

Impressive Empresario, Grade 7

Created by Brenda Beaven, December 2007

Lesson Plan Summary: In this lesson plan, students will learn about the difficulties the empresarios and colonists faced as they searched for the best places in Texas to farm land, build their homes, and raise their families. (Note: This lesson is a good way to follow the advertisement project created in Brenda Beaven's lesson, "Come One, Come Y'all to Texas.")

Objectives

The student understands the location and characteristics of places and regions of Texas.

The student is expected to:

- compare places and regions of Texas in terms of physical and human characteristics;
- analyze the effects of physical and human factors such as climate, weather, landforms, irrigation, transportation, and communication on major events in Texas.

TEKS §113.23. Geography, Grade 7. (b)(9)(B,C)

The student understands the effects of the interaction between humans and the environment in Texas during the 19th and 20th centuries. The student is expected to:

- identify ways in which Texans have adapted to and modified the environment and analyze the consequences of the modifications;
- explain ways in which geographic factors have affected the political, economic, and social development in Texas.

TEKS §113.23. Geography, Grade 7. (b)(10)(A,B)

Materials:

- Task Sheet
- Maps found on the TIDES website (if there is no internet access, these maps can be printed out.
 - Deed to land <http://tides.sfasu.edu:2009/u?/Newton,539>
 - Barge on a river <http://tides.sfasu.edu:2009/u?/Newton,323>
 - "Old 300" Deed <http://tides.sfasu.edu:2009/u?/Newton,528>
 - Austin's Colony <http://tides.sfasu.edu:2009/u?/Newton,1873>
 - Empresario Map <http://tides.sfasu.edu:2009/u?/EastTexRC,71>
- Textbook
- Texas Almanacs (These do not need to be current)

Teaching Notes and Background:

Background on early life in Texas:

- **It's all about the land!** In order to settle the land called Texas, the Mexican government granted twenty six empresario contracts. Among those contracts granted, the most successful colony was managed by Stephen F. Austin. Austin did a lot of things right. He picked good farm land between the Brazos and Colorado Rivers where there were enough trees to build farms, barns, and fences but not an overgrown forest. The rainfall was plentiful but land tended not to flood often. The rivers were adequate to take the produce, such as cotton, to the ports and while wildlife abounded, threats from Native Americans were scarce. Austin himself was a huge advantage because he had spent time in Mexico City meeting many important people and learning the Spanish language, which allowed him to earn the trust of the Mexican officials.

Directions:

- After reviewing the history of early life in Texas, students will break up into small groups and work on forming their own “colonies.”
- Each group will be given a task sheet and a map to work with. They may use their textbooks, the Texas Almanac, and “hearsay,” or prior learning.
- After filling out the sheet and placing their colony on the map provided, each group must find a way to convince the class to move to their colony.

Assessment

The students will be graded on the information included about their colonies and their group presentations.

Names _____

Impressive Empresarios Task Sheet

Pretend you are empresarios planning to bring a colony of U.S. settlers to Texas. You must choose a location for your colony. Make notes as to what you are looking for in your location. You may use your assets, like your textbook, to come up with your preferences and needs for your colonists.

1. Geographic areas (sub-regions – use your prior learning)
2. Natural resources
 - rivers
 - soil
 - trees
 - rainfall
 - wildlife
3. Threats from Native Americans
4. Other important details

Place your colony on the map provided. (Be sure that the resources actually fit into the spot you pick.)

Write down your rules to live in your colony.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

How will you deal with the Native Americans who might be defending their land?

Present your colony to the class. Each person must have a part to play. (You will be graded based on research and placement of colony in right location – must match up.) Also, your presentation is worth 20% of your grade. Real Estate is all about LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION!