

## Description of Topic

In 1891, a group of women began a now-beloved San Antonio tradition when they decided to hold a parade to honor the heroes of the Alamo and the anniversary of the Battle of San Jacinto. What began as a modest local celebration has grown into the largest parade in the United States run entirely by women. Although the parade is a fun and festive event, all participants are asked to lay a floral tribute on the front lawn of the Alamo as the parade passes by this UNESCO World Heritage Site as a way to honor and remember the bravery and sacrifice of our forefathers. The mission of The Battle of Flowers Association is *to teach the history of our state and to keep alive the patriotic traditions of Texas and San Antonio*. In keeping with this tradition, the Oratorical Contest creates awareness and fosters appreciation of our Texas heritage while providing Texas college and university students a unique and highly-prized forum in forensic competition. The Battle of Flowers Association is proud to present the topic for the 94<sup>th</sup> annual Oratorical Contest:

### *The Lone Star Story: ....an epic saga of the events that changed Texas forever!*

*The discovery of oil at Spindletop, the Battle of San Jacinto, the Galveston Storm of 1900, the founding of the King Ranch empire, the arrival of the Canary Islanders in Central Texas....*

Each of these pivotal events played a vital role in shaping the great state of Texas. These “epic sagas” and the characters leading them were as big as the Lone Star state, and each marked a moment of change for Texas. This year’s topic invites you to take a trip back in time to discover and share the stories of the blockbuster events that altered the course of the Lone Star and its people forever.

These groundbreaking events in the course of Texas history transpired in multiple sectors, and we invite you to select the area of change that tells *The Lone Star Story* from the perspective that inspires you. Whether the changes affected the state’s economy, government, or culture, each had a profound impact on the future of Texas. Some of these changes were driven by advances in industry and technology, such as the introduction of windmills to Texas, the use of railroads for the great cattle drives after the Civil War, or the opening of the Houston Ship Channel. Other major shifts in the story of Texas were driven by natural phenomena such as the Galveston Storm of 1900, the Dust Bowl of the 1930’s, or the oil discovered at Spindletop in 1901.

The unique culture of Texas also offers a fascinating perspective for viewing events impacting Texas history. The Canary Islanders first settled in Texas in the early 1730’s and, through their grit and determination, they established what is now one of the oldest and most historically significant cities in the state, San Antonio. Even earlier than the Canary Islanders, Spanish missionaries interacted with indigenous Native Americans in Texas, establishing missions and communities throughout central Texas, and paving the way for the blending of cultures among the many peoples who would eventually inhabit Texas. Stephen F. Austin’s establishment of the colony known as the “Old Three Hundred” in 1823 further set the course for an independent-minded culture of people who would eventually proclaim themselves to be, above all else, Texans.

We Texans are proud of our past and the events that marked us for greatness. Having existed under six different national flags, Texas has seen its share of history-making battles and major changes in

government. During the tumultuous periods of the Spanish American War, the Mexican War, and the Texas War for Independence, Texans fought bravely for their land and for the right to control their own destiny. However, some of the most extraordinary events centered around the years leading up to Texas declaring itself to be a sovereign nation. The Battle of Goliad, The Battle of the Alamo, The Battle of San Jacinto...these were seminal moments in the history of Texas that live on today in the hearts of every Texan. The cry, "Remember the Alamo" is one that changed the course of the Lone Star State forever, as Texans and supporters from across the country rallied to avenge the razing of the Alamo by Santa Anna's troops at the Battle of the Alamo. As the Republic of Texas was established in 1836, the Texas state of mind and sense of pride that still lives in the hearts of Texans today was cemented.

Naturally, the many turning points and pivotal players in the history of Texas intersect and overlap each other. However, we encourage and invite you to focus on one event for your topic. While other episodes and people will be important to your "Lone Star Story", it should be clear which seminal event is the main focus of your speech.

#### Suggested Topics\*

1. Battle of the Alamo (1836)
2. Battle of San Jacinto (1836)
3. Battle of Goliad (1836)
4. Galveston Storm of 1900
5. Spindletop & discovery of oil (1901)
6. Railroad established in Texas (1853)
7. NASA Johnson Space Center (1961)
8. Canary Islanders settle in Texas (1731)
9. Missionaries established in Texas (early 1700s)
10. Stephen F Austin elected first president of the Republic of Texas (1836)
11. Opening of Houston Ship Channel (1914)
12. Texas Railroad Commission established (1891)
13. King Ranch (1853) & cattle-ranching industry established
14. Cattle drives of late 1800s
15. Introduction of barbed wire (1870s)
16. Texas Rangers established (1835)
17. 1968 World's Fair & Hemisfair
18. Spanish-American War (1898)
19. Texas War for Independence and the Republic of Texas (1836-1846)
20. The "Old Three Hundred" colonists settled under Stephen F. Austin (1823)
21. The Dust Bowl (1930s)
22. Mexican-American War (1846-1848) & the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848)
23. Windmills introduced in Texas (1860)
24. The American Civil War & Texas Secession (1861-1865)

\*These are suggestions. You may have a personal connection or interest in an important Texas historical event not listed here. You are not limited to these suggested topics.