

SOCIAL STUDIES

Focus 2025-26



Grades 7-8

World, United States, and Texas History



UIL Social Studies Focus Topic

2025-26
for
7th & 8th Grades

Important Issues & Events of the Early 20th Century

In Focus:

Prominent Texans of the 1930s and 1940s

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~ President Hexco Inc., Linda Tarrant

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SOCIAL STUDIES FOCUS FOR 7TH & 8TH GRADES

TEXAS

(60% of the Test)

I. HISTORICAL ISSUES, EVENTS AND PEOPLE OF THE 20TH CENTURY

A. 1900 to 1910

1. Galveston Hurricane - 1900
 - a. The 20th century opened with a devastating hurricane that slammed into Galveston Island in September.
 - b. Some have called it **Isaac's Storm** after Isaac Cline, the forecaster at the Weather Bureau in Galveston.
 - c. The strength of the storm and its exact destination could not be determined at the time. At this time, there were no satellites or radar systems taking and creating pictures of the clouds and winds over the Gulf. No TV news reported.
 - d. Galveston was the leading port in Texas and for many people in "high society," the city rivaled New York City.
 - e. Entire families were washed away as houses were swept off their foundations and tossed into the sea. Almost 4,000 homes disappeared, and the city was in ruins.
 - f. The rebuilding of Galveston was a huge task. City leaders decided to raise the elevation of the island by bringing in sand from the ocean floor and building a sea wall 16 feet high and 17 feet wide along a 10-mile stretch of coastline in order to protect the city from storm surges.
 - g. As a result of the storm, Galveston lost its place of prominence, and the city of Houston funded the dredging of the Houston Ship Channel. This project enabled Houston to become the major port and strongest commercial center of the southern coast of Texas.
2. Tenant farming - 1900
 - a. By 1900, many farmers were tenant farmers who worked crops on land owned by another and paid the owner between one-fourth and one-third of the profit. This group often had no money and extremely poor living conditions. The percentage of farming done by tenant farmers reached over 60% by 1930, and this percentage dropped to about 12% by 1987.
3. Spindletop - 1901
 - a. Patillo Higgins bought land in the 1880s on Spindletop Hill, south of Beaumont Texas, and began to drill for oil. He hired Anthony F. Lucas to help develop the area he thought would be a productive oil field, but the first efforts failed.
 - b. In 1901, with new financing and more developers, Lucas led the way in drilling a new well. Thinking they hit another dry spot, the workers were startled by the rumble, roar, and eventual 100-foot-high explosion of oil that erupted from the ground.

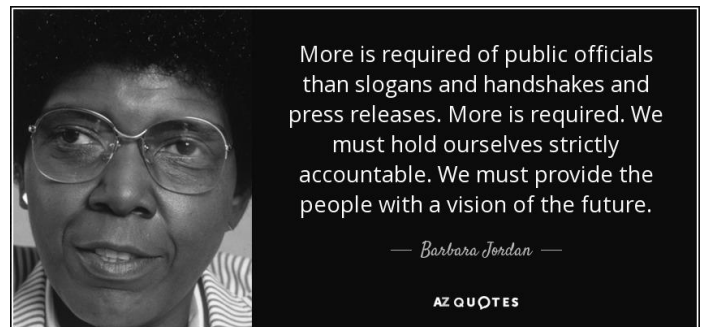
- j. More prisoners of war, 50,000 prisoners, were housed in Texas during WWII than in any other state. Most were Germans, but 3,000 were Italians, and 1,000 were Japanese. Internment camps were located in Seagoville, Kenedy and Crystal City with most prisoners being Axis nationals from Latin America.
- k. Over 400,000 Americans were killed during World War II. It is believed between 40 and 50 million other soldiers and citizens also died. This included 22,000 Texans who were killed or died of wounds of the 750,000 Texan men and women who served in the armed forces.
- 2. Texas City explosion - 1947
 - a. The SS *Grandcamp*, a French ship, was carrying ammonium nitrate when it exploded in the Texas City harbor.
 - b. A second ship, the SS *High Flyer*, exploded the following morning.
 - c. Some 600 people died and some 4,000 suffered injuries.
- 3. U.S. Senate race - 1948
 - a. **Lyndon B. Johnson** defeated Coke Stevenson by 87 votes for the Democratic nomination to the U.S. senate.
 - b. An infamous dispute arose over ballots from Jim Wells County in Ballot Box No. 13 that represented deceased people. This was an instance of voter fraud.
- 4. Racial integration of higher education facilities
 - a. The University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston admitted its first black student in 1949.
 - b. The University of Texas was ordered to integrate its law school by the U.S. Supreme Court in the *Sweatt v. Painter* case in 1950.

F. 1950 to 1960

- 1. Election of first Texas-born president of the U.S. - 1952
 - a. Dwight D. Eisenhower of Denison became president.
 - b. Eisenhower was a five-star general in the U.S. Army during WWII and served as Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe.
 - c. The Tidelands Bill was signed by Eisenhower that gave Texas exclusive rights to its offshore oil.
- 2. *Brown v. Board of Education* - 1954
 - a. The U.S. Supreme Court declared segregation illegal in schools.
 - b. San Antonio was one of the early cities to follow the decision.
- 3. Development of the integrated circuit - 1958
 - a. Jack Kilby of Texas Instruments patented the principle of integration and developed the first prototype of a microchip.
 - b. Texas Instruments became the third largest manufacturer of semiconductors in the world.

G. 1960 to 1970

1. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) - 1961
 - a. NASA was instituted in 1958, and it opened its Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston in 1961.
 - b. The center moved to a new building complex in 1964 that was renamed the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center.
 - c. **Ed White** of San Antonio became the first American to walk in space in 1965.
 - d. An Ohioan, Neil Armstrong in 1969 became the first man to walk on the moon as a part of the *Apollo 11* mission. His first message to Earth was "Houston, the Eagle has landed."
2. Presidential assassination - 1963
 - a. President John F. Kennedy (JFK) travelled to Texas in an attempt to appease those in the Texas Democratic Party that might threaten his re-election the following year.
 - b. President Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas during a motorcade through the downtown area.
 - c. Vice-president Lyndon B. Johnson was sworn in during the ride on *Air Force One* back to Washington.
3. University of Texas sniper - 1966
 - a. Charles Whitman shot 46 people from the observation deck on the 28th floor of the Main Building of the University campus.
 - b. Whitman killed his wife and mother before going to the campus where he killed 17 random people.
 - c. He was shot and killed by officers on the observation deck of the tower.
4. First black state senator - 1967
 - a. **Barbara Jordan** of Houston became the first black state senator in the Texas Legislature since 1883. She was the first black woman to serve in the Senate.
 - b. Her career was aided by Lyndon B. Johnson, and she successfully ran for the U.S. House of Representatives in 1973.
 - c. She was the first African American to deliver a keynote speech at the 1976 Democratic National Convention, and was mentioned as a possible running mate to Jimmy Carter.
 - d. She and Andrew Young were the first two African Americans from the South to be elected to Congress in the 20th century.



II. PROMINENT TEXANS

A. Oveta Culp Hobby

1. Born in Killeen, Texas in 1905, Oveta Culp Hobby died in 1995 in Houston.
2. Her father was a lawyer and state legislator and her mother a homemaker who stressed community service.
3. Oveta was an avid reader from an early age and often read books and journals in her father's offices after school.
4. At 14, Oveta's father often took her to Austin when legislature was in session; she was a keen observer of the daily sessions.
5. She was a talented speaker and was asked to join a touring company. Her parents refused permission so she organized the "Jolly Entertainers," a small group of teen musicians who gave performances to raise money to buy church organs.
6. She was an outstanding student and studied for two years at Mary Hardin Baylor College before beginning work as a legislative parliamentarian at the age of 20. She continued to take classes at the University of Texas.
7. She worked as a clerk of the State Banking Commission and in the legislature's judiciary committee. She also worked for several electoral campaigns.
8. Her first and only try at political office occurred in 1930 when she was asked to run for the legislature as a representative from Houston. She did not win, and she returned to her post as assistant to the city (Houston) attorney.
9. **William Pettus Hobby**, a friend of Oveta's father, became president of the *Houston Post-Dispatch*. He and Oveta renewed their friendship in 1930 and in 1931 they were married.
10. Oveta learned the publishing business from her husband. She started as a book reviewer and copy editor and worked her way up through the various positions in the publishing company. She became the executive vice president of the *Houston Post-Dispatch* in 1938. She was also president of the **League of Women Voters of Texas**, served on the board of the Houston Museum of Fine Arts, served as a committee member of the Houston Symphony Orchestra, and as regional chairman of the **Mobilization for Human Needs** organization which formed as a result of the Depression.
11. Oveta wrote the book *Mr. Chairman* about parliament and its operations, based on her observations of her father's time in government, and it became a textbook for Texas public schools.

