

## Instructional Recipe

# Why Did Some Texas Towns Become Ghost Towns?

7<sup>th</sup> Grade - Social Studies / Language Arts

### Step 1 – Ask

**Objectives:** By identifying selected ghost towns in Texas and the reasons of their prosperity or decay, students draw conclusions on what factors determine why and how communities throughout Texas have changed over time.

**Introduction:** There are an estimated 800 ghost towns in Texas. A ghost town was once an active place with businesses, schools, churches, and activities. Some of these towns still have a few people living in them. Some have remains of old buildings but no people, and some have nothing to indicate that anyone ever lived there.



*Image Source: Library of Congress*

**Ask:**

- ★ Where can ghost towns be found in Texas?
- ★ Why did people settle in certain parts of the state?
- ★ What did people do for a living in these towns?
- ★ Why did people decide to live elsewhere?

**Vocabulary:**

- ★ Decadence

### **SOCIAL STUDIES TEKS**

(8) **Geography.** (A) pose and answer questions about geographic distributions and patterns in Texas during the 19th and 20th centuries  
 (10) **Geography.** (A) identify ways in which Texans have adapted to and modified the environment and analyze the consequences of the modifications (B) explain ways in which geographic factors have affected the political, economic, and social development of Texas  
 (21) **Social studies skills.** (A) differentiate between, locate, and use primary and secondary sources such as computer software, databases, media and news services, biographies, interviews, and artifacts to acquire information about Texas; (B) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions (C) organize and interpret information from outlines, reports, databases, and visuals including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps

### **Language Arts TEKS**

(23) **Research/Gathering Sources.** (A) follow the research plan to gather information from a range of relevant print and electronic sources using advanced search strategies; (B) categorize information thematically in order to see the larger constructs inherent in the information; (C) record bibliographic information (e.g., author, title, page number) for all notes and sources according to a standard format; and (D) differentiate between paraphrasing and plagiarism and identify the importance of citing valid and reliable sources.

## Step 2 – Investigate

Suggested search: Texas AND “ghost town”

### K-12 Databases Resources:

- ★ Texas Ghost Towns: Former State Backbones are Now Mere Skeletons By: By Kathryn Straach. Dallas Morning News, The (TX), 10/27/1997; (AN 4N37551473677443)  
<<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nfh&AN=4N37551473677443&site=src-live>>
- ★ Museum plan brings Texas Ghost town alive with controversy By: Diane Jennings. Dallas Morning News, The (TX), 06/07/2002; (AN 2W70507645634)  
<<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nfh&AN=2W70507645634&site=src-live>>

### Additional Websites:

- ★ Search the Handbook of Texas for “ghost town” - <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/>
- ★ [www.ghosttowns.com/states/tx/tx.html](http://www.ghosttowns.com/states/tx/tx.html)
- ★ [www.texasescapes.com/TOWNS/Texas\\_ghost\\_towns.htm](http://www.texasescapes.com/TOWNS/Texas_ghost_towns.htm)

**Book:** Ghost Towns of Texas by T. Lindsay Baker

## Step 3 – Create

As you read about each ghost town, make a list of reasons why the towns declined and classify them into categories. Use graphic organizers for this classification activity. Color code the categories by marking a different color for each factor. Some towns may fall under more than one category.

🔗 **Technology Link** – Use a graphic organizer program, such as Inspiration, <http://bubbl.us>, or <http://mywebspiration.com> to categorize and color code information.

### English Language Arts TEKS

(24) **Research/Synthesizing Information.** (A) narrow or broaden the major research question, if necessary, based on further research and investigation; and (B) utilize elements that demonstrate the reliability and validity of the sources used (e.g., publication date, coverage, language, point of view) and explain why one source is more useful than another.

(25) **Research/Organizing and Presenting Ideas.** (A) draws conclusions and summarizes or paraphrases the findings in a systematic way; (B) marshals evidence to explain the topic and gives relevant reasons for conclusions; (C) presents the findings in a meaningful format; and (D) follows accepted formats for integrating quotations and citations into the written text to maintain a flow of ideas.

### Technology Applications TEKS

(3) Foundations. (A) discuss copyright laws/issues and model ethical acquisition and use of digital information, citing sources using established methods

(4) **Information acquisition.** (B) apply appropriate electronic search strategies in the acquisition of information including keyword and Boolean search strategies

(6) **Information acquisition.** (C) demonstrate the ability to identify the source, location, media type, relevancy, and content validity of available information

(7) **Solving problems.** (A) plan, create, and edit documents created with a word processor using readable fonts, alignment, page setup, tabs, and ruler settings; (D) demonstrate proficiency in the use of multimedia authoring programs by creating linear or non-linear projects incorporating text, audio, video, and graphics; (J) use foundation and enrichment curricula in the creation of products  
(11) **Communication.** (A) publish information in a variety of ways including, but not limited to, printed copy, monitor display, Internet documents, and video

#### Step 4 – Discuss

**Culminating project:** You are a photojournalist visiting a Texas town of your choice. Report what you observe and explain how the town is at risk of becoming a ghost town. You may select a real town or a fiction town, the current year or any time period in the past. Present your final report to the media and explain why the town is at risk as well as what can be done to prevent the worst from happening.  
Good luck and have fun!

🔗 **Technology Link** - Students may choose between writing a newspaper article using word processing or desktop publishing software, creating a multimedia presentation (i.e., PowerPoint, Keynote, AppleWorks), or producing a video documentary (i.e., iMovie, Windows Movie Maker). Both the multimedia and the video projects require the creation of a storyboard.

#### Step 5 – Reflect

Allow students to present their projects to the rest of the class. Use the following suggested rubric to assess the students' work. Make sure that the students are familiar with the rubric *before* they begin creating their project. They should refer to the rubric repeatedly to monitor their progress in creating their project.

🔗 **Technology Link:** You can also create your own rubric with your students at <http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php>.

**Extension:** Students research historical facts about how and why their own town was founded. They identify natural resources and business activities in their town, as well as problems and threats to the community. Then they decide what their own town needs to survive and grow

## Multimedia and Video Project Rubric

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
<b>Description of the Town</b>	Student describes the town in depth, and uses rich descriptive words. It is easy to imagine the scene by just reading the text.	Student describes the town somewhat in detail.	Student describes a few details about the town.	Student only describes few details about the town, and does not choose words carefully.
<b>Explanation of Risks</b>	Student describes detailed reasons why the town is at risk of becoming a ghost town. Reasons are convincing and well thought.	Student describes some reasons for decline. Most are convincing.	Student describes fewer reasons for decay. They are somewhat convincing.	Student does not offer a logical explanation of why the town is at risk of becoming a ghost town.
<b>Organization</b>	Content is well organized using headings or bulleted lists to group related material.	Uses headings or bulleted lists to organize, but the overall organization of topics appears flawed.	Content is logically organized for the most part.	There was no clear or logical organizational structure, just lots of facts.
<b>Attractiveness</b>	Makes excellent use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. to enhance the presentation.	Makes good use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. to enhance the presentation.	Makes use of font, color, graphics, effects, etc. but occasionally these detract from the presentation content.	Uses font, color, graphics, effects etc. but these often distract from the presentation content.
<b>Presentation</b>	Well-rehearsed with smooth delivery that holds audience attention.	Rehearsed with fairly smooth delivery that holds audience attention most of the time.	Delivery not smooth, but able to maintain interest of the audience most of the time.	Delivery not smooth and audience attention often lost.
<b>Sources</b>	Source information collected for all graphics, facts and quotes. All documented in desired format.	Source information collected for all graphics, facts and quotes. Most documented in desired format.	Source information collected for graphics, facts and quotes, but not documented in desired format.	Very little or no source information was collected.
<b>Storyboard</b>	Storyboard is detailed and carefully thought. Narration, visuals and transitions are carefully chosen and flow in logical sequence, creating a positive reaction in the audience.	Storyboard is well designed and includes audio and video. Some parts of the project are vague or incomplete.	Storyboard includes parts of the narration and visuals but details are missing and needs revisions.	Storyboard is incomplete and done without much thought.

## Newspaper Article Rubric

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
<b>Purpose</b>	The article establishes a clear purpose in the lead paragraph and demonstrates a clear understanding of the topic.	The article establishes a purpose in the lead paragraph and demonstrates understanding of the topic.	The article's purpose and lead paragraph are vague.	The article's purpose and lead paragraph are unclear or off topic.
<b>Supporting Details</b>	The details in the articles are clear, effective, and vivid 90-100% of the time.	The details in the articles are clear and pertinent 90-100% of the time.	The details in the articles are clear and pertinent 75-89% of the time.	The details in more than 25% of the articles are neither clear nor pertinent.
<b>Who, What, When, Where &amp; How</b>	The article adequately addresses the current situation of the town, its reasons for decay, and possible solutions.	80-90% of the article adequately addresses the current situation, what can be done to prevent negative consequences, and possible solutions.	70-80% of the article adequately addresses the current situation, the consequences, and possible solutions.	The article lacks details and a logical explanation of the future of the town. Few or no solutions are stated.
<b>Interest</b>	The article contains facts, figures, and/or word choices that make the articles exceptionally interesting to readers.	The article contains facts, figures, and/or word choices that make the articles interesting to readers.	The article contains some facts or figures but is marginally interesting to read.	The article does not contain facts or figures that might make it interesting to read.
<b>Attractiveness</b>	The article is enhanced with graphics that are appropriately chosen and placed, and that embellish the final project.	The article includes graphics that are appropriate and not distracting.	The article includes graphics that may not be the best choice.	The article has no images, or the images chosen are distracting and poorly chosen.