



The State Fair of
TEXAS
Curriculum

BIG TEX
GRADE 4 SOCIAL STUDIES

ICON-SIDER BIG TEX A BIG DEAL

A CULTURAL ICON WITH TEXAS-SIZED CHARACTER



TEACHER

BIG TEX



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A Cultural **ICON** with Texas-Sized Character

In this lesson students will:

- ★ Create a character profile for our life-sized cowboy, outlining the qualities he represents.
- ★ Explore how individual participation in civic affairs helps us all become better citizens.
- ★ Define the meaning of an icon, and how it is used in art.
- ★ Explore cultural icons at the State Fair, particularly Big Tex.
- ★ Create their own version of Big Tex (or alternative icon) that they feel best represents the State Fair of Texas.

We've all heard the phrase, "Everything is bigger in Texas!" This includes our cultural icons like Big Tex! Because symbols and meanings fluctuate throughout cultures, time periods, and even person-to-person, there are no "rules" for what can or cannot be considered an icon. Who do you think would be considered an icon for your generation?



Standards

- ★ Social Studies TEKS: 4.16(A), 4.17(B)
- ★ ELAR TEKS: 4.18(C)
- ★ Art TEKS: 4.2(B), 4.3(C)

Before You Go

Icon Class Discussion

- ★ An icon is a person or thing that is a representative symbol of something.
- ★ For the most part, an icon stands for an agreed-upon meaning in a given group.
- ★ For example, Taylor Swift might be considered a pop icon today, because she is a very successful musician.
- ★ Begin a class discussion about icons. Explain to the students what an icon means - it is a person or thing that is a representative symbol of something. Show them a few examples, such as a U.S. President, a famous musician, or even a popular game. Ask questions such as:
 - * Why might these people/things be considered icons?
 - * What does each one symbolize?
 - * Why is each one important to our society?
 - * Do you think other cultures have the same type of icons? Why or why not?

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Big Tex is a Texas-Sized Icon!

- ★ To build background knowledge about Big Tex, share this article from [Texas Monthly Magazine](#).
- ★ Ask the kids to analyze the images and take notes about interesting facts they learn.
- ★ Explain how cultural icons like Big Tex are symbols of pride, tradition, and history.



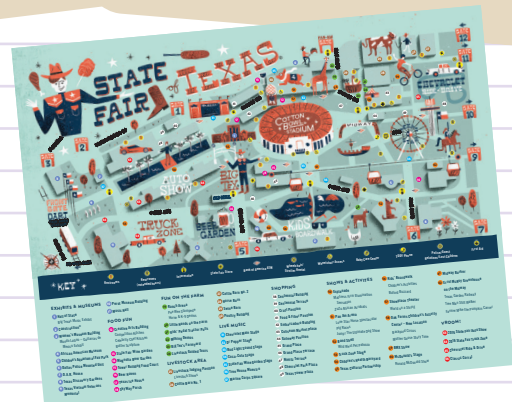
ARTS CONNECTION

- ★ Talk with the students about icons in art:
 - In early art history, icons were mostly religious symbols, but, as time went on, artists began to use other people or things as representations of meaning for a society.
 - A great artist to use as an example is Andy Warhol. Below is a link to some of his work. His prints of Marilyn Monroe, Elvis, and Campbell's Soup would be some strong works to talk about regarding icons.
- <https://www.artsy.net/artist/andy-warhol>

- As you talk about the images from Warhol or other artists that you might find, ask the students:
 - ★ Who/what would be considered the icon in these works?
 - ★ What makes them an icon?
 - ★ How did the artist use emphasis or color to focus the viewer's attention on the icon?
 - ★ What or who might an artist focus on today in their artwork as an icon?
- Lastly, talk to the students about Big Tex, and how he is considered an icon for the State Fair of Texas.
- Go to Big Tex's personal website and talk about the information provided there.
- <http://bigtex.com/bigtex/>
- As you review this, ask the students to write down some notes or discuss out loud why he might be considered an icon of the Fair.

Plan Your Route.

- ★ Find Big Tex on the map, and go there.



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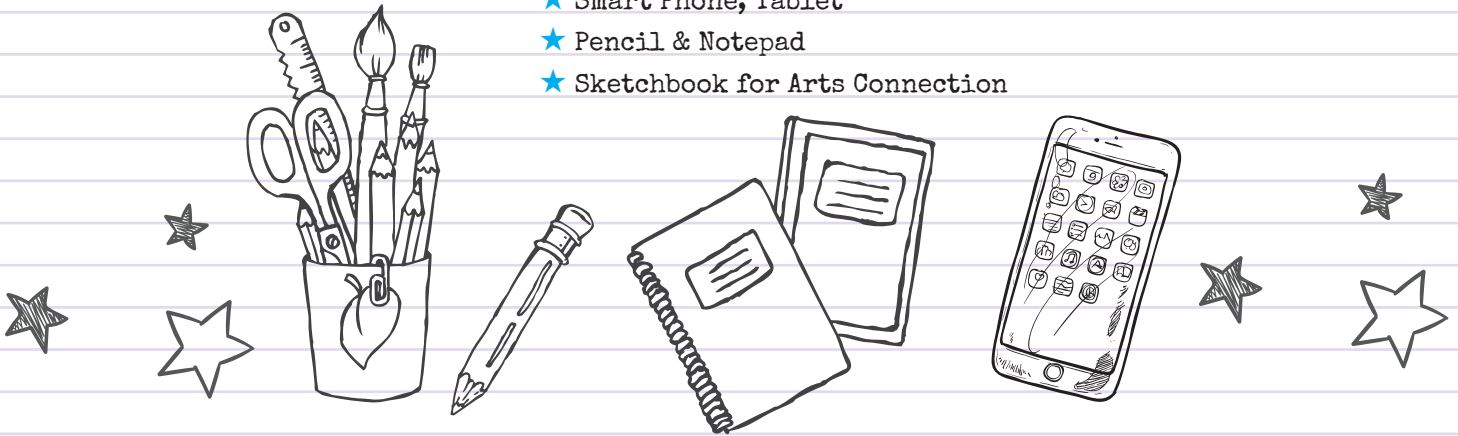


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Optional Materials to Bring

- ★ Smart Phone, Tablet
- ★ Pencil & Notepad
- ★ Sketchbook for Arts Connection



While You're There

The objective of your visit is to view Big Tex as an icon and gather information to use in two projects when you get back to school.

How Fairgoers See Big Tex

- As you approach Big Tex, pay attention to the reactions of other people, as they look up at him.
- Are they snapping photos?
- Are they listening to his greetings?
- Spend a few minutes observing his size and dimensions.
- Why do you think he needed to be so big?
- Using your smartphone to capture responses, ask other guests to give you **ONE WORD** that sums up what Big Tex represents.
- Think about the qualities all Texas citizens should embrace and display.
- How can you be a good citizen at the fair?

Arts Connection

- Think about the following things regarding the sculpture of Big Tex:
 - Size
 - Color
 - Sound
- Surroundings - what is around Big Tex? Is he the focus of the area that he is in?
- Does seeing him in person change the way you think of him as an icon? Why or why not?
- Next, walk around and take note of other things that you see at the Fair that you feel could be considered an icon for the State Fair.
- Draw some sketches or take some photos of these to reference later!

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After the Fair

- ★ When students return from the Fair, they will complete two project goals.

Facebook Page

- ★ No big celebrity would be complete without his or her own social media page! After their Fair visit, students will build a Facebook (actually Fakebook) page for Big Tex.
- * Using Fakebook, a Web 2.0 tool, the children will create a profile for Big Tex, outlining his history, defining his character traits, and describing how he symbolizes the character of Texans.
- * **Extension:** write a brief composition describing how citizens can voluntarily participate in civic affairs and participate in service projects.

Arts Connection

- ★ Now it's time to think about how you would represent Big Tex, or another person/thing that you feel could be an icon for the State Fair. Create your own icon in an art work.
- ★ Think back to the examples you looked at in class:
 - * How did Andy Warhol emphasize the icons in his work?
 - * What types of colors did he use?
 - * Was the icon in his work large or small?
- ★ As you draw or paint, think about the things that could surround your icon to give clues to the viewer as to why she/he/it is considered such an important representative of the Fair. Have fun with this and get creative!

