



Texas

4 Studies Weekly

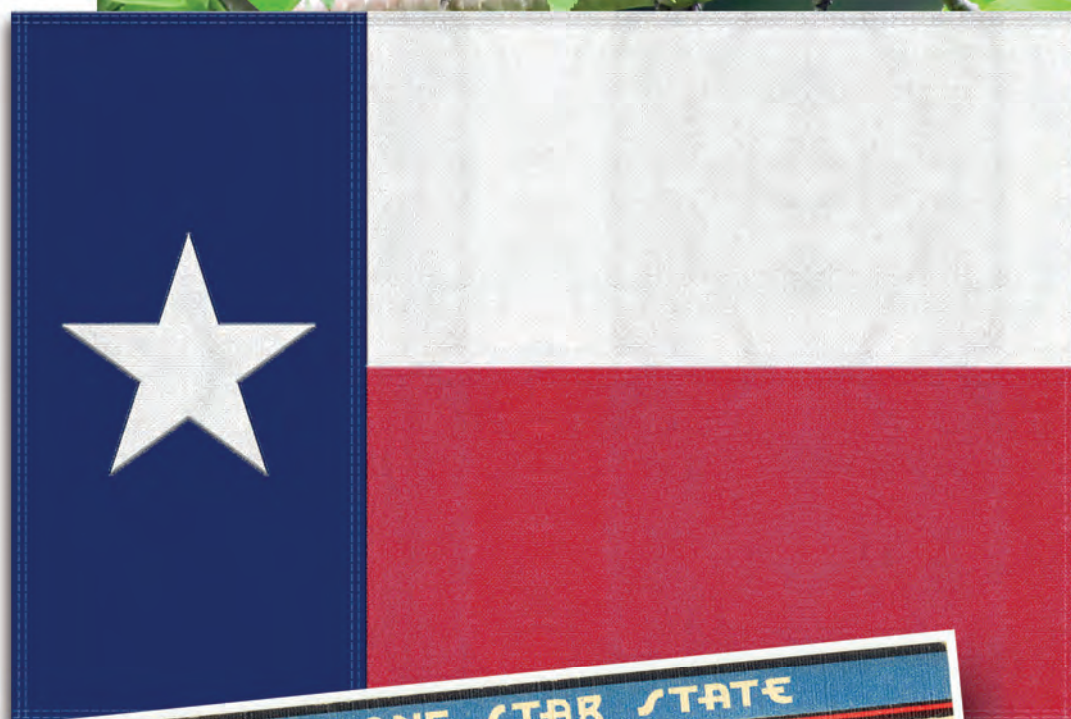
OUR STATE

Symbols of Texas

Texas is filled with many symbols, monuments, and landmarks that represent pivotal moments in the state's history. A **symbol** is a visual representation of important ideas, beliefs, traditions, and events. The symbols of Texas make us feel patriotic. **Patriotism** is a feeling of love for your country, state, or community.

Over time, these symbols have taken on new meanings that reflect the climate of Texas society. However, many of our important symbols continue to represent the ideas of freedom, democracy, independence, and the rights of citizens. These symbols do not belong to one person. They belong to all Texans. Many are on display for visitors to view.

Texas has many well-known and widely recognized state symbols. These include the six flags that have flown over Texas; the current Texas flag; the state song, "Texas, Our Texas;" the Pledge to the Texas Flag; the Alamo; and the San Jacinto Monument. Each symbol has a unique history and holds an important place in Texas culture.



Six Flags Over Texas

Texans often speak with pride about the “Six Flags Over Texas.” This refers to the six nations that governed Texas from the 1500s to the present. The flags of Spain, France, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, the Confederate States of America, and the United States have each flown over Texas at one time in history.

Spain (1492-1821)

Following Columbus’s expedition in 1492, Spain claimed much of the land in the Americas, including present-day Texas. Spanish explorers were sent to find out more about the land. They quickly learned that the Americas were full of riches. Spanish explorers were motivated by the three Gs: God, gold, and glory.

Many explorers were seeking riches for themselves and their country. They searched for gold and other precious metals that they could send back to Europe. Some Spanish explorers wanted to bring their religious beliefs to the people of the Americas and convert them to Christianity. Other explorers hoped to gain fame across the globe for their courageous actions and daring expeditions.

Spanish explorers led several expeditions through Texas during the 16th and 17th centuries with the hopes of finding gold and other riches. They didn’t find gold and riches, but the Spanish explorers found vast amounts of land ideal for colonization. Spain established many settlements in Texas and remained in control of the territory until 1821.

France (1684-1688)

In 1684, René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle sailed to Texas from France. He had already claimed land near the Mississippi River for Louis XIV, the king of France. He named the land Louisiana in the king’s honor. The king wanted to send La Salle back to start a colony. The new settlement meant France would have control of the land.

La Salle could not find the Mississippi River again. Instead, he landed at Matagorda Bay on the Texas coast. There, he and his men claimed the land for France. The French flag became the second flag to fly over Texas. The French colony did not last very long, but it renewed Spain’s interest in settling Texas.

Mexico (1821-1836)

In the early 1800s, the Spanish Empire extended from the southernmost point of South America to the Pacific coast of North America, including present-day Texas and Mexico.

During this time, many Mexican citizens began to speak out against Spain’s control. The people of Mexico wanted a government that would be fair to all people. The Mexican people fought a war with Spain to gain their independence. In 1821, Mexico won its independence from Spain but lost control of its territories in North America, including Texas.

Republic of Texas (1836-1845)

Texas settlers were upset with Mexico’s laws and unfair treatment. They declared their independence from Mexico and fought for the right to form their own country. For nine years, Texas was its own nation. The flag of the Republic of Texas flew during this time.

This was a difficult time for Texas. The new nation didn’t have a lot of money. Texans lived in fear of attacks from Mexico and the American Indian tribes of Texas. In 1845, Texas was annexed by the United States and became the 28th state in the country.

Confederate States of America (1861-1865)

When the United States was torn apart during the Civil War, Texas seceded from the Union and joined the Confederate States of America. The Confederate flag flew over Texas until the end of the Civil War in 1865.

At that time, Texas was readmitted to the United States of America.

United States of America (1845-1861 and 1865-present)

Texans have proudly flown the United States flag since the end of the Civil War. Many people in Texas have bravely fought to keep the freedoms that we have. The flag of the United States is a symbol of these freedoms.

Texas Flag

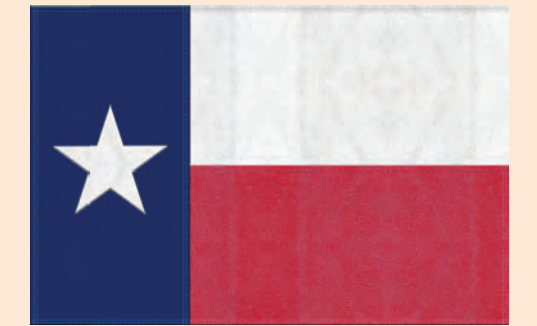
Each state in our country has its own flag. Each state flag is a symbol of the cultural characteristics, history, and unique features of a state. The official flag of the state of Texas is often called the Lone Star Flag. It was adopted by the Republic of Texas in 1839. The original designer of the flag is unknown. However, the members of the Flag Committee of 1836 and Texas Senators William H. Warton and Oliver Jones are often credited with its creation.

Legislation passed in 1839 specified that the flag must include "a blue perpendicular stripe of the width of one-third of the whole length of the flag and a white star of five points in the center thereof and two horizontal stripes of equal length and breadth, the upper stripe of white, the lower of red, of the length of two-thirds of the length of the whole flag."

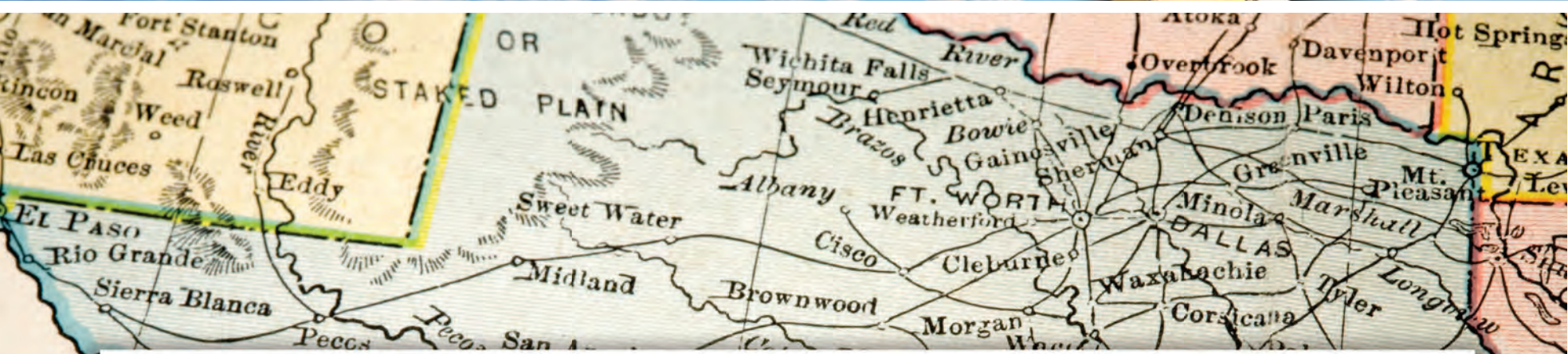
The colors that were chosen for the Lone Star Flag symbolize specific virtues. The red stripe symbolizes courage. The blue stripe symbolizes loyalty. The white stripe symbolizes purity and liberty. In 1933, the Texas Legislature passed specific rules for the use and display of the Lone Star Flag. Some of these rules include:

- The flag should be displayed on all state holidays and on days that commemorate events of historical significance.
- If displayed outdoors, the Texas flag must be placed on a flag pole or staff.
- Schools should display the Texas flag when in session.
- When flown with the flag of the United States, the Texas flag should never be higher than the national flag.
- It is disrespectful to print or write any words, sayings, or phrases on the Texas flag.

Today, the Lone Star Flag serves as a reminder of the state’s history and the pride Texans feel toward their state.



Background image courtesy of Gianni Crestani



“Texas, Our Texas”

The state song of Texas is called “Texas, Our Texas.” The music was written in 1924 by composer William J. Marsh. The lyrics, or words of the song, were written by Marsh and Gladys Yoakum Wright. In 1929, the Texas legislature held a contest to choose an official state song. “Texas, Our Texas” won the competition and was adopted as the state song of Texas later that year. In 1993, the Texas legislature passed a law designating “Texas, Our Texas” as the official state song.

*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.
[Refrain] God bless you Texas! And*

*keep you
brave and strong,
That you may grow in power and worth, Thro’out
the ages long.
Texas, O Texas! Your freeborn single star,
Sends out its radiance to nations near and far.
Emblem of freedom! It sets our hearts aglow,
With thoughts of San Jacinto and glorious Alamo.
[Refrain]
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.
[Refrain]*

Background image courtesy of GettyImages

Pledge to the Texas Flag



Image courtesy of GettyImages

In 1933, the Texas legislature created the Pledge to the Texas Flag. This pledge honors the Lone Star flag. A **pledge** is an oath that someone makes to be loyal to beliefs and ideas. Reciting a pledge to a flag means that you are showing loyalty to your state or country. The Pledge to the Texas Flag has changed since its initial creation.

Originally, the Pledge to the Texas Flag stated, “Honor the Texas Flag of 1836; I pledge allegiance to thee, Texas, one and indivisible.” In 1965, it was changed to: “Honor the Texas Flag; I pledge allegiance to thee, Texas, one and indivisible.” Lawmakers chose to remove the words “of 1836” because they wanted Texans to pledge loyalty to the current flag of the state. In 2007, lawmakers added the words “one state under God” to the pledge. The current Pledge to the Flag of Texas reads: “Honor the Texas flag; I pledge allegiance to thee, Texas, one state under God, one and indivisible.” People across the state show their loyalty to Texas, its government, and its history by reciting this pledge.

Name _____

The Alamo

The Alamo is one of the most iconic landmarks in Texas. It is located in San Antonio. It began as a Spanish mission in 1718 and was called San Antonio de Valero. The original mission was built west of San Pedro Springs. The mission was destroyed by a hurricane in 1724, and a new location was chosen farther inland. The mission was rebuilt on the eastern side of the San Antonio River. For many years, the mission served more than 100 American Indian tribes. The mission also served as a fort, a storehouse for artillery, a jail, and San Antonio's first hospital.

When the Spanish missions in Texas were secularized, or no longer under the control of the church, San Antonio de Valero became known as the Alamo. "Álamo" is the Spanish word for cottonwood. Many historians believe that the name was given to the old mission because it was next to a grove of cottonwood trees. Spanish and Mexican soldiers used the Alamo as barracks and a base of operations from 1803 to 1835.

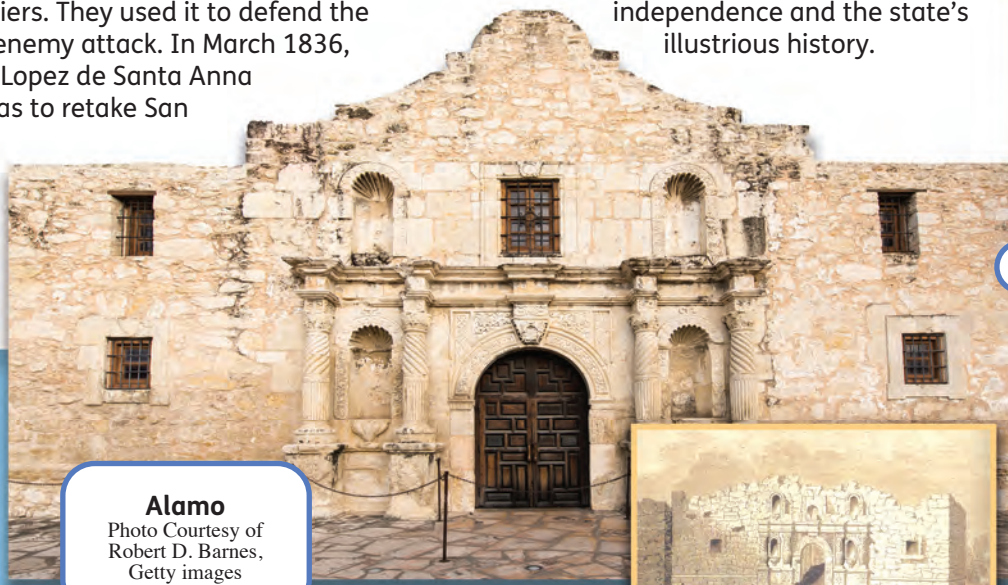
During the Texas Revolution, the Texian Army captured the Alamo from Mexican soldiers. They used it to defend the city of San Antonio from enemy attack. In March 1836, Mexican general Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna and his army crossed Texas to retake San

Antonio. Texian forces barricaded themselves in the Alamo and defended the city.

For days, the soldiers defended the mission and the people of the city. Notable soldiers, including William B. Travis, Davy Crockett, and Jim Bowie, fought at the Alamo. None of the soldiers survived the battle. The story of the defenders of the Alamo spread across Texas, and the phrase "Remember the Alamo!" became the battle cry of the Texas Revolution.

Following the Texas Revolution, the Alamo fell into disrepair. Conservation efforts began in the 1880s. The Daughters of the Texas Republic worked for years to purchase and preserve the property. Through the efforts of prominent individuals, including Clara Driscoll, Adina Emilia De Zevala, and members of the Daughters of the Texas Republic, the Alamo was saved.

Today, the Alamo is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the state. About two million people visit the Alamo each year. This site serves as a reminder of the fight for Texas independence and the state's illustrious history.



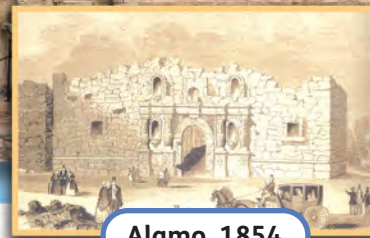
Alamo
Photo Courtesy of Robert D. Barnes, Getty images



Clara Driscoll



Adina Emilia De Zevala



Alamo, 1854

San Jacinto Monument

The San Jacinto Monument is located southeast of Houston at the site of the Battle of San Jacinto. The monument and historical museum commemorate the battle. The Battle of San Jacinto was the final battle of the Texas Revolution. Following the battles of the Alamo and Goliad, Mexican general Santa Anna pursued the Texian Army led by Sam Houston. Santa Anna forced his men to stop and made plans to attack a group of Texian soldiers near San Jacinto.

On the morning of April 21, 1836, more than 1,200

Mexican soldiers arrived at San Jacinto. Santa Anna's men built a barricade out of sacks of supplies for protection. They were shocked that the Texians didn't immediately attack their position. The Mexican soldiers began to relax. Many of the men, including General Santa Anna, decided to take an afternoon nap.

This was just the chance Houston was waiting for! He had already ordered his men to destroy a nearby bridge to prevent the Mexican Army from retreating. Houston led about 900 of his men to the Mexican camp, and the surprise attack began. The Battle of San Jacinto lasted only 18 minutes, and it secured Texas's independence from Mexico.

The San Jacinto Monument is the tallest war memorial in the world. The structure is 570 feet tall. It honors everyone who fought for independence during the Texas Revolution. It was designed by Jesse H. Jones. Jones was a member of the Texas Centennial Committee. Construction began on the monument in 1936 and was completed in 1939. The total cost to build the monument was approximately \$1.5 million.

Today, visitors to the site can ride an elevator to the top of the monument and look out at the battlegrounds. On the ground, visitors can spend time in a museum with artifacts and documents to better understand the history and culture of Texas. The monument serves as a reminder of the final battle of the Texas Revolution and the sacrifice of all those who participated.



"The Battle of San Jacinto" painting by Henry Arthur McArdle, 1895. In present-day Harris County, Texas.