

BATTLE OF FLOWERS 2019 TEXAS HISTORY ESSAY CONTEST

Dear Principals, Curriculum Directors and Seventh Grade History Teachers,

The Battle of Flowers Association announces its 25th Annual Texas History Essay Contest for all seventh grade students from San Antonio area schools. **Please encourage your students to compete** for the honor of representing their school in this contest by writing an original 350 to 700 word historical essay on the topic:

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 essay.

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.

Please select your school's two best essays and submit them to contest chair Susan Janes at the address below. The deadline is **Wednesday, January 16, 2019**. Include the attached statement of originality, signed by students whose essays you select.

Entries will be judged on content, creativity, the interest generated, accuracy and appropriateness of topic (70%), and on neatness of presentation, grammar, spelling and quality of research (30%). Title page and resource materials listed in standard bibliographic form should be on separate pages (not counted toward the length of the essay). References will be checked for accuracy. Please note that essays must fall within the 350 to 700 word length to qualify for the contest. **Please make sure your essays are titled!**

The first place winner of the Essay Contest will be invited to ride in the 2019 Battle of Flowers Parade!

The Texas History Essay Contest is held in conjunction with the Battle Flowers Annual Oratorical Contest in which Texas college students research, write and deliver original speeches on a similar topic.

Winning Essay Contest authors will be honored at the Oratorical Contest, which begins at 9 a.m. on Friday, February 22, 2019 at the Witte Museum in San Antonio. PROMPTLY AT 1:00 p.m., the first, second and third place winners of the Essay Contest will receive plaques and awards for their accomplishments. In addition, the first, second and third place winners will also receive monetary prizes of **\$100, \$75.00 and \$50.00**. Winning essays will be displayed and Participation Certificates will also be presented. The first place essay will be published in the Battle of Flowers Parade program. Each school submitting entries will receive participation recognition.

We invite winners and their teachers to attend the luncheon as guests of the Battle of Flowers Association. Essay guests check in at 11:45 a.m. and have lunch where the winning author will read his/her essay to the crowd! We invite other interested students, parents and teachers to attend the Oratorical Contest and Essay Contest Awards (open to the public) and, if they choose, to make a paid reservation for lunch (\$30.00) by mailing a check to Mrs. Mimi Riley, 343 Arcadia Place, San Antonio, Texas 78209.

Oratorical Contest finalists repeat their speeches to a new set of judges in the afternoon session, which begins at 1:15p.m. after the Essay Awards and everyone is invited to attend.

We hope that you will encourage your students to compete! Please complete the attached participation form and send it to the address below if you plan to participate. To help you publicize the Essay Contest, we have enclosed a flyer for you to copy, post and distribute.

Please contact me if you have questions or need more information.

Sincerely,

Susan Janes
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