

# LOS TEJANOS THE RANCHING EXPERIENCE

Life & Work

**Based on Texas Essential Knowledge & Skills**

Kindergarten through Third Grade



**UTSA** INSTITUTE OF  
**TEXAN CULTURES**

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# Introduction

Dear Educator,

*Los Tejanos: The Ranching Experience* explores the legacy of ranching from a unique cultural perspective and offers students a glimpse into what life was like for people working and thriving on Texas ranches. This resource guide provides students with hands-on learning activities that give them the opportunity to engage with the past, where they will refine critical thinking skills while learning about the value of work as an aspect of Tejano culture. The contents of this guide are based on Art, Social Studies, and English Language Arts and Reading TEKS for grades K through 3.

For additional resources and information on ITC exhibits and tours, please visit <http://www.texancultures.com/resources/>

If you have any questions or would like more information on materials, resources and services for students and educators, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Respectfully,

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## Using this Educator Guide

*Los Tejanos: The Ranching Experience* features a series of interactive, inquiry-based and hands-on activities for use in the classroom. These activities, developed for grades K through 3, are designed to help younger students utilize prior knowledge to better understand the job and life of a Tejano cowboy or *vaquero*, learn about the important role branding technology played in the development of the Texas ranching industry, and discuss the value of work and jobs as important aspects of culture. As a culminating experience, students will use what they have learned to create a classroom “ranch” art mural. While these activities are designed to be completed as an entire series, please feel free to modify and/or expand upon them to meet your individual classroom needs.

### “Big Picture” Understandings:

The following “Big Picture” Understandings are woven throughout the lessons provided in this guide. These understandings help students identify and connect with important thematic concepts that will come up throughout their studies in economics, technology, and culture.

- Jobs have value because they enable people to earn money to meet their basic needs.
- Jobs are an important aspect of culture, and learning about different jobs helps us understand how people in different cultures may meet their basic needs in different ways.
- Tejano ranchers made important contributions to the Texas economy.

### Classroom Activities:

*Vaquero Clothing and Tools* – This brainstorming activity assesses students’ prior knowledge and introduces them to the job and life of a Tejano rancher. The tools and clothing needed to assist the *vaquero* in meeting his basic needs are emphasized.

*Build a Brand* – This activity builds upon the concepts introduced in *Vaquero Clothing and Tools* and provides students with an in-depth, hands-on exploration of a tool and technology commonly used by those working on Texas ranches. Students will create their own brand using pipe cleaners.

*Create a Classroom Ranch Mural* – Students will demonstrate their understanding by creating simple works of art and incorporating their newly created brands into a classroom ranch mural depicting the life and work of a Tejano rancher.

## Vaquero Clothing and Tools

In this activity, students will use what they already know about life and work on Texas ranches to complete a circle map detailing the clothing worn and tools used by vaqueros. Students will discuss each object's function and how it helps the vaquero meet his basic needs through work. Additionally, this exercise will introduce students to the important contributions Tejanos made to the development of the Texas ranching industry.

Before you begin, you'll need to gather the following materials:

- Dry erase or flip chart markers
- Board or flip chart paper to display in the front of the classroom; OR
- "Life-size" butcher or flip chart paper to spread across tables or on the floor for group work

### Background Information and Introduction:

Perhaps no other Spanish industry left such an important legacy to Texas as ranching. There had been an effort to introduce livestock to Texas as early as 1690, but only after the colonization of the Canary Islanders did cattle raising become a major endeavor. Spain had a fully developed ranching tradition going back hundreds of years, including the use of special equipment, clothing, and a unique vocabulary associated with ranching. The Spanish found Texas to be perfect for cattle. Thriving and multiplying in the favorable environment, often with no fences to contain them, herds of cattle served as a reservoir for ranching development of the future.

The first cowboys, or vaqueros, were Indians that were trained by the Spanish priests at the missions. Later, European, American and African American settlers learned about cattle from the Spanish and ranching became big business in Texas.

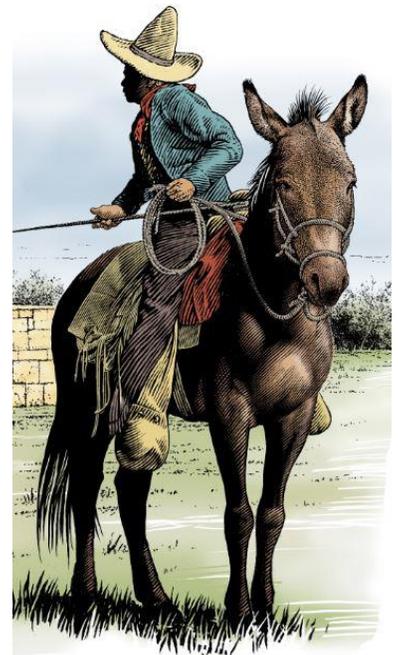
Be sure to introduce the following important vocabulary words during the lesson:

- Vaquero: A cowboy or cattle herder of Spanish heritage.
- Ranch: A large farm where cattle or other animals are bred and raised.

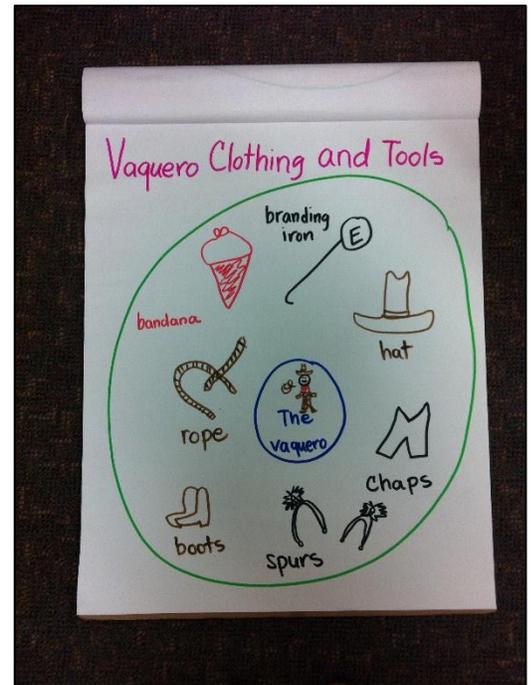
### Directions:

1. Begin by discussing jobs and the importance of working to meet basic needs. Ask students to brainstorm different types of jobs people may have and why they are important to themselves, their families, and the communities in which they live. Create the outline of your circle map by drawing a large circle on the board or on chart paper. Title your map "Vaquero Clothing and Tools." You may choose to have students complete this activity using their own paper in groups depending on their skills and abilities.
2. Discuss what the students already know about cowboy life and culture:
  - What kinds of clothing do cowboys wear?
  - What kinds of tools do they use, and why?
  - What kinds of foods do they eat, and where do they get that food?
  - What kinds of activities do cowboys participate in, and why?

Guide the class discussion and assist students in answering questions if necessary.



- Introduce the word *vaquero* to your students and write it in the center of your circle map. A *vaquero* is a cattle herder or rancher of Spanish heritage. Vaqueros played a prominent role in the early development of cattle ranching in Texas. Ask students if they think a vaquero might have used some of the same types of clothing and tools as modern cowboys do, and why? Tell students that just like modern cowboys, vaqueros had a very important job – to herd and take care of cattle and run ranches or farms. They also repaired fences or buildings and took care of horses. Vaqueros could sell the cattle they raised and herded to earn money for themselves and their families. Ask students if they think life as vaquero was difficult or easy, and try to relate the experience to their lives by discussing their daily activities such as chores or homework.
- Complete the circle map by drawing pictures or writing the names of clothing and tools mentioned by your students. Reemphasize each object’s function and how it helps the vaquero do his work as you complete the circle. If students are working in groups, encourage them to take their time in writing or illustrating each object within the circle. See below for a brief description of common objects and their functions.



- Hat: Vaqueros wore a hat to protect themselves from the hot sun, wind, and rain while they were outside herding cattle or working on the ranch. Hats could also be used as cups from which to drink water.
- Chaps: Chaps, similar to leggings, were worn over the vaquero’s clothing to protect him from scratches or injuries caused by riding a horse through thick brush.
- Rope: Vaqueros used ropes to catch and corral cattle. They could be made from rawhide or horse hair.
- Branding iron: A branding iron was used to mark cattle to help ranchers identify which cattle belonged to them.
- Bandana: A bandana was used to protect a vaquero from the sun while working outside. It was also used as a towel, a washcloth, or bandage.
- Sarape or poncho: A woolen blanket with a hole in the center served as a blanket to protect a vaquero from cold or wet weather and as a mobile tent.

**Closure:**

- Reinforce the importance of each of the objects highlighted in helping the vaquero do his job. Clarify which of the items are tools. Do cowboys still use these tools today? In what ways have tools or ranching technology changed? How do you think the vaquero’s work might have been different without having a rope to herd his cattle or a branding iron to keep track of them?
- Why was the work of the vaquero so important?
- What other jobs are similar to that of a vaquero or cowboy? What other jobs might there be on a ranch or farm?

## Build a Brand

In this activity, students will investigate branding irons in greater detail in order to better understand the importance of the technology to the Texas cattle ranching industry. Students will craft their own brand using pipe cleaners and investigate the thought process behind creating and reading cattle brands. This activity helps students refine skills in shape, line, letter, and number identification.

Before you begin, you'll need to gather the following materials:

- Pipe cleaners
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- Enough copies of the "Reading a Brand" handout to distribute to each of your students

### Brief History of Branding/Background Information:

The practice of cattle branding goes back perhaps 4,000 years, where evidence of branding has been seen depicted on the walls of ancient Egyptian tombs. The Spanish brought the practice of cattle branding to the New World. The vaqueros continued the tradition, and Texan cowboys adopted the practice of branding from them.

Branding irons are heated over a fire and calves may receive a brand on their hip, shoulder, side, or hindquarter during the spring and fall roundups. Brands are a way to permanently mark a calf or cow to signify ownership and still play an important role in identifying an animal's owner in Texas cattle ranching.



### Directions:

1. Begin by telling students that the Spanish were the first people to bring cattle to Texas, reminding them of what they learned during the *Vaquero Clothing and Tools* lesson. Relate branding to the students' lives using the following discussion prompts:
  - Have you ever lost something that meant a lot to you? Perhaps a toy or a favorite book?
  - What happens if you let your dog outside and your yard doesn't have a fence?
  - How can you make sure your dog, toy, or book is returned to you?

Students may respond with answers such as "I would put my name on my toy" or "I would put a collar on my dog."

2. Ask students if they have ever tried to put their name on a cow, and note that cattle can't wear collars because they might get caught in the brush and hurt themselves. How do you think ranchers put their names on their cattle?
3. Tell students that cattle ranchers used a branding iron to put their names on the cattle much in the same way they put their names on their homework or favorite toys. Without a brand, a rancher or vaquero would be unable to identify their cattle if they went missing or somehow made their way onto another ranch. Since it would be too difficult to write their entire name, ranchers would make brands out of letters, shapes, lines, or numbers. There is a special way to read a brand so that any rancher can look at someone else's brand and know what it says.
4. Tell students that they will now learn about this special way to read a brand. Distribute a copy of the "Reading a Brand" handout to each student. This activity can be completed as a class or in small groups. Refer to the rules below to assist your students in reading their brands and completing their worksheets. Brands are read from:

R "R"

Left to Right

Running R

Quarter Circle R

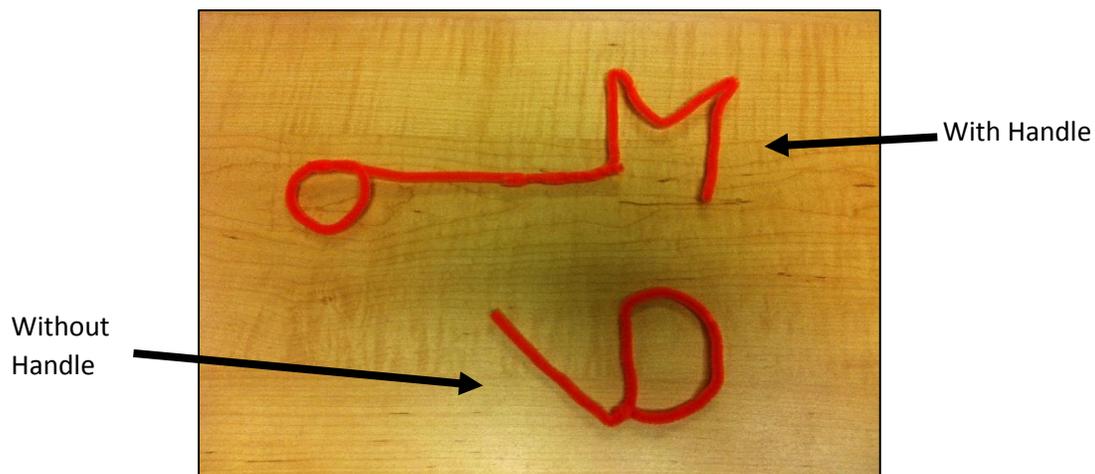
Top to Bottom

Box R

Outside to Inside

Letters, numbers, and characters or symbols can be used to make a brand.

5. After students have completed the “reading” portion of the activity, instruct them to practice tracing each of the brands. Discuss which letters, shapes, or numbers they see in the designs.
6. Tell students they will now create their own cattle brand with a design of their choosing. Have them practice drawing that design in the large box on their worksheets, and remind them that it needs to be very simple. They may color their designs. Monitor the students’ work and encourage them to share with you the reasons they have chosen certain shapes or letters. Students may choose to include their first or last name initial or a favorite shape.
7. After all students have completed this portion of the activity, pass out the pipe cleaners. They will use these pipe cleaners to shape into their branding irons to the best of their abilities, tracing the designs they created on paper to bend the pipe cleaners to their shape. Brands can be made with or without a handle, as pictured below. For the handle, instruct students to make a ring at one end with a straight line going down to their brand shape. Scissors may be used to trim pipe cleaners to fit designs if needed.



Examples of simple brand designs created using pipe cleaners.

#### Closure:

1. Review with students the importance of branding to the development of the Texas cattle ranching industry.
2. How did branding iron technology assist the vaqueros in doing their jobs? Why did they use shapes, numbers, and letters on their brands instead of writing their full names?
3. We know that cattle were very important to the vaqueros in making a living for themselves. How are cattle important to other people? Discuss how people use or benefit from cattle, referencing food, leather, or household products.

#### Modification Ideas:

- This activity can also be completed using air-dry clay or alphabet stamps and an ink pad. Students can “sketch” their brand design into the clay using toothpicks, and use alphabet stamps and ink and markers to “brand” a paper with their name or design.
- You may choose to complete only steps 1-6 of this activity depending on the skills of your students or if you are pressed for time in the classroom.

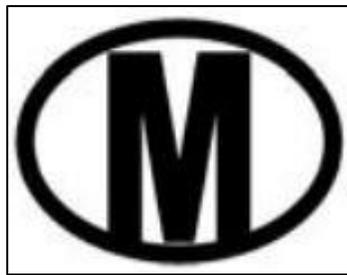
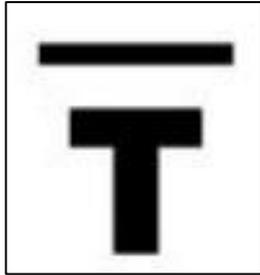
“Reading a Brand” Answer Key: 1) Box A 2) Bar T 3) Circle M 4) Bar B BQ

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Reading a Brand

**Directions:** Look at each of the brands and work with your teacher or a partner to figure out what each one means. What shapes and lines do you see?



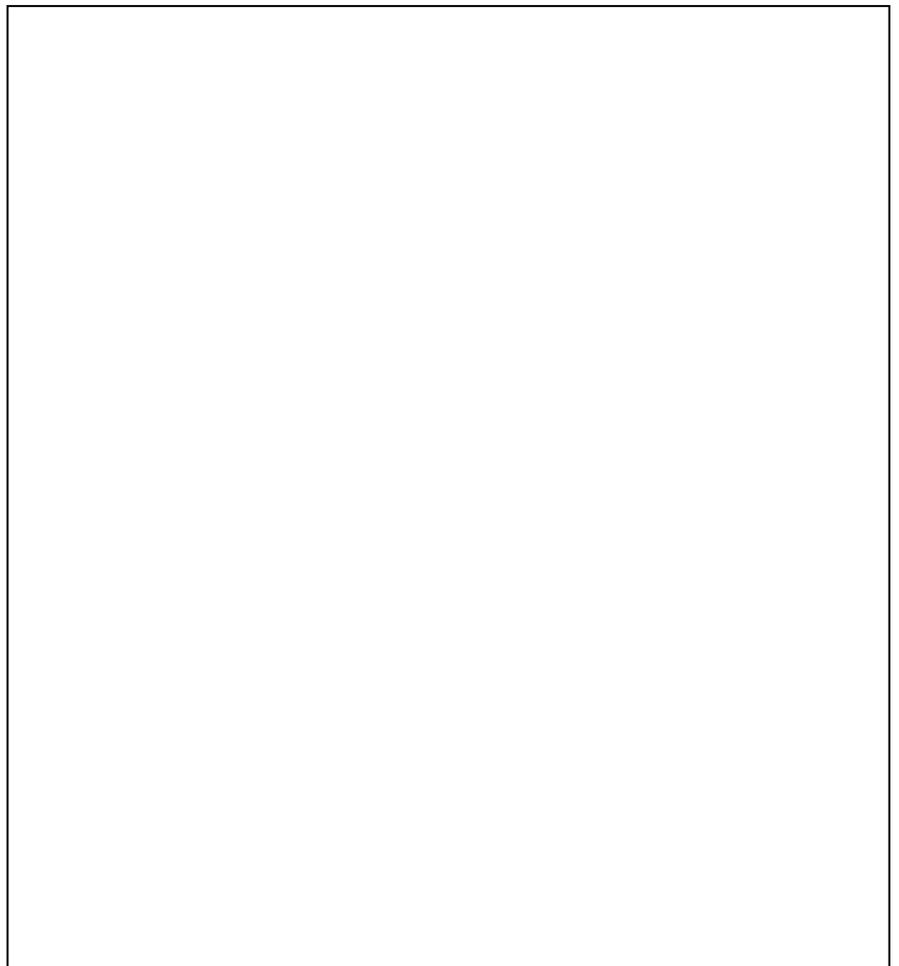
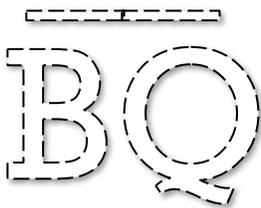
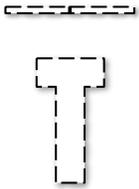
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Practice tracing each of the brands on your own. Then practice making your own brand in the box below.



## Create a Classroom Ranch Mural

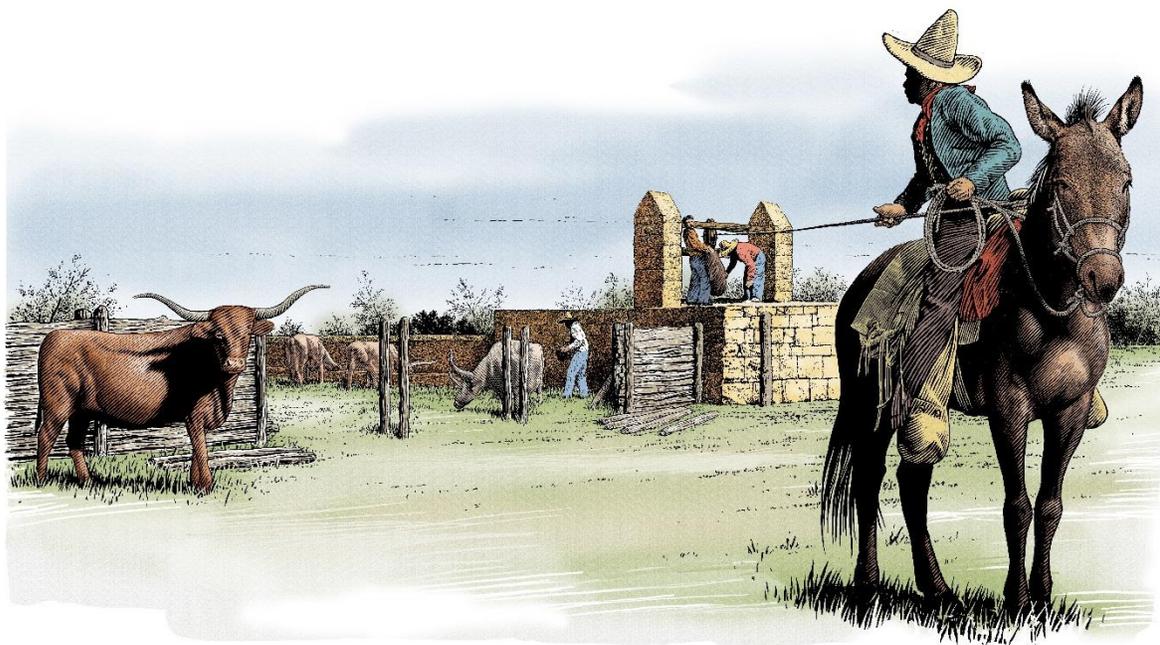
In this culminating experience, students will use what they have learned about Texas cattle ranching and the life and work of a Tejano rancher to construct a classroom art mural.

Before you begin, you'll need to ensure you have the following materials and spaces:

- Whiteboard or flip chart paper for brainstorming
- Colored construction paper or scraps
- Scissors
- Glue and or/pins
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Green Kraft or butcher paper
- Student branding irons created during the "Build a Brand" activity

### Directions:

1. Prepare for the activity in advance by hanging your Kraft or butcher paper background on a blank wall. Create a fence for your ranch using construction paper and glue it to the background. Use the image from the *Los Tejanos* exhibit below for reference or inspiration for the class activity.
2. Begin by asking the students what the most important parts of a farm or ranch might be, referencing what they have just learned about the work of a Tejano rancher. Possible answers may include: horses, structures (wells, homes, barns, and fences), cattle, ropes, trees, branding irons, ranchers and their clothing, water, etc. Draw pictures or show photos of these items on the board or on flip chart paper.
3. Tell students that they will be working together to create a Texas ranch mural using what they learned about the job and life of a Tejano rancher.



*Noria de Buque*. Photo courtesy of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park.

4. As a class, decide on a name for your ranch. Be creative! Create a label for your ranch mural and paste it onto the background you have created.
5. Allow students the opportunity to choose their desired paper pieces and crayons, colored pencils, or markers to illustrate their works of art.
6. Instruct students to choose two items they may encounter on a Texas ranch. Give them free choice about they wish to create for the ranch, but be sure to emphasize the different elements you have just discussed. There may be duplicates between students. Students may draw and color their designs on blank construction paper. Partners or small groups may choose to work on certain areas of the ranch as a team. Monitor the students as they complete the activity, asking them questions about the different colors and shapes they are using to create their pieces, and why.
7. After students have completed their pieces, instruct them to carefully cut them out. Younger students may require assistance.
8. Allow students to assist you in gluing the pieces to the ranch mural in a cohesive manner. Glue or pin the students' branding irons created during the "Build a Brand" activity to the mural, as well.

**Closure:**

1. Reinforce the three "Big Picture" Understandings with the students (page 3).
2. Discuss the mural as a class. Ask students to point out some of the items in the mural, noting similarities and differences in shape, size, or color.
3. How do each of the different pieces come together to make a working ranch? What role does each piece play in helping a Tejano rancher do his work running a cattle ranch or farm? How does the mural tell a story about the life of a Tejano rancher?

## References

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. *Herding Cattle and Noria de Buque*. 2015. UTSA Institute of Texan Cultures. San Antonio, Texas. Reproduced and used with permission.

## Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Social Studies

**§113.11. Social Studies, Kindergarten.** (b) Knowledge and skills. (5) Geography. The student understands physical and human characteristics of place. The student is expected to: (B) identify how the human characteristics of place such as ways of earning a living, shelter, clothing, food, and activities are based upon geographic location. (6) Economics. The student understands that basic human needs and wants are met in many ways. The student is expected to: (A) identify basic human needs of food, clothing, and shelter; (B) explain the difference between needs and wants; and (C) explain how basic human needs can be met such as through self-producing, purchasing, and trading. (7) Economics. The student understands the value of jobs. The student is expected to: (A) identify jobs in the home, school, and community; and (B) explain why people have jobs. (11) Culture. The student understands similarities and differences among people. The student is expected to: (B) identify similarities and differences among people such as music, clothing, and food. (13) Science, technology, and society. The student understands ways technology is used in the home and school and how technology affects people's lives. The student is expected to: (A) identify examples of technology used in the home and school; (B) describe how technology helps accomplish specific tasks and meet people's needs. (15) Social studies skills. The student communicates in oral and visual forms. The student is expected to: (A) express ideas orally based on knowledge and experiences; and (B) create and interpret visuals, including pictures and maps.

**§113.12. Social Studies, Grade 1.** (b) Knowledge and skills. (6) Geography. The student understands various physical and human characteristics. The student is expected to: (C) identify and describe how the human characteristics of place such as shelter, clothing, food, and activities are based upon geographic location. (7) Economics. The student understands how families meet basic human needs. The student is expected to: (A) describe ways that families meet basic human needs; and (B) describe similarities and differences in ways families meet basic human needs. (10) Economics. The student understands the value of work. The student is expected to: (A) describe the components of various jobs and the characteristics of a job well performed; and (B) describe how specialized jobs contribute to the production of goods and services. (16) Science, technology, and society. The student understands how technology affects daily life, past and present. The student is expected to: (C) describe how technology changes the way people work. (18) Social studies skills. The student communicates in oral, visual, and written forms. The student is expected to: (A) express ideas orally based on knowledge and experiences; and (B) create and interpret visual and written material.

**§113.13. Social Studies, Grade 2.** (b) Knowledge and skills. (8) Geography. The student understands how humans use and modify the physical environment. The student is expected to: (A) identify ways in which people have modified the physical environment such as building roads, clearing land for urban development and agricultural use, and drilling for oil; (9) Economics. The student understands the value of work. The student is expected to: (A) explain how work provides income to purchase goods and services. (17) Science, technology, and society. The student understands how science and technology have affected life, past and present. The student is expected to: (B) explain how science and technology change the ways in which people meet basic needs. (19) Social studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms. The student is expected to: (A) express ideas orally based on knowledge and experiences.

**§113.14. Social Studies, Grade 3.** (b) Knowledge and skills. (6) Economics. The student understands the purposes of earning, spending, saving, and donating money. The student is expected to: (A) identify ways of earning, spending, saving, and donating money. (18) Social studies skills. The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms. The student is expected to: (A) express ideas orally based on knowledge and experiences.

## Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Art

**§117.2. Art, Kindergarten.** (b) Knowledge and skills. (1) Perception. The student develops and organizes ideas from the environment. The student is expected to: (A) glean information from the environment, using the five senses; and (B) identify colors, textures, forms, and subjects in the environment. (2) Creative expression/performance. The student expresses ideas through original artworks, using a variety of media with appropriate skill. The student is expected to: (A) create artworks, using a variety of colors, forms, and lines; (B) arrange forms intuitively to create artworks; and (C) develop manipulative skills when drawing, painting, printmaking, and constructing artworks, using a variety of materials.

(3) Historical/cultural heritage. The student demonstrates an understanding of art history and culture as records of human achievement. The student is expected to: (A) identify simple subjects expressed in artworks; (B) share ideas about personal artworks and the work of others, demonstrating respect for differing opinions; and (C) relate art to everyday life.

**§117.5. Art, Grade 1.** (b) Knowledge and skills. (1) Perception. The student develops and organizes ideas from the environment. The student is expected to: (B) identify color, texture, form, line, and emphasis in nature and in the human-made environment. (2) Creative expression/performance. The student expresses ideas through original artworks, using a variety of media with appropriate skill. The student is expected to: (A) invent images that combine a variety of colors, forms, and lines; (B) place forms in orderly arrangement to create designs; and (C) increase manipulative skills, using a variety of materials to produce drawings, paintings, prints, and constructions.

**§117.8. Art, Grade 2.** (b) Knowledge and skills. (1) Perception. The student develops and organizes ideas from the environment. The student is expected to: (B) identify art elements such as color, texture, form, line, and space and art principles such as emphasis, pattern, and rhythm. The student is expected to: (2) Creative expression/performance. The student expresses ideas through original artworks, using a variety of media with appropriate skill. The student is expected to: (A) express ideas and feelings in artworks, using a variety of colors, forms, and lines; (B) create effective compositions, using design elements and principles; and (C) identify and practice skills necessary for producing drawings, paintings, prints, constructions, and modeled forms, using a variety of art materials.

**§117.11. Art, Grade 3.** (b) Knowledge and skills. (1) Perception. The student develops and organizes ideas from the environment. The student is expected to: (A) identify sensory knowledge and life experiences as sources for ideas about visual symbols, self, and life events; (B) identify art elements such as color, texture, form, line, space, and value and art principles such as emphasis, pattern, rhythm, balance, proportion, and unity in artworks. (2) Creative expression/performance. The student expresses ideas through original artworks, using a variety of media with appropriate skill. The student is expected to: (A) create artworks based on personal observations and experiences; (B) develop a variety of effective compositions, using design skills; and (C) produce drawings, paintings, prints, constructions, ceramics, and fiberart, using a variety of art materials appropriately. (4) Response/evaluation. The student makes informed judgments about personal artworks and the artworks of others. The student is expected to: (A) identify general intent and expressive qualities in personal artworks; and (B) apply simple criteria to identify main ideas in original artworks, portfolios, and exhibitions by peers and major artists.

## **Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for English Language Arts and Reading**

**§110.11. English Language Arts and Reading, Kindergarten.** (b) Knowledge and skills. (21) Listening and Speaking/Listening. Students use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to: (A) listen attentively by facing speakers and asking questions to clarify information; and (B) follow oral directions that involve a short related sequence of actions. (22) Listening and Speaking/Speaking. Students speak clearly and to the point, using the conventions of language. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to share information and ideas by speaking audibly and clearly using the conventions of language. (23) Listening and Speaking/Teamwork. Students work productively with others in teams. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to follow agreed-upon rules for discussion, including taking turns and speaking one at a time.

**§110.12. English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 1.** (b) Knowledge and skills. (27) Listening and Speaking/Listening. Students use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to: (A) listen attentively to speakers and ask relevant questions to clarify information; and (B) follow, restate, and give oral instructions that involve a short related sequence of actions. (28) Listening and Speaking/Speaking. Students speak clearly and to the point, using the conventions of language. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to share information and ideas about the topic under discussion, speaking clearly at an appropriate pace, using the

conventions of language. (29) Listening and Speaking/Teamwork. Students work productively with others in teams. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to follow agreed-upon rules for discussion, including listening to others, speaking when recognized, and making appropriate contributions.

**§110.13. English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 2.** (b) Knowledge and skills. (28) Listening and Speaking/Listening. Students use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to: (A) listen attentively to speakers and ask relevant questions to clarify information; and (B) follow, restate, and give oral instructions that involve a short related sequence of actions. (29) Listening and Speaking/Speaking. Students speak clearly and to the point, using the conventions of language. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to share information and ideas that focus on the topic under discussion, speaking clearly at an appropriate pace, using the conventions of language. (30) Listening and Speaking/Teamwork. Students work productively with others in teams. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to follow agreed-upon rules for discussion, including listening to others, speaking when recognized, and making appropriate contributions.

**§110.14. English Language Arts and Reading, Grade 3.** (b) Knowledge and skills. (29) Listening and Speaking/Listening. Students use comprehension skills to listen attentively to others in formal and informal settings. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to: (A) listen attentively to speakers, ask relevant questions, and make pertinent comments; and (B) follow, restate, and give oral instructions that involve a series of related sequences of action. (30) Listening and Speaking/Speaking. Students speak clearly and to the point, using the conventions of language. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to speak coherently about the topic under discussion, employing eye contact, speaking rate, volume, enunciation, and the conventions of language to communicate ideas effectively. (31) Listening and Speaking/Teamwork. Students work productively with others in teams. Students continue to apply earlier standards with greater complexity. Students are expected to participate in teacher- and student-led discussions by posing and answering questions with appropriate detail and by providing suggestions that build upon the ideas of others.