

The Story of Texas



Welcome to 7th grade humanities class! This class will be centered around stories: both the ones we tell ourselves, and the stories we can learn from history. For our first unit of the year, we will explore stories about Texas, the state in which we live. We'll consider stereotypical stories about Texas — oil and country music, cowboys and football, the Bible and delicious barbecue — as well as diving into stories that are perhaps overlooked, such as the fact that Texas is the 2nd most diverse state in the country, or that Texas leads the world in space exploration.

Humanities class will incorporate English as well as social studies, so for our first unit we will brush up on some social studies skills: reading maps, making graphs, detecting bias, analyzing primary sources, and identifying different perspectives. In other words, we'll research as many stories about Texas as we can, and we'll do our best to celebrate stories about Texas that aren't usually told.

Essential Questions

- Who is Texas, today?
- How can I know the truth about what happened in the past?
- How is the dominant culture of a place established? How does the dominant culture serve to silence other voices?
- How does the place we grow up shape who we become?



Final Project:

We are creating a class documentary to place on YouTube that tells the world what Texas is really like; the truth, and not just stereotypes. In order to answer the question, “Who Is Texas, Really?” students will have to engage in research, and work in small small groups write research papers. Each student is responsible for answering the question through a different social studies lens: a cultural lens, a geographical lens, a political lens, a historical lens, or an economic lens, using evidence in the form of maps, charts, text, photography, and media. These papers will become the starting place for each



group's YouTube documentary. Each class will have a viewing party, before a tech-savvy volunteer edits all the videos into one film per class period. Finally, the four class periods will present their “Who Is Texas, Really?” video to the entire school, which will watch the videos during morning home group. The class with the highest amount of views on YouTube will win a pizza or breakfast tacos party.

Have questions? Contact me! zwilson1@saisd.net