

“GONE TO TEXAS” TEXAS PIONEERS, 1830-1860

Based on Fourth Grade Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills



UTSA INSTITUTE OF
TEXAN CULTURES

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Introduction

Dear Educator,

Thank you for choosing the “Gone to Texas”, Texas Pioneer, 1830-1860. In this package, you will find everything you will need to implement a primary source based lesson.

We know that you may need to adapt these lessons to fit the constructs of your classroom and the needs of your students. Please feel free to copy the handouts included or create your own!

We look forward to bringing the museum experience to your classroom. If you should have any questions before the visit, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

The following fourth grade TEKS are covered through the implementation of the included lessons. Additional TEKS for fourth grade and other grade levels may also be covered through adaptations to the activities.

Fourth Grade Social Studies TEKS:

4.2 History. The student understands the causes and effects of European exploration and colonization of Texas and North America. The student is expected to: (A) summarize motivations for European exploration and settlement of Texas, including economic opportunity, competition, and the desire for expansion; (B) identify the accomplishments and explain the impact of significant explorers, including Cabeza de Vaca; Francisco Coronado; and René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle, on the settlement of Texas; (C) explain when, where, and why the Spanish established settlements and Catholic missions in Texas as well as important individuals such as José de Escandón; (D) identify Texas' role in the Mexican War of Independence and the war's impact on the development of Texas; and (E) identify the accomplishments and explain the economic motivations and impact of significant empresarios, including Stephen F. Austin and Martín de León, on the settlement of Texas.

4.9 Geography. The student understands how people adapt to and modify their environment. The student is expected to: (A) describe ways people have adapted to and modified their environment in Texas, past and present, such as timber clearing, agricultural production, wetlands drainage, energy production, and construction of dams; (B) identify reasons why people have adapted to and modified their environment in Texas, past and present, such as the use of natural resources to meet basic needs, facilitate transportation, and enhance recreational activities; and (C) compare the positive and negative consequences of human modification of the environment in Texas, past and present, both governmental and private, such as economic development and the impact on habitats and wildlife as well as air and water quality.

4.10 Economics. The student understands the basic economic activities of early societies in Texas and North America. The student is expected to: (A) explain the economic activities various early American Indian groups in Texas and North America used to meet their needs and wants such as farming, trading, and hunting; and (B) explain the economic activities early immigrants to Texas used to meet their needs and wants.

4.22 Social studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms. The student is expected to: (A) use social studies terminology correctly; (B) incorporate main and supporting ideas in verbal and written communication; (C) express ideas orally based on research and experiences; (D) create written and visual material such as journal entries, reports, graphic organizers, outlines, and bibliographies; and (E) use standard grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation.

Fourth Grade English Language Arts TEKS:

4.2 Reading/Vocabulary Development. Students understand new vocabulary and use it when reading and writing. Students are expected to: (B) use the context of the sentence (e.g., in-sentence example or definition) to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words or multiple meaning words...(D) identify the meaning of common idioms.

4.16 Writing/Literary Texts. Students write literary texts to express their ideas and feelings about real or imagined people, events, and ideas. Students are expected to: (A) write imaginative stories that build the plot to a climax and contain details about the characters and setting;

“Gone to Texas”: An Introduction to Pioneer Culture in Texas Jigsaw

Estimated Time: 45 minutes

Materials:

- Copies of reproducible “*Gone to Texas*”: *An Introduction to Pioneer Culture in Texas Jigsaw Activity*, page 5
- Copies of reproducible “*Gone to Texas*” readings, pages 6-9

Instructions:

1. Divide students into four groups. Tell the students that each group will read about one aspect of life and culture of pioneers in Texas and they need to become the expert on their subject. In a few minutes, it will be their responsibility to teach their classmates.
2. Ask students to read silently or aloud to each other. The group should make notes as they read in their appropriate portion of the Jigsaw Activity Page. Reading assignments will be divided into the following sections:
 - a. Gone to Texas
 - b. Building a Home
 - c. Chores and Responsibilities
 - d. Fun and Games
3. Once students have become the expert on their subject and completed their portion of the graphic organizer, regroup them. You should have six groups of four students, and each student should be the expert on one section of the reading. If you have more than 24 students, you will need to adjust the grouping assignments and you may have more than one expert in each group.
4. Students should present the information that they learned to their new group members, and help them complete their Jigsaw Activity Page. If you have more students, ask those students that are duplicates in the group to share the responsibility of teaching their classmates. Remind the students that they are essentially the teacher for their subject, so it is important that they explain their topic as best they can.
5. When this activity is completed, students should have learned about each topic related to the life and culture of pioneers in Texas, completed the Jigsaw activity page, and had the opportunity to teach their fellow classmates.

Note: This assignment can also be completed individually.

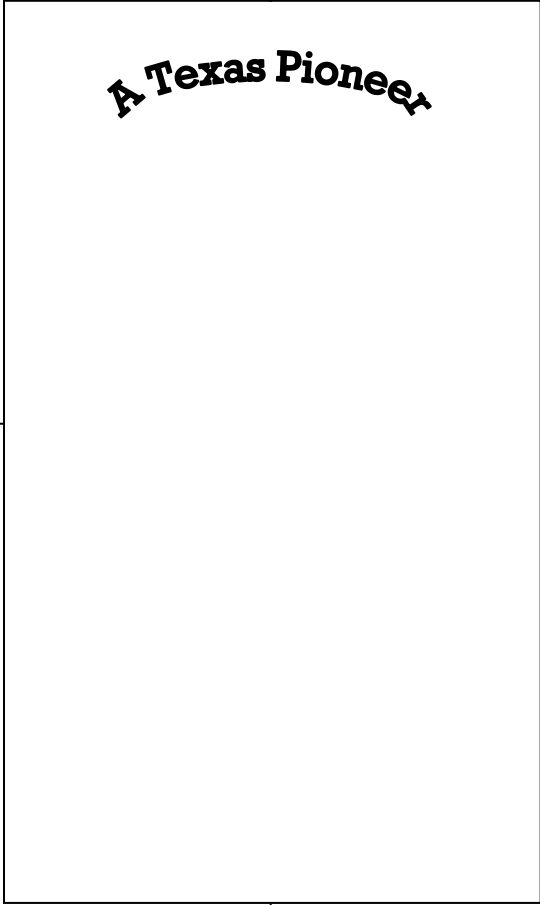
NAME: _____ DATE: _____

“Gone to Texas”: An Introduction to Pioneer Culture in Texas

Directions: Fill in the chart with facts from your reading and the information your classmates teach you, following your teacher’s instructions for your jigsaw activity. Then draw a picture in the center to represent how a pioneer may have looked.

<p>“Gone to Texas”</p>	<p>Building a Home</p>
<p>Chores and Responsibilities</p>	<p>Fun and Games</p>

A Texas Pioneer



“Gone to Texas”



Family stands in front of a log cabin at Deep Creek Crossing, Medina County, Texas (between 1900 and 1910).

To many people in the 1800s, Texas was a land of opportunity. Early in that century, Texas belonged to Spain and made up the northern part of their Mexican territory. Few people lived on the land in Texas, but it would not stay that way for long.

During the 19th century, Americans moved west across the continent searching for new land and a new life. Moses Austin, a man from Missouri, thought that Texas could provide opportunities for land and wealth. In 1821, he received a land grant from the Spanish government and was named an *empresario*, a person whose job it is to bring new settlers to an area. Moses Austin was allowed to bring 300 families to settle in Texas. Unfortunately, he died before he could see his colony settled. His son, Stephen F. Austin, took over his father’s work and settled the first colony in Texas. Stephen F. Austin is now known as the “Father of Texas.”

Green DeWitt of Missouri was another successful *empresario*. He was granted permission

to bring 400 families into Texas in 1825. He helped found the town of Gonzales, which became the headquarters for his colony.

Martín de León was a native of Mexico that worked as an *empresario*. With the help of his wife, Patricia de la Garza de León, he settled between 100 and 200 Mexican families in Texas and founded the city of Victoria in 1824. His colony became very successful in farming and ranching and the city of Victoria did a lot of trade with Mexico.

Americans, Mexicans and Europeans moved quickly into Texas. By 1825, just four years after Moses Austin was awarded land by the Spanish government, Stephen F. Austin’s colony was home to more than 1800 people. This number grew quickly, and by 1836 when Texas declared independence from Mexico, the region was home to nearly 30,000 people. By the time Texas joined the United States in 1845, the population had grown to more than 100,000 citizens and 35,000 slaves.

The population of Texas grew so quickly because many people were in search of land and new opportunities. Travelers in the 1800s reported that Texas had rich soil and thick forests. They described natural harbors and rivers that made travel and shipping by boat easy. These descriptions and the ease of getting land in Texas drew people from all over the United States and the world. They hoped to find a chance to work the land and earn wealth.

Some people were trying to escape hard lives in their previous home, and some hoped to find more political and religious freedom in Texas. Still others set out in search of adventure on the wild Texas Frontier!

Many settlers in Texas found what they were looking for and more. These pioneers encountered a challenging life and difficult work, but many of them also found a new home in Texas.

Building a Home



Woman and boy posing outside of a dugout home near Serbin, Texas (between 1900 and 1905).

For those brave immigrants that left for Texas in the 1800s, their search for a new life was filled with hard work and sometimes difficult conditions. Early pioneers experienced rough travel and they moved their families to an unknown land with uncertain outcomes. Many of these pioneers were successful and made Texas their new home.

In the 1820s and 1830s, immigrants moved to Texas from all over the United States and Europe. Pioneers came to Texas in search of cheap and farmable land, new opportunities for their families, and adventure in a new frontier. Those settlers that moved from the United States followed trails made by earlier settlers or rivers. People traveled by horse, covered wagon, boats, and many settlers even walked. They had limited space to back their belongings, so they could usually only pack the necessary supplies for the trip. If a family was lucky enough to have a wagon, they often packed the wagon full of supplies and walked beside it so they would have room for more supplies.

Settlers to Texas chose their new land for many reasons. Those that received land grants from an *empresario*, a person whose job it is to bring new settlers to an area, settled in colonies and received land based on the size of the family. People who had special skills that would help the

colony grow, such as doctors or merchants, could receive extra land. It was important to choose land that had access to a river, trees for building, and good soil for farming.

Many people wanted to live in colonies with other people from the same background. For example, many Irish settlers lived along the Gulf Coast, and German settlers often moved to Central Texas.

When settlers arrived in Texas and found their new land, the first thing they needed to do was build a home. Often a pioneer family would build a dugout or sod house as their first shelter because it could be completed quickly. A dugout is a home that is dug into the side of a hill or into the ground. A sod house was made of bricks made from packed dirt and grass. Not only were they quick to build, they provided protection from the weather. They were cool in the summer and warm in the winter, and they were strong enough to stand through wind and storms. Unfortunately, sod houses did often leak and drip mud during heavy rains.

After families were more settled into their new Texas homes and were able to start farming to provide food for their families, they would build a more permanent home from the resources they had available. Settlers in East Texas and the Texas Hill Country, where trees are abundant, built log cabins. In other areas such as West Texas and South Texas, where trees are less likely to grow, they often built homes using rocks or adobe bricks, made of clay and straw. Families usually started their permanent homes with just one room, and then added more rooms as they had time. They even built their own furniture from the materials they had.

Pioneers came to Texas with very little and learned to use what the land provided. Moving to a new land in the 1800s required an adventurous spirit and a willingness to work hard, but many people did so and made Texas their new home.

Chores and Responsibilities



Exhibit depicting a kitchen in a pioneer home at the Pioneer Memorial Museum, Fredericksburg, Texas (no date).

When pioneers arrived in Texas during the 1820s and 1830s, there was a lot of work to be done. Everyone in the family had chores and responsibilities that included farming, cooking and cleaning. To be successful in making their new life in Texas pioneer families had to work together.

Farming was the most important responsibility because it provided food for the family before markets and stores existed in Texas. When families moved to Texas, they often brought animals such as cows, pigs, oxen and chickens. These animals sometimes helped the families work, like oxen able to pull a wagon or a plow; or they were a source of food. After making a temporary shelter, like a dugout house, the family planted seeds that they brought with them from their previous home. Early pioneers grew corn as their main food crop. It could be eaten fresh, or dried to last through the cold winter months when most plants do not grow. Families usually had a vegetable garden to provide a variety of other foods. They often grew cotton that could be used to make clothing or sold so the family could buy other things they needed.

Once the food was grown and harvested, women had the challenge of cooking without the modern appliances we have today. Women cooked in heavy cast iron or copper pots that hung over the fireplace or open fires, unless they were

lucky enough to have a wood-burning stove. Children helped by hauling water from the creek or well, because homes did not have sinks or running water. Learning to cook for a family was a very important lesson, so girls often learned by helping and watching their mothers.

Women and young girls had the responsibility of cleaning the house. Chores included cleaning dishes, sweeping, and cleaning chamber pots.

In the 1800s, pioneers did not have bathrooms inside their homes. During the day, families would use an outhouse, a small building set away from the main house that had a seat set over a hole dug in the ground. This served as a toilet before homes had running water. At night when it was dark and maybe cold, pioneers might use a chamber pot. A chamber pot is a small pot with a lid that was kept under the bed. It was used as a toilet at night, and then cleaned the next morning.

Pioneer families often had only two sets of clothing and laundry was done once a week, because it was a long and tiring process. They made a kind of soap called lye from cooking ashes, animal fat and salt. This soap was used for everything from bathing to doing laundry!

Because water had to be hauled from a creek or well, many families did laundry near the creek or other water source. They started by boiling water over an open fire, and then scrubbed clothes clean using a tool called a washboard.

After clothes had been cleaned and rinsed, women would hang them on a nearby bush or tree to dry. The final process in doing the laundry was ironing. Before electric irons that we have today, the pioneers used irons made from cast iron that were heated over a fire. This was long hard work and often took a day or more.

Pioneers worked to maintain their homes daily. Everyone in the family who was old enough helped, including young children. These were just some of the challenges of settling a new land in the 1800s.

Fun and Games



Family stands in front of log cabin with small wagon (no date).

Pioneers who moved to Texas in the 1820s and 1830s had to work very hard to establish their new homes. When the work was done, families and communities came together to celebrate, have fun, and play games.

As pioneer communities grew across Texas, they supported each other in work and in play. Dances were held to celebrate important events such as weddings, and sometimes they were held just for fun! Because farms were located long distances from each other, settlers might travel forty or more miles just to gather for these dances.

People of all ages would participate in square dances, where a caller would instruct the dancers to do different moves and change partners. These dance traditions came from many European countries. German polkas, Irish reels and French quadrilles were popular dances in Texas and eventually adapted to become the Western square dance that is still popular today.

Families and communities would gather for house raisings or barn raisings, especially in German communities. During these events, the people would gather to complete a new home or barn and then celebrate the big accomplishment. Early Texas settlers also socialized at quilting parties, picnics and church events.

Children did not have access to store bought toys, so they often played games with they had or could make. Some kids made marbles out of clay and girls often made dolls out of rags or scrap fabric left over when their mothers made clothes.

Pioneer children played many games that are still common today, such as ring-around-the-rosy, hide-and-seek and leap frog. One game, "Old Mother Wobble Gobble," was very similar to Simon Says. The leader of the game recited the phrase, "old Mother Wobble Gobble, do as I do." Then, the leader would make a funny face or do an action that the other children had to copy. Many of the games and toys that pioneer children played with were similar to those children use today.

Music was another form of entertainment for the entire family. Someone might entertain the family by playing the fiddle (or violin), an accordion, or even make music using kitchen spoons!

Pioneer families may not have had much, but they learned to have fun, play games and develop a sense of community through their celebrations.

Pioneer Idioms and Slang

Estimated Time: 30 minutes

Materials:

- Copies of reproducible *Pioneer Idioms and Slang* Activity Page, pages 11-12

Instructions:

1. Explain to students that an idiom is a common expression or saying that is understood figuratively, but does not make any sense literally.
2. Review common idioms such as:
 - a. It's raining cats and dogs.
 - b. Actions speak louder than words.
 - c. It's a piece of cake!
 - d. You are the apple of my eye.
 - e. That's the last straw!
3. Then, tell students that people from different cultures have their own sayings and slang words. Ask students to brainstorm some idioms, sayings or slang words that they use with their family and friends.
4. Next, pass out copies of the reproducible *Pioneer Idioms and Slang* Activity Page. On this page students will complete the following activities:
 - a. Read and explain the meaning of pioneer idioms, and then draw a picture in the space provided to represent what this idiom would look like if it were understood literally.
 - b. Next, read the list of cowboy slang words and try to match them with the correct word or definition.

Pioneer Idioms and Slang

Directions: Read each idiom and explain what it means. Then use the space provided to draw a picture of what that idiom would look like if understood literally.

Idioms are phrases that have hidden meanings. The expressions do not mean exactly what they say. Whoon

Example:

We didn't go to town much because it was **a whoop and a holler** from our house.
What is the meaning of this idiom? It means that it is far away.



1. My sister will **raise the steam** if she finds out that I got a new doll and she did not.

What is the meaning of this idiom? _____

2. After a long day of work in the garden, I decided that it was time to **hit the shucks**.

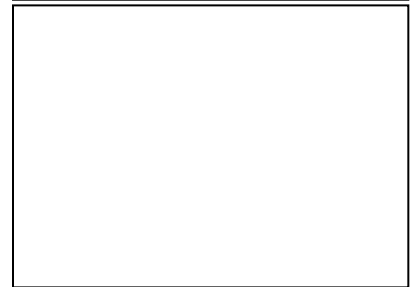
What is the meaning of this idiom? _____

3. Dad got mad when I was playing when I should have been working. He told me that it was time to **fish or cut bait**.

What is the meaning of this idiom? _____

4. We saw clouds in the sky and decided to **make the chips fly** and get the seeds planted before the rain came.

What is the meaning of this idiom? _____



Directions: Match each cowboy slang word listed in the word bank with the correct word and picture.

Slang is a type of language that is very informal and usually used by a particular group of people.

STRONG



Corn-Fed
Slang Term

GHOST STORIES



Slang Term

SAD



Slang Term

RAIN



Slang Term

FINGERS



Slang Term

HOGS



Slang Term

CHAMBER POT



Slang Term

LARGE KNIFE



Slang Term

MUSTACHE



Slang Term

Cowboy Slang Word Bank

Corn-Fed

Soup Strainer

Booger Tales

Thunder Pot

Dark-Hearted

Devil's Footwash

Corn Stealers

Hillside Fish

Frog Sticker

A Day on the Frontier

Estimated Time: 45 minutes

Materials:

- Previously completed *“Gone to Texas”: An Introduction to Pioneer Culture in Texas* Jigsaw Activity, page 5
- Notebook paper or blank paper

Instructions:

1. Using all of the information that they have learned from the previous activities, ask students to think about what a day in the life of a pioneer might have been like.
2. Instruct students to write a two-page story about a pioneer or family moving to Texas during the 1800s. In their story, they should include facts and details that they learned in the other activities. Students may be creative and make up names for characters, but they should be sure to use factual information about what life was really like.
3. When they have completed their writing, ask students to illustrate one aspect of their story. They may choose to draw a character or a scene.

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Photos

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