

# WHAT IS TEXAS?

## COUNCIL DISCUSSES QUESTION

*Caddo Indian Village, No. America, October 12, 1492*

A council meeting of elders held here today has discussed the meaning of “Texas.” All have agreed on the principle of friendship, but not everyone agrees with what that means! Must we even be “friends” with our enemies, those with greater power, and those with different customs? Must we be friends with all?

What if a whole new race of people should appear? Must we be friends with them as well?

The council agreed that no such race can exist except in the heavens. The Land of Our Fathers will never change. They adjourned without reaching a final consensus.



# Texas!

**What is Texas to you?** Write your answer below.

Did you say it is a state, your home, part of America? Yes, if you live in Texas, it is all of these. But it is more. Texas is people, land, homes, farms, cities, schools, and rivers. They are all part of Texas. What are some other parts of Texas?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

So Texas is not just a space on a map or a name on your address!

Have you been outside of Texas? Have you been in any of these states? (Circle the ones that you have been in.)

- |           |            |
|-----------|------------|
| Arkansas  | New Mexico |
| Louisiana | Oklahoma   |

Look at a map of America. What is special about these states?

\_\_\_\_\_

You are right if you said that they all touch Texas. They are our neighbor states.

What about these? (Circle any you’ve been in.)

- |            |            |
|------------|------------|
| Alaska     | Hawaii     |
| California | Maine      |
| Florida    | Washington |

Can you find them on your map? What is special about them?

They are far away from Texas. In fact, two of these states are so far away that they may not be on your map! Which two are they?

What do all of these states have in common? (Mark ‘X’ by the right answers.)

- \_\_\_ They are part of America
- \_\_\_ Everyone there is over 18 years old
- \_\_\_ People there love their families and state
- \_\_\_ They have a *history*
- \_\_\_ They have jungles and glaciers

(See next page for answers)

## History and News

Welcome to this first issue of “My Texas,” your newspaper of Texas history. In it you will read about events that took place many years ago, but often they will be presented as news. Headlines and shaded boxes like those at the top of this page are good examples.

Read the shaded box again. It is a make-believe article but it tells us something special about our past. In it we look at history as if it were news. We imagine how the native Texans might have thought about the meaning of our state’s name.

Most of the news articles in the issues that follow will tell about real events and real people, but they will not come from real newspapers.

If you marked 'X' on #1, #3, and #4, you are right. #2 is wrong because there are younger people in every state. Why is #5 wrong?

### Texas is part of America

While we live in Texas and love Texas, we also live in and love America. We are Texans and Americans. We are proud of each.

In this newspaper you will especially learn about Texas. You will learn about her past and the people here first. You will also study the land and how it was discovered and explored. You will learn what it was like then and what has happened since. It is the story of our Texas *heritage*.

It is a tale of adventure filled with *heroes* and *villains*, good times and bad, success and failure. Sometimes we may wish we could change it, but we can't. But if we pay close attention, we can learn from it. Then maybe we can make the future better. Are you ready? Let's go.

### NEW ROUTE TO INDIA FOUND

Barcelona, Spain, March 1493

After a perilous journey of over seven months, Admiral Christopher Columbus and his valiant crew have returned from their voyage of discovery. The admiral reports having reached some unknown islands that must surely lie near India, but he was unable to locate any recognizable site or place. He also reports meeting a strange race of people he has called Indians. A return voyage is planned on which he expects to confirm his findings.

## Short way to India!

It was 2:00 in the morning of October 12, 1492, when a crewman on the ship, Pinta, sighted an island off the southeastern coast of what is now America. A cannon shot announced the discovery and soon Columbus landed, threw himself to his knees, and returned thanks to God. He named the island "San Salvador."

When Columbus returned and word of his discovery reached Spain, there was much excitement. He believed he had reached islands near Asia called the "Indies." He thought he was close to the country of India where Spain traded for things not available at home. He thought he was near India, but he was mistaken. Columbus had sailed west but had reached the farthest lands of the east!

Today the islands Columbus discovered are known as the "West Indies." He never did see the

mainland of America and he never did know he was still half way around the world from India!

Columbus returned three more times to look for India. Once he thought he was too far north so he sailed farther south. Finally he landed on the coast of South America. He thought it was Asia. He never did visit our North American mainland. He didn't understand the world or its size.

### History and News (continued)

Look at the shaded box on page one again. What is the date?

What is special about this date?

This is what is sometimes called an "irony." You see, our imaginary Caddo Indian council was meeting to discuss "friendship" on the same day that Columbus arrived in the "new world."

As you continue reading you will learn more about early explorers in this new world. You will also learn about these people we call "Indians" and the America they lived in.

## Understanding your world

For this lesson you need a globe. A globe is a model of the earth we live on. It is a *replica*, a likeness in small size. It is round like the earth is round. It has a map on it that shows where the land is and where the sea is. The sea is usually colored blue. The land is in many shapes and may have countries marked in different colors. The different land shapes are called *continents*. The seas between them are the oceans.

Look at your globe. Can you find America? Turn the globe and look at the top half until you find it. Do you see how America fits into the middle of a large continent? Now look above America to find Canada. Next look below America to find Mexico.

Look left of Canada and find the state of Alaska. Look in the ocean below Alaska and find Hawaii. Alaska and Hawaii are two of our United States. What separates Alaska from Hawaii?

Altogether, America, Canada, and Mexico form most of the continent of North America.

"North" is a direction. It means toward the top of the globe. "South" means toward the bottom of the globe. Since your globe probably tilts slightly, the top and bottom are really where the pole

Photo of a globe showing North and South America and the Atlantic Ocean.

In the picture, Texas is at the far upper left of the globe and Spain is at the far right.



sticks out that the globe spins on. Find the north pole and the south pole. Spin the globe slowly. The line made by the pole through the globe is the *axis*. The world, like your globe, spins on its axis. It makes one full turn each day.

Look at the thin line of land below Mexico. Today this is called “Central America.” Follow it down and to the right until you come to the country of Colombia. Colombia is on another continent called “South America.” Find a few other countries on this continent. Find Brazil, the biggest country in South America. Why do we call this continent “South America” and our own “North America?” Yes, because one is south and the other north.

Set your globe on a table. Look for a doorknob in the room. Imagine the doorknob is the sun. Turn the globe slowly so that America moves to your right. (This is toward the east.)

As you turn it, imagine you are standing on the globe like you are standing on the earth. Imagine looking for your doorknob-sun. Sometimes you will face toward it. Other times you will face away. Our earth is just like that and that is why we have day and night.

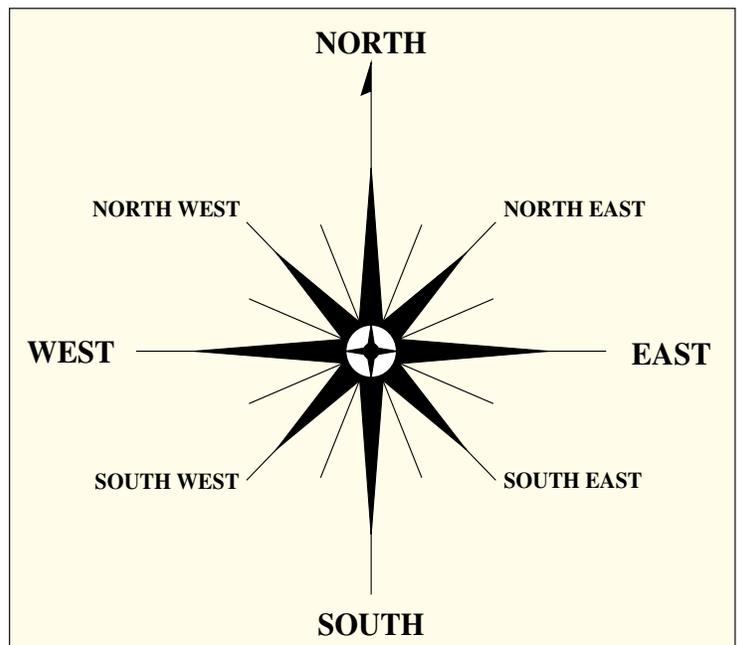
Look again at your globe. Canada is north of America. Mexico is south of America. But Mexico is north of Brazil. “Well,” you say, “Mexico is not straight north. Straight north of Brazil is an ocean.” Find its name. It is the Atlantic Ocean. America is left of the Atlantic Ocean. We call this direction “west.” The Atlantic Ocean is right of America. We call this direction “east.”

To tell directions we use four names: north, south, east, and west. These are called the “cardinal directions.” They are the four basic directions.

Sometimes we use them together for a direction in between. If we use two of them together, we always use the north or south name first.

We may even use three together. For example, the direction between north and northeast is called north-northeast. These directions are called the “16 points of the compass.” Look in the box below. Count them. You should find sixteen.

There are different ways to remember the four basic directions. Have you ever heard the phrase “Never Eat Soggy Waffles”? You can use this funny sentence to help remember your directions! The first letter of each word is the first letter in each direction while moving clockwise around the compass starting at the top. Can you come up with your own phrase for the directions?



Compass illustrating the 16 points.

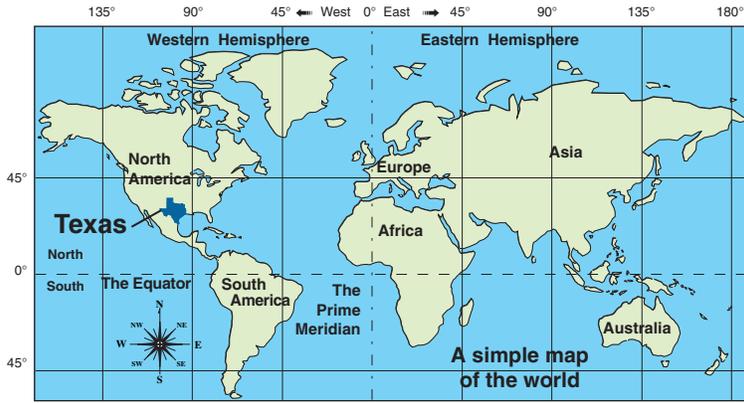
## Where is Texas?

When Columbus arrived in the New World, he was at the western edge of that great ocean we call the Atlantic. West of the islands he explored is a large gulf. Today it is known as the Gulf of Mexico. It is kind of tucked up under our United States.

Locate the Gulf of Mexico on your globe. Now find Texas. What part of the gulf is it on? (Circle your answer.)

NE SW SE NW

Now look at where Texas is on the North American continent. (You may also locate it on the map on the next page.) What part is it in?



Did you say “The southern”? You may also say “the southwest” since it is also in the western part of the southern United States. (Note: We never say “westsouth”)

Columbus believed he could sail all the way around the world and arrive back in Spain. He thought he could get to India and China that way. But he didn't know it was so far and he didn't know North and South America were in the way! No one knew that but the people living there. Who were they?

But the Indians didn't know about the people in Spain! They were *isolated*. Neither people knew or understood the other.

This is still true today. That is, there are many people who do not know about others nearby. Are there people near you that you know nothing about?

## Trade

So why was Columbus looking for a shorter route to India? The answer is “trade.” This word is important because trade is very important to us.

Many people lived in Europe. Some were farmers. Others worked in factories. There were fishermen, miners, lumbermen, and many other *trades*. Some countries raised lots of food, while other countries had lots of coal. People in one country needed what people in other countries had, so they would “trade” things they had for what they needed. Sometimes they *bartered*, but often they used gold or silver coins and *bullion*.

Still there were some things that couldn't be found anywhere in Europe. There were spices and tea from India and silk cloth from China. Caravans would go by land all the way to India and China to deliver goods from Spain and bring back goods from China.

On your globe, find China, far east of Spain. Imagine carrying goods all the way from China to Spain over land. What would be a better way?

But there was a problem! To sail from China to Spain you had to go all the way around Africa.

Today the Suez Canal goes between the Mediterranean and Red Seas. What difference do you suppose that makes?

## Columbus' last voyage

In 1502 Columbus sailed along the coast of Central America in the area now known as Nicaragua and Costa Rica. He thought he had found Asia. He was still looking for China when a terrible storm struck. It almost destroyed his small ship. After the storm he took refuge in a harbor near what is now one end of the Panama Canal. This is as close as he ever came to China or the Pacific Ocean.

Today, the Panama Canal allows ships to sail from ocean to ocean without the long trip around South America.

### Balboa discovers the Pacific Ocean

In September 1513, Vasco Núñez de Balboa led a party to the crest of the Central American mountains. He was a farmer, merchant, explorer who had come to what is now Panama. For the first time, Europeans sighted the Pacific Ocean.

Balboa sent three scouts to find the shore. One was the first European to ever actually enter the sea. On September 29, Balboa claimed the whole sea and all the lands it touched for Spain.

The Pacific is the biggest ocean on earth. It forms all of the western boundary of America. When Balboa discovered it, he had no idea how big it actually is.

### REACTION TIME

1. What is the world?
2. What really happens when the sun “rises”?
3. How is “history” like “news”?
4. Why did Columbus think he was in India?
5. Why is trade important to you?

ANSWER BOX  
Did you say FSE?