

The State Fair of
TEXAS
Curriculum

BIG TEX
GRADE 8 SOCIAL STUDIES

FRIENDS OF BIG TEX

PEN PALS





Friends of Big Tex Pen Pals



In this lesson students will:

- ★ Research the history of Big Tex.
- ★ Design an interactive creative presentation about Big Tex to present to his friends, globally.



Big Tex has been a part of the State fair since 1952. Though he's popular among tourists, Big Tex has little interaction with people outside of the Fair. How can we fix that?

Standards

- ★ Social Studies TEKS:
8.10(A), 8.29(A), 8.30(D)
- ★ ELAR TEKS:
8.17(B), 8.23(A)
- ★ Art TEKS:
8.1(A), 8.1(B), 8.2(A), 8.2(B)



Before You Go

Historical Background

Research the history of Big Tex:

- ★ Watch this brief [video](#) about Big Tex.
- ★ For additional information, refer to the website found [here](#).
- ★ Write down important facts about Big Tex for later reference.





Friends of Big Tex Pen Pals



Connecting Globally

Big Tex doesn't get to travel and would like to connect with people around the world! You will get to choose a pen pal, and present Big Tex to his new friend (and make a friend yourself).

★ To find a pen pal for Big Tex, refer to [this website](#).

Next, hold a discussion with the students about **interactive art**.

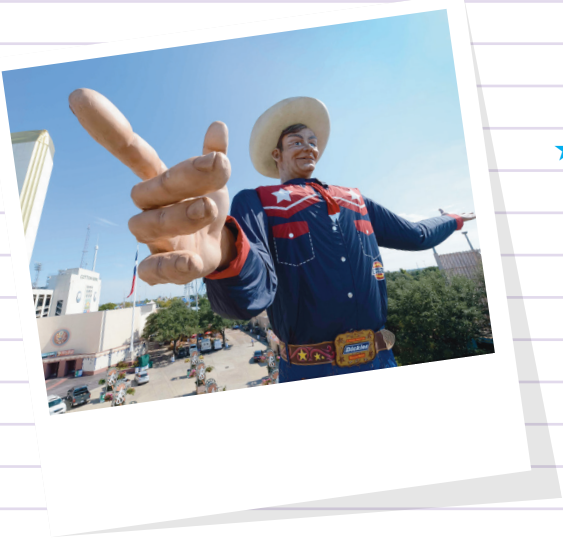
★ This type of art requires the viewer's involvement in order for the art to achieve its purpose. Have you ever been to a fun house at a carnival or fair? That is an interactive art space that requires you to experience all of the crazy sites and obstacles to achieve its purpose.

★ Here is a link that contains over 70 interactive art installation examples:

* <http://www.trendhunter.com/slideshow/interactive-art-installations>

* Choose some pieces from the site to share with your students, and discuss as a class what it is that makes them interactive. Questions to ask:

- What makes these interactive art works appealing to the viewer?
- How can you tell that the artist kept the viewer in mind when creating this work?
- Which one of these would you most like to experience? Why?
- Does Big Tex have any characteristics that would consider to be interactive? If so, what are they?



TEACHER

BIG TEX



Friends of Big Tex Pen Pals

Plan Your Route.

★ Go Directly to Big Tex Circle.



Optional Materials to Bring

- ★ Smart Phone or Tablet
- ★ Pencil & Notepad or Sketchbook



While You're There

The objective of your visit is to gather information about Big Tex so you can accurately portray him in your interactive art work back at school and for your pen pal!

PICTURES

- Take or draw pictures of Big Tex.

APPEARANCE

- Take some notes on the general appearance of Big Tex.
- Does Big Tex seem friendly and approachable?
- Why or why not?

OTHER STUFF

- What does he say?
- What does he do?
- Does he interact with the fairgoers?
- Why does it seem that way?



TEACHER

BIG TEX



Friends of Big Tex Pen Pal



After the Fair

When you return to class following your State Fair visit, it's time to design your own interactive version of Big Tex!



- ★ Look back at your notes/sketches of Big Tex from the Fair.
- ★ Think back to the interactive art examples that you saw in class.
- ★ Think about different ways that the State Fair visitors might interact with Big Tex.
 - * Can they interact with Big Tex now?
 - * If not, what changes would you make to allow them to?
 - * (Keep in mind, there are many ways to interact.)
- ★ In what ways would you change Big Tex, in order to make him more interactive?
- ★ Do some preliminary sketches.
 - * You may choose to work alone or in groups, after your preliminary ideas are shared.
- ★ Then, draw your final plans, complete with explanations as to how the different parts of Big Tex would work. How would the visitors interact with him?
- ★ Share your presentation with your pen pals!
 - * Brainstorm with your classmates about the best way to share your presentation across the Internet.

