

FUN FACTS

— about the State of Texas —

STATE CAPITAL: **AUSTIN**

The Capitol was built with local materials, took 7 years to complete and cost nearly \$3 million.



STATE LARGE MAMMAL
Longhorn

STATEHOOD: **DECEMBER 29, 1845**

Caddo Lake is the only natural lake in the state.

STATE MOTTO: **FRIENDSHIP**



STATE BIRD *Mockingbird*

Texas Pledge of Allegiance

Honor the Texas flag; I pledge allegiance to thee Texas, one state under God, one and indivisible.

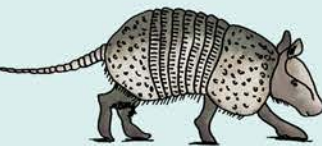
STATE SONG: **"TEXAS, OUR TEXAS"**

Texas has one of the largest capitols in the country.

OFFICIAL DANCE: **SQUARE DANCE**

Dr Pepper was invented in Waco, Texas in 1885.

NICKNAME: **THE LONE STAR STATE**



STATE SMALL MAMMAL
Armadillo



STATE FLOWER
Bluebonnet

Capitol or Capital?

CAPITOL refers to the building where the legislature meets, and **CAPITAL** refers to the city.

Texas Founding Fathers

SAM HOUSTON Born in Virginia and reared in Tennessee, Sam Houston spent much of his life in Texas. He led Texans to victory as a commanding general of the army against Mexican General Santa Anna at the Battle of San Jacinto. After declaring independence, he became the first President of the Republic of Texas.

Texas was later annexed by the United States and Sam Houston became a U.S. Senator who supported unionism and friendship with the Native Americans. He returned to Texas as governor in 1859, but later resigned from office when Texas seceded in 1861.

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN Although not a native Texan, Stephen F. Austin is considered by many to be the founding father of modern day Texas. Stephen F. Austin brought the first American families to settle into what was then Mexican Tejas. In addition, he helped the new colonists and the Mexican Government communicate with one another.

They established a new legal system, infrastructure and immigration policies for the colony. He played such a big role in shaping Texas that the Capital City was named Austin.



STATE INSECT *Monarch Butterfly*

The State Seal

The Texas State Seal has a single star with five points surrounded by olive and live oak branches, with the words "The State of Texas." It was originally adopted by the Republic of Texas.



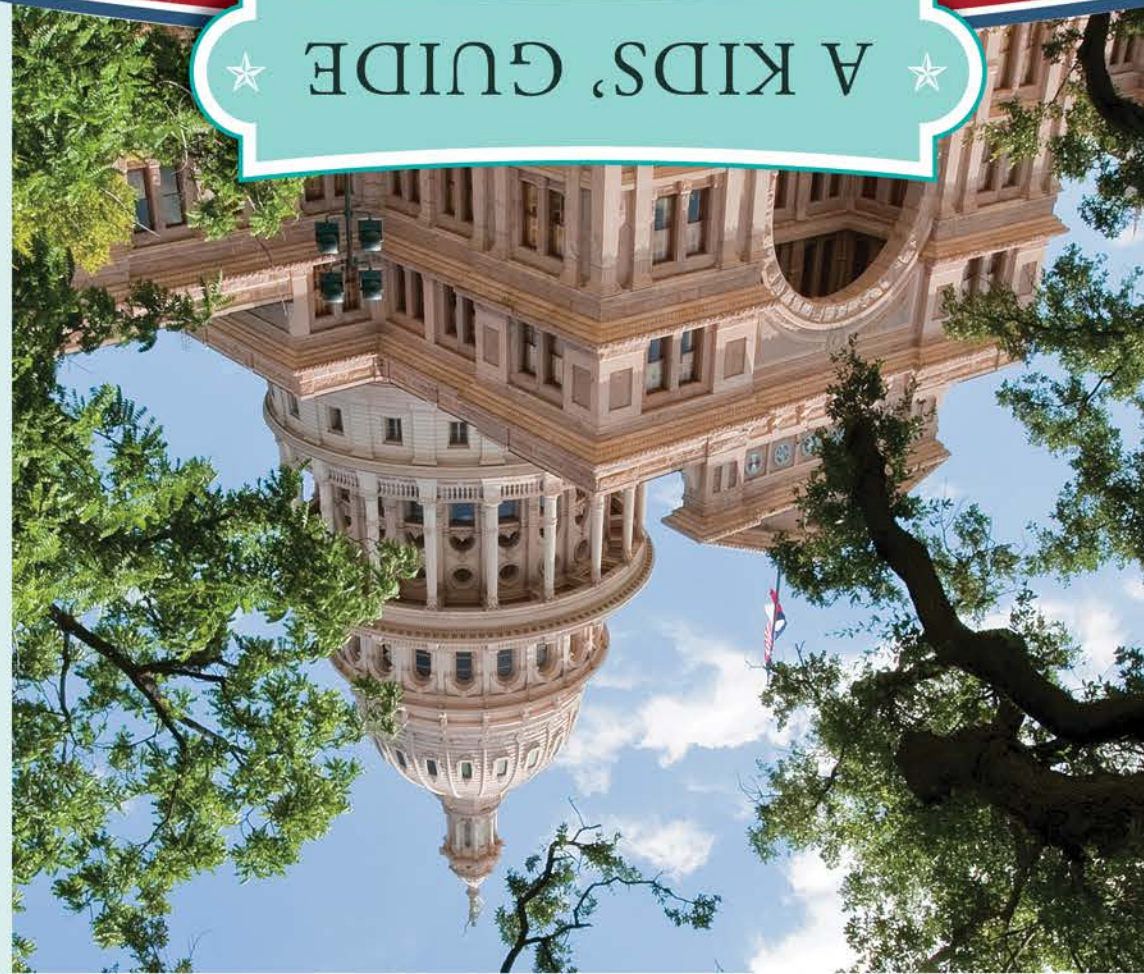
STATE TREE: **PECAN TREE**

The Heisman Trophy is named for John William Heisman, the first full-time coach and athletic director at Rice University in Houston.

OFFICIAL DISH: **CHILI**

Texas House of Representatives

A KIDS' GUIDE



GET INVOLVED!

*Do you want to let your legislators know what you think?
When writing your legislators about important issues, address your letters as follows:*

Texas House of Representatives

The Honorable (First and Last Name)
Texas House of Representatives
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768-2910

Texas Senate

The Honorable (First and Last Name)
Texas Senate
P.O. Box 12068
Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711

You can find out who represents you online at www.capitol.state.tx.us and even send your legislators an e-mail! Remember to sign your name clearly and give your correct address so the legislator can respond to your letter.

The Texas House of Representatives is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services. This brochure is available in alternate formats upon request. Please call 1-800-241-1163.

KIDS' HOUSE

Check out all the new features:
Capitol Dome Tour • Kid-Friendly Laws • Texas State Pledge
kids.house.state.tx.us

WELCOME

— to the Texas House of Representatives —



The Texas Legislature passes laws that determine all types of issues, as well as other important matters. This brochure describes some of the key points of state government. You will also find some fun facts about Texas and this state's history.

The Texas House of Representatives

State Representatives are men and women who are elected by the people of Texas to speak on behalf of their constituents. They meet every other year to discuss new laws. The regular session begins at noon on the second Tuesday in January of each odd numbered year and lasts 140 days.

Representatives spend many hours working at the Capitol. With the help of their staff, they research bills, meet with constituents, listen to committee testimony and prepare for House debates. When a bill comes up for consideration, it can start in either the House or Senate Chamber. However, if the bill involves raising or creating State taxes, then it must start in the House.



The Speaker of the House

Speaker Joe Straus, of San Antonio, is a member of the House and is chosen by his fellow members on the first day of the session. The Speaker is responsible for maintaining order, recognizing members who wish to speak on the House floor, appointing committees and interpreting rules of the House.

Pictured: House Chamber at the Texas Capitol

Did you know?

Each of the 150 Representatives serves a 2-year term and represents about 167,000 people.

BRANCHES

— of the Texas Government —

Executive

The Governor is the head of the Executive branch and the leader of the State, working with State Senators and State Representatives to pass laws that will help citizens of Texas. All bills must pass through the Governor's office, where it will be signed into law or vetoed.



Governor Greg Abbott

Legislative

The Texas Legislature is the lawmaking branch of the government, and is made up of two chambers: the Texas House of Representatives and the Texas Senate. Both Representatives and Senators create and approve laws that govern Texas.

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



Speaker Joe Straus

The House is made up of 150 members and is led by the Speaker. Together, the members pass new laws, consider amendments and pass resolutions.

THE SENATE



Lt. Governor Dan Patrick

The Senate is comprised of 31 members. The leader of the Senate is the Lieutenant Governor.

Judicial

The Judicial branch is made up of different courts, the highest being the Texas Supreme Court and the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals. Judges interpret the laws, how they are applied and whether they follow the Texas Constitution. The courts also determine whether a group or person has broken any laws and if so, what disciplinary actions should be taken.



TEXAS UNDER SPAIN

(1519-1685 • 1690-1821)

In 1519, Spain established the first European claim to what is now Texas. After much exploration, the first Spanish settlement, the Ysleta Mission near present-day El Paso, was established in 1680.

TEXAS UNDER FRANCE

(1685-1690)

In 1685, France claimed parts of eastern Texas near the Gulf Coast to expand west of Louisiana and a colony called Fort St. Louis was founded. By 1690, the French abandoned their claim because of shipwrecks, disease, famine, hostile Indians and fighting.

TEXAS UNDER MEXICO

(1821-1836)

In 1821, Mexico won their independence from Spain. Hispanic settlers from the south and Anglo settlers from the north came to settle this frontier region. When Mexican General Santa Anna declared himself dictator, Texans revolted and won independence April 21, 1836 at the Battle of San Jacinto, near Houston.

TEXAS AS A REPUBLIC

(1836-1845)

By entering the Union, Texas remained an independent nation for nearly ten years. Things were hard for this new nation, but leaders like Sam Houston, the Texas Rangers and the ways of the cowboy will forever be remembered in history. On December 29, 1845, Texas joined the United States.

TEXAS IN THE CONFEDERACY

(1861-1865)

In 1861, Texas joined the Confederacy in their effort to separate from the Union. The "Stars and Bars" was the first Confederate flag flown in Texas. When the war was over, Texas returned as a member of the Union and rebuilt its economy through the cattle business, agriculture, and trade with Mexico.

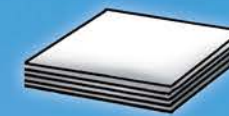
TEXAS IN THE USA

(1845-1861 • 1865-PRESENT)

In 1845, Texas became the 28th star on the U.S. flag when it re-joined the Union. The "Star Spangled Banner" remains the national flag of Texas today. The Lone Star emblem from the days of the Republic of Texas remains the state flag.

SIX FLAGS OVER TEXAS

How a Bill Becomes a Law



INTRODUCTION

Bills are introduced on the House floor by the member who wrote the bill. A brief description of the bill is read out loud in the chamber. The bill is then assigned to a committee.



COMMITTEE

In committee, members listen to testimony from the public, discuss issues relating to the bill, and then decide whether to move it on to the House floor for debate.



FLOOR ACTION

Bills are debated on the House floor. Changes can be made to the bill if a majority of members agree. Members vote; if a majority are in favor, the bill goes to the Senate chamber for approval.



SIGN THE BILL

If both the Senate and the House vote in favor of a bill, it goes to the Governor's office for his signature, officially making the bill a Texas law.

