebration, Harris County, <http://www.june19.org>

Kerrville Folk Festival, <https://www.kerrvillefolkfestival.org>

Lulling Watermelon Thump, <http://watermelonthump.com/>

Peach Jamboree, Stonewall, <https://stonewalltexas.com/peach-jamboree/>

Raymondville Onion Festival,

Spring Ho Festival, Lampasas, <https://springho.com/>

Splash Day, Galveston, <https://www.galveston.com/festivals/>

Sun Carnival, El Paso, <http://www.sunbowl.org/>

Texas Citrus Fiesta, <https://www.texascitrusfiesta.org/>

Texas Folklife Festival, San Antonio, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Texas\\_Folklife\\_Festival](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Texas_Folklife_Festival)

Texas Rose Festival, Tyler, <http://www.texasrosefestival.com>

Washington's Birthday Celebration, Laredo, <https://www.wbcalaredo.org>

### **TEKS**

#### **Texas History, Grade 4**

7A - Describe a variety of regions in Texas and the United States such as political, population, and economic regions that result from patterns of human activity

7B - Identify, locate, and compare the geographic regions in Texas (Mountains and Basins, Great Plains, North Central Plains, Coastal Plains), including their landforms, climate, and vegetation

16B – Sing or recite “Texas, Our Texas”

16C - Recite and explain the meaning of the Pledge to the Texas Flag



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16D - Describe the origins and significance of state celebrations such as Texas Independence Day and Juneteenth

19B - Identify customs, celebrations, and traditions of various cultural, regional, and local groups in Texas such as Cinco de Mayo, Oktoberfest, the Strawberry Festival, and Fiesta San Antonio

21A - Differentiate between, locate, and use primary and secondary sources such as computer software; oral, print, and visual material; documents; and artifacts to acquire information about the United States and Texas

22C - Express ideas orally based on research and experiences

23B - 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 History, Grade 7

19A - Explain how the diversity of Texas is reflected in a variety of cultural activities, celebrations, and performances

19B - Describe how people from various racial, ethnic, and religious groups attempt to maintain their cultural heritage while adapting to the larger Texas culture

21A - Differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources such as computer software, databases media and news services, biographies, interviews, and artifacts to acquire information about the United States and Texas

22D - Create written, oral, and visual presentations of social studies information

23B - 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