



### 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 97<sup>th</sup> annual Oratorical Contest:

### ***Defining Disasters....Reshaping Texas and Texans***

From the Great Storm of 1900, a heart-wrenching school explosion in New London 1937, wind's devastating power during tornado season to feeling the earth shake due to a disaster is something one will never forget.

Each of these pivotal events played a vital role in reshaping the great state of Texas and Texans. These events and the people who survived them each marked a moment of change for Texas and Texans. 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 Texas and its people forever.

These events in the course of Texas history transpired in multiple sectors, and we invite you to select an area of change that tells *Defining Disasters...Reshaping Texas and Texans* from a perspective that inspires you. Whether the changes affected the state's economy, government, landscape, or culture, each had a profound impact on the future of Texas and Texans. These disasters were driven anthropogenically or naturally. The unique culture of Texas also offers a fascinating perspective for viewing disastrous events that have impacted Texas history. 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 "Defining Disasters story", it should be clear which seminal event is the main focus of your speech.