

**LESSON:** Larger Than Life Texans

**TIME:** Estimated 4-5 class periods to complete project (50-minute periods)

**CLASS LEVEL:** 7<sup>th</sup> grade Texas History

**TEKS SOCIAL STUDIES GOAL:** In this lesson, students research the life and contributions of a famous Texan, create a life-sized visual representation of the Texan, and share a presentation with their peers.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION:** How have individual citizens contributed to the diversity of the state of Texas?

**STUDENTS:**

- \*Identify famous Texans or others who have made significant contributions to the state of Texas.
- \*Choose a famous Texan and research that individual's life, using both primary and secondary sources.
- \*Compose a short, biographical report about a famous Texan that highlights the individual's accomplishments.
- \*Create a life-sized visual representation of the famous Texan.
- \*Share their Larger-Than-Life Texan in a formal presentation to their peers.

**TEKS:**

7th grade Social Studies: History: (2E) (3B) (4A) (4C) (5C) (6A) (6B) (6C) (7D) Citizenship: (18 B) Culture: (19D) Science, Technology, and Society: (20 B) Social Studies Skills: (21A) (21 B) (21C) (21G) (22B) (22C) (22D).

**Vocabulary:**

Primary Source: pertaining to a firsthand account, original data, or based on original knowledge.

Secondary Source: pertaining to a derived account of original data/ not original

Symbol: any object, person, place, or action that has meaning in itself while standing for something larger than itself, such as a quality, attitude, belief, or value.

**Step 1**

Students read short biographical articles about the lives of [Susanna Dickinson](#) and [O. Henry](#), the two individuals whose lives are featured at the two museums at Brush Square in Austin, Texas. Students discuss how these two individuals made significant contributions to the state of Texas, and explain how they are considered "larger than life Texans."

## **Step 2**

Students review a comprehensive list of famous Texans. (It may be beneficial to introduce this lesson at a point in the school year when students have learned about many of the individuals on the list.)

## **Step 3**

Students research both primary and secondary sources and record information about their famous Texan. Students will need to have one or two days of library time to complete their research. Students also record correct bibliographic information to document sources.

## **Step 4**

After students collect the information on their famous Texan, they compose a one-page biographical report about the person that highlights the person's important contributions to the state of Texas and justify why that Texan might be considered "larger than life."

## **Step 5**

In small groups of three or four, students share their biographical reports with classmates. After listening to each report, the group agrees on the one Texan who deserves to be the group's "Larger-Than-Life Texan." Students plan and create a life-sized representation of this Texan. Students must include at least one object with their life-sized figure that symbolizes an important aspect of that person's life. Teachers may need to allow two-three days class time for the completion of this project.

## **Step 6**

Students share their Larger-Than-Life Texan in a formal presentation to their peers. Students will explain their visual product, including the object that symbolizes something important from the Texan's life and justify why their Texan should be considered "Larger Than Life."

## **EXTENSION:**

Schedule a field trip to the O. Henry and Susanna Dickinson Museums at Brush Square to learn more about these individuals and their contributions to the Austin area and the state of Texas. For more information or to make a tour reservation, please contact [Bao.Nguyen](#).