

Caddo Traditional Stories

Personal Thoughts:

My experience this past summer at the workshop and camping down the road at Mission Tejas State Park reinvigorated a personal connection to history. Most authors of history have been men. So, the word history, is simply restated as his story. The collection of oral stories was a tremendous task for early scholars. Winners of conflicts were often the ones to write down the tales of soldiers and politicians alike. Tales of everyday life were equally complex as the tales of battle. With Caddo stories, the main characters were often based on animals. So, a Caddo story can be a historical narrative featuring the environment, culture, and time period. The sounds of nighttime crawlers of the 21st century are the same sounds heard by the Caddo of Caddo Mounds State Historic Site. The nighttime sky above the forests of pine, pecan, and oak is the same as back then. The past is all around us, we just have to take it in.

About This Lesson

General Citation

This lesson is based on the National Register of Historic Places registration files for Caddo Mounds State Historic Site (also known as the George C. Davis site) and materials prepared by the Texas Historical Commission. It was written by Kathy Lathen, a Texas educator with over a decade of classroom instructional experience. This lesson is one in a series that brings the important stories of historic places into classrooms across the country.

Where it fits into Curriculum

Topics and Time Period: This lesson could be incorporated with the Texas history unit on the historical era, Natural Texas and Its People (Prehistory to 1528).

TEKS Standards

Seventh Grade Social Studies

Students will be able to:

- 7.2(A) compare the cultures of American Indians in Texas prior to European colonization such as Gulf, Plains, Puebloan, and Southeastern;
- 7.20(A) compare types and uses of technology, past and present;
- 7.21(A) differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources such as computer software, databases, media and news services, biographies, interviews, and artifacts to acquire information about Texas;
- 7.21(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;
- 7.21(C) organize and interpret information in outlines, reports, databases, and visuals, including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps;
- 7.22(A) use social studies terminology correctly;

- 7.22(C) transfer information from one medium to another, including written to visual and statistical to written or visual, using computer software as appropriate;
- 7.22(D) create written, oral, and visual presentation of social studies information.

National Council for the Social Studies

I. Culture

Students will be able to:

- a. explore and describe similarities and differences in the ways groups, societies, and cultures address similar human needs and concerns;
- d. compare ways in which people from different cultures think about and deal with their physical environment and social conditions.

II. Time, Continuity, and Change

Students will be able to:

- a. demonstrate an understanding that different people may describe the same event or situation in diverse ways, citing reasons for the differences in views;
- b. demonstrate an ability to use correctly vocabulary associated with time such as past, present, future, and long ago; read and construct simple timelines; identify examples of change; and recognize examples of cause and effect relationships;
- c. compare and contrast different stories or accounts about past events, people, places, or situations, identifying how they contribute to our understanding of the past;
- d. identify and use various sources for reconstructing the past, such as documents, letters, diaries, maps, textbooks, photos, and others;
- e. demonstrate an understanding that people in different times and places view the world differently.

III. People, Places, and Environments

Students will be able to:

- c. use appropriate resources, data sources, and geographic tools such as atlases, data bases, grid systems, charts, graphs, and maps to generate, manipulate, and interpret information;
- h. examine the interaction of human beings and their physical environment, the use of land, building of cities, and ecosystem changes in selected locales and regions;
- j. observe and speculate about social and economic effects of environmental changes and crises resulting from phenomena such as floods, storms, and drought.

Objectives for Students

- 1) To make connections between the archeological evidence of Caddo culture, found at Caddo Mounds State Historic Site, and their stories.
- 2) To analyze and interpret examples of Caddo traditional stories.
- 3) To explain the importance of the oral traditions of the Caddo people in Texas history.

Materials for students

The materials listed below can be used either directly on the computer or can be printed out, photocopied, and distributed to students:

- 1) maps depicting Caddo villages;
- 2) documents of printed Caddo stories;
- 3) photographs and drawings of Caddo culture.

Getting Started

Inquiry Question



Take a few moments to study this image, describe the setting and action of the painting.

Setting the Stage

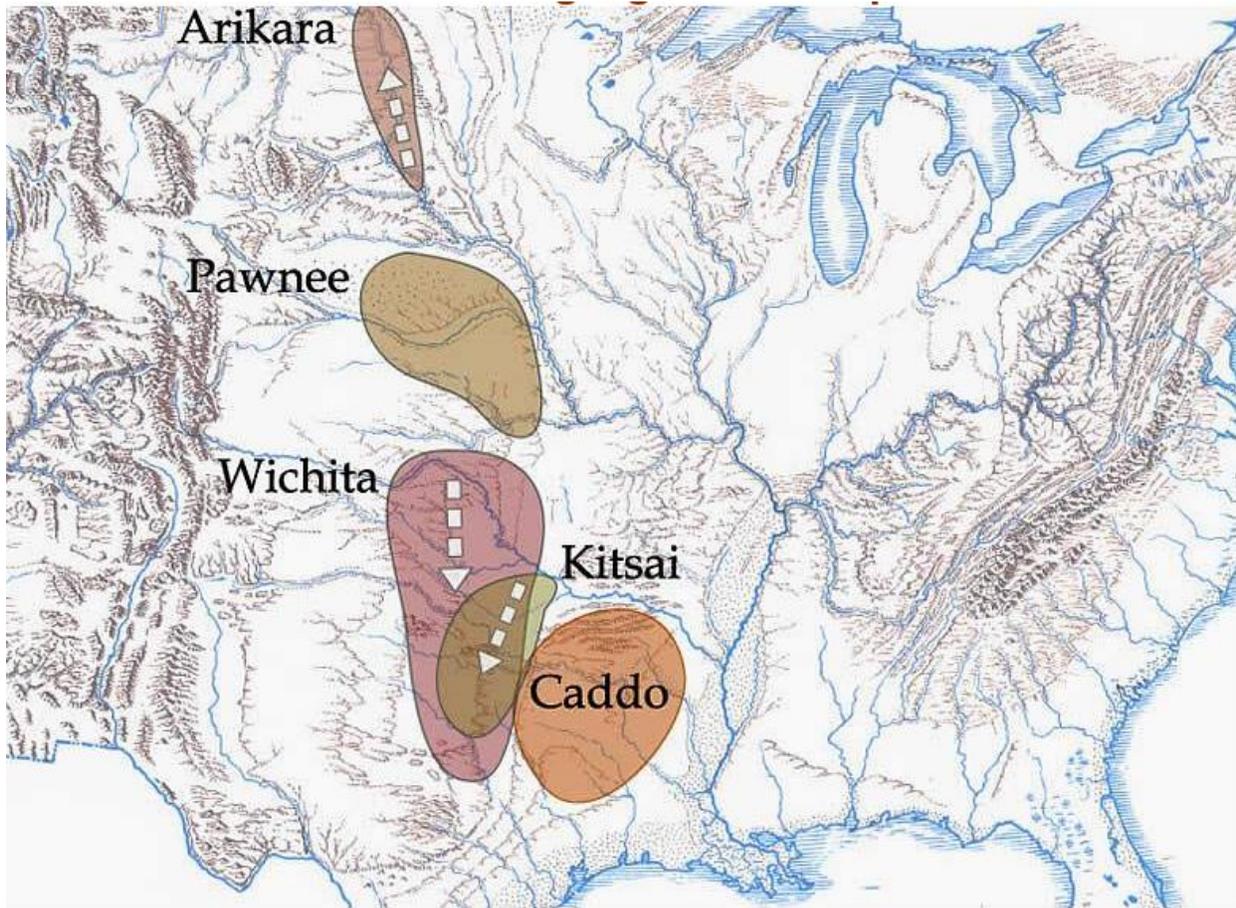
Prior to the European explorers landing on the North American continent, many American culture groups built earthen mounds as ceremonial spaces for ritual purposes. These mounds were large structures built entirely of packed earth. The Mississippian cultures, which flourished between 1000 and 1600 A.D., are the best known example of these mound-building cultures. During the peak of their civilization, Mississippian cultures spread across a large portion of the continent, as far north and east as present-day Ohio, and as far south and west as present-day Texas. Mississippian cultures shared characteristics including large communal plazas, intensive agriculture; flat-topped temple mounds paired with round-top burial mounds, a complex hierarchical society, and shared religious symbols and styles of decoration. The largest of the known Mississippian centers was Cahokia, located in the present-day State of Illinois. Today the site consists of 80 remaining mounds including a temple platform and burial mounds. The majority of Mississippian mound sites weren't nearly as large as Cahokia. Most, including the site preserved at the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site, contained only a few mounds, and rose and declined within a few hundred years.

The Caddo people were the western-most of the Mississippian cultures. The Caddo culture is primarily differentiated from other Mississippian cultures by their shared language and shared customs, especially oral tradition. Between 800 and 1300 A.D., the Caddo were the dominant culture in an area that included northeastern Texas, southeastern Oklahoma, northwestern Louisiana, and southern Arkansas. One of their important regional ceremonial sites is preserved today as the Caddo Mounds State Historic Site, in Alto, Texas (near Nacogdoches). The site includes a High Temple Platform Mound, a Burial Mound, and a Low Platform Mound that was probably used for rituals.

In addition to being a ceremonial center, this site would have been a center of Caddo trade and economic life. Archeological investigations of the site have found many items at the temple mound sites made of materials such as copper, marine shells, and high-quality flint that cannot be found near the Caddo Mounds site. The close association of a village with these mounds indicates that the Caddo both lived and worshipped at this site between 800 and 1300 A.D. Many of the trade routes used by the Caddo became important routes for Spanish explorers and later settlers. One such trail is the historic El Camino Real de los Tejas, which served as the primary route between Mexico and Louisiana. The close association of the site with Texas State Route 21 shows that the area remained a route of trade and travel through the arrival of Anglo-American settlers in Texas.

Locating the Site

Map 1: Caddoan Languages and People

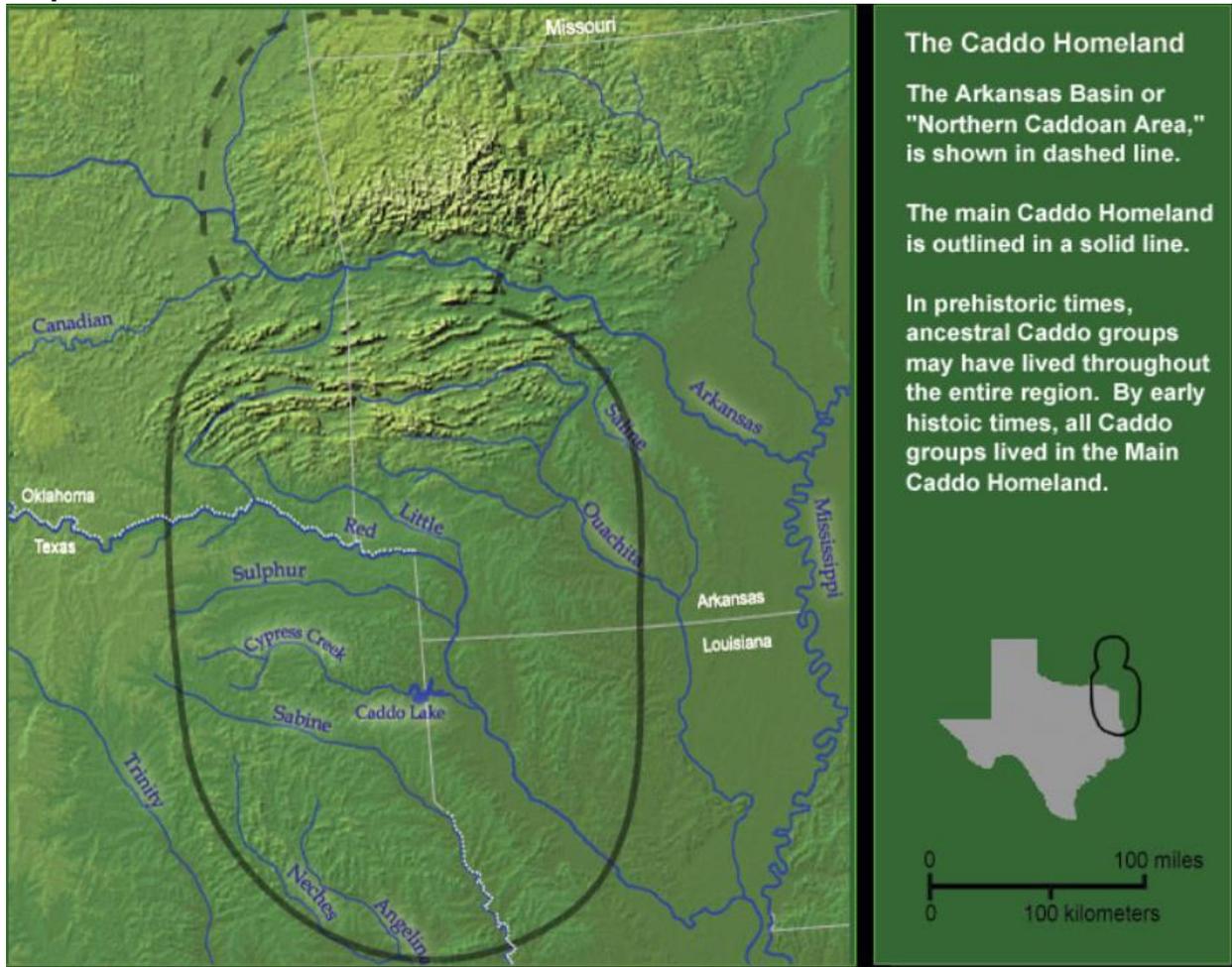


Approximate areas where the various Caddoan languages were spoken in the 17th and 18th centuries. The arrows show the general directions of group migrations during this period. Courtesy of "Texas Beyond History" project at the University of Texas, Austin www.texasbeyondhistory.net

Questions for Map 1

- 1) How many Caddoan languages are represented on the map?
- 2) Of the Caddoan languages represented on the map, which ones are located in Texas?
- 3) What conclusions can be made where the Caddoan languages intersect?

Map 2: Caddo Homeland



Courtesy of "Texas Beyond History" project at the University of Texas, Austin www.texasbeyondhistory.net

Questions for Map 2

- 1) Using your knowledge of Texas history, what physical region of Texas is within the oval?
- 2) What rivers are located on the map?
- 3) What states are included on the map?
- 4) What is the distance between the Mississippi River and Neches River?
- 5) What rivers are within the watershed of the Mississippi River?

Determining the Facts

The selected stories in this section are from the book, Traditions of the Caddo, Collected Under the Auspices of the Carnegie Institution of Washington; by George Amos Dorsey (1903). The text can be read for free by utilizing the Google Play app, or by downloading a PDF file from the Internet Archive. Students are expected to read aloud the stories to peers in small groups. When reading aloud, the students should dramatize the reading by using inflection, dramatic pause, facial expressions, etc.

Reading 1: “The Origin of Animals”

3. THE ORIGIN OF ANIMALS.

The people and animals all lived together and were the same in the beginning of the world. After a time they became too numerous and there was not food enough for all. A council was held and the chiefs determined that some should become animals and live apart from the people and be hunted by them for food. Some of the people, who lived where the big fire had burned off the grass, were rolled about in the black ashes until they became black. Again they were rolled and then they took on the form of bears. Long pieces of white stone were put upon their feet for claws and in their mouth for teeth. They were given ten lives. When killed the first time, the second life was to arise from the blood that was spilled upon the ground, and so the third life was to arise from the blood that was spilled when the bear was killed for the second time, and so on through the other lives up to the tenth. During the first life the bear was not to be fierce, but as often as he was killed and passed to another life he was to become fiercer and fiercer, until, when he came to the tenth life, he would fight, and even eat, human beings.

Some other people who lived where the long grass grew were rolled upon the earth, and when they arose they had the form of buffalo, and the grass had stuck to them and hung all like a beard under their necks. They, too, were given ten lives and then put upon the prairie to live, where man could hunt them. The deer were then made in the same way, and after them all the other animals were made.

Source: Traditions of the Caddo, Collected Under the Auspices of the Carnegie Institution of Washington; by George Amos Dorsey (1903) page 14.

Reading 2: "Snake-Woman Distributes Seeds"

7. SNAKE-WOMAN DISTRIBUTES SEEDS.

The Great Father gave the seeds of all growing things to Snake-Woman. He taught her how to plant the seeds and how to care for the green things that grew from them until they were ripe, and then how to prepare them for food. One time, when Snake-Woman had more seeds than she could possibly care for, she decided to give some to the people. She called her two sons and asked them to help her carry the seeds. Each put a big bag full of seeds on his back, and then they traveled all over the world, giving six seeds of each kind of plant to every person. As Snake-Woman gave each person the seeds she told him that he must plant them, and must care for the plants that grew from them, but must allow no one, especially children, to touch them or even point to them as they grew. She said that until the seeds were ripe they belonged to her, and if any one gathered them too soon she would send a poisonous snake to bite him. Parents always tell their children what Snake-Woman said, and so they are afraid to touch or go near any growing plants for fear a snake will come and bite them.

Reading 3: "The Flood"

8. THE FLOOD.*

One time a long, hot, dry season came and all the waters of the earth dried up. The people wandered from place to place, trying to find water, and after many days they became crazed and did many foolish things. They went to the dried-up river beds and there found many dead fish and turtles and animals that dwelt in the water, and the people cut them to pieces and threw them about, for they thought that these animals and fish were in some way responsible for the waters disappearing. While they were acting foolishly they looked up and saw a man in the sky coming toward them from the west. A wind blew, and the man approached and lighted on the ground before them. In his hand he carried a small green leaf. He told the people that they had not acted wisely and had abused him, and that he was angry with them. He motioned the leaf in four directions and drops of water fell from it. Soon the waters grew in volume and arose all over the world, even to the tree-tops, and the highest mountains except one. To this high mountain the man led a few of the people whom he chose, and they stayed on the mountain for four days, while the water rose higher and higher. As the waters rose the man caused the mountain to rise with them. He could do this because he had greater power than the spirit of Cold or Heat. After a time the waters began to go down, and green things appeared upon the earth again. Then he led the people down from the mountain. They found that many people who had been left in the water during the flood had not drowned, but had turned into alligators and other water animals.

* Told by Wing.

Source: Traditions of the Caddo, Collected Under the Auspices of the Carnegie Institution of Washington; by George Amos Dorsey (1903) pages 18-19.

Reading 4: "The Old Woman Who Kept all the Pecans"

27. THE OLD WOMAN WHO KEPT ALL THE PECANS.*

There lived an old woman who was mother to all the pecan trees. She owned all of the trees and gathered all the nuts herself. When people went to her lodge she would give them a few pecans to eat, but would never allow them to take any away. The people were very fond of pecans and they wanted some for their own use, but the old woman would not let them have any. One time the people were very hungry and the old woman had everything in her lodge filled with pecans, but she would give them only a few when they went to see her and she made them eat them before going away. This made the people angry and they decided that something must be done.

There was in the village an old man who had four little sons who were very troublesome and meddlesome. The people—they were the field Rats—thought that these four little boys would be the right ones to go over to the old woman's house some night to try to steal some of the nuts. They chose the four boys both because they were small and quiet and sly and because they were such a nuisance around the village that they would be no great loss to the people if the old woman killed them. The Rats were willing to go because they were always glad to be meddling. They chose one to slip over and make sure that the old woman was asleep. He went to her lodge and peeped in through a small crack and saw that she was still at work. He waited until she finished her work and went to bed; then when he heard her snore he ran back home to tell his brothers to come. When he went inside his father's lodge he saw a stranger sitting there. The stranger was Coyote. He had come to tell the Rats not to trouble about stealing pecans from the old woman, for he was going over the next day and kill her. Coyote was afraid to trust the Rats. He wanted to go himself, so he could get the most of the pecans. The next morning he went over to see the old woman and acted very friendly. The old woman gave him some pecans and he sat down and ate them all up. Then he asked her for some more, and as she turned around to get them he pulled out his stone knife and struck her on the head. She died, and ever since then the pecan trees have grown everywhere and belong to all of the people.

* Told by Wing.

Source: *Traditions of the Caddo, Collected Under the Auspices of the Carnegie Institution of Washington*; by George Amos Dorsey (1903) page 52.

Reading 5: "Why Dogs have Long Tongues"

48. WHY DOGS HAVE LONG TONGUES.*

A long time ago, when the animals were like people, dogs were noted for telling everything that they knew. In those days there were not so many dogs as now, but the best families always had a few hounds to take with them on the hunt. A man, Running-Water, who was a great hunter, wanted a dog to help him hunt, but he would not have one, because he hated to have some one always tattling on him and telling everything that he did. One time he saw four little pups and he decided to take one of them and try to teach him not to talk so much. He took the pup home, and every day, when he played with him, he would talk to him and try to teach him not to be a tattler like other dogs. The pup grew and was soon big enough to be taught to hunt. Running-Water began to take him out to hunt rabbits and small game. Every time the man killed any game the dog would sneak home and tell ; then he would return to Running-Water in a circuitous way and come up to him from behind, as though he had been hunting all the time. Running-Water knew that the dog was trying to deceive him, and he whipped and scolded him. After each whipping he would stop running off and tattling for a little while, but soon he would begin again.

After a time the dog was big enough to go far away into the high timber to hunt with his master. One day Running-Water told his mother to prepare a large quantity of food, for he and his dog were going to the mountains to hunt and would be gone many weeks. He loaded several horses with provisions and started out, with his dog for his only companion. After three days of traveling they came to the mountains and made camp. They hunted several weeks and killed many big animals, and then started home. After a day's journey Running-Water missed his dog. He called him and searched for him and then went back to camp, thinking that he had perhaps gone back. He

could not find him there, and so he gave him up for lost and again started home. He did not think the dog had gone on home ahead of him, for he thought that he had broken him of the habit of running home and telling everything ; but when he came home he found the dog there. He had been there a long time and had told many big stories about the number of bears, mountain-lions, deer, coyotes, and other animals that they had killed. Running-Water was more angry than ever before, and he said, “ I will make that dog stop tattling so much.” He caught the dog, gave him a hard whipping, and told him he would pull his tongue out the next time he came home and told everything. Then, being still angry, he caught hold of the dog’s tongue and pulled it as hard as he could, and then he ran a stick across his mouth. Ever since then dogs have had long tongues and big mouths.

Source: Traditions of the Caddo, Collected Under the Auspices of the Carnegie Institution of Washington; by George Amos Dorsey (1903) page 82-83,

Questions for Readings 1-5

- 1) Of the selected stories, which ones were the most entertaining? Why?
- 2) Of the selected stories, how many could be connected to a historical event? In a short paragraph, use text evidence to support your conclusion.
- 3) Create a table, such as the one below, to examine the traditional roles man and women had in Caddo society.

Title	Men	Women	Conclusions
“The Origin of Animals”			
“Snake-Woman Distributes Seeds”			
“The Flood”			
“The Old Woman Who Kept all the Pecans”			
“Why Dogs Have Long Tongues”			

Visual Evidence

Video 1: “Caddo Mounds State Historic Site”



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rU4_w3Nin3k

Questions for Video 1

- 1) While watching the video, students will complete the PEGS graphic organizer.
- 2) List three to five important takeaways from the video.
- 3) Can art tell a story? Explain your answer using evidence from the video.
- 4) Why are the mounds important to Caddo culture?

Photographic Mosaic 1



Courtesy of "Texas Beyond History" project at the University of Texas, Austin www.texasbeyondhistory.net

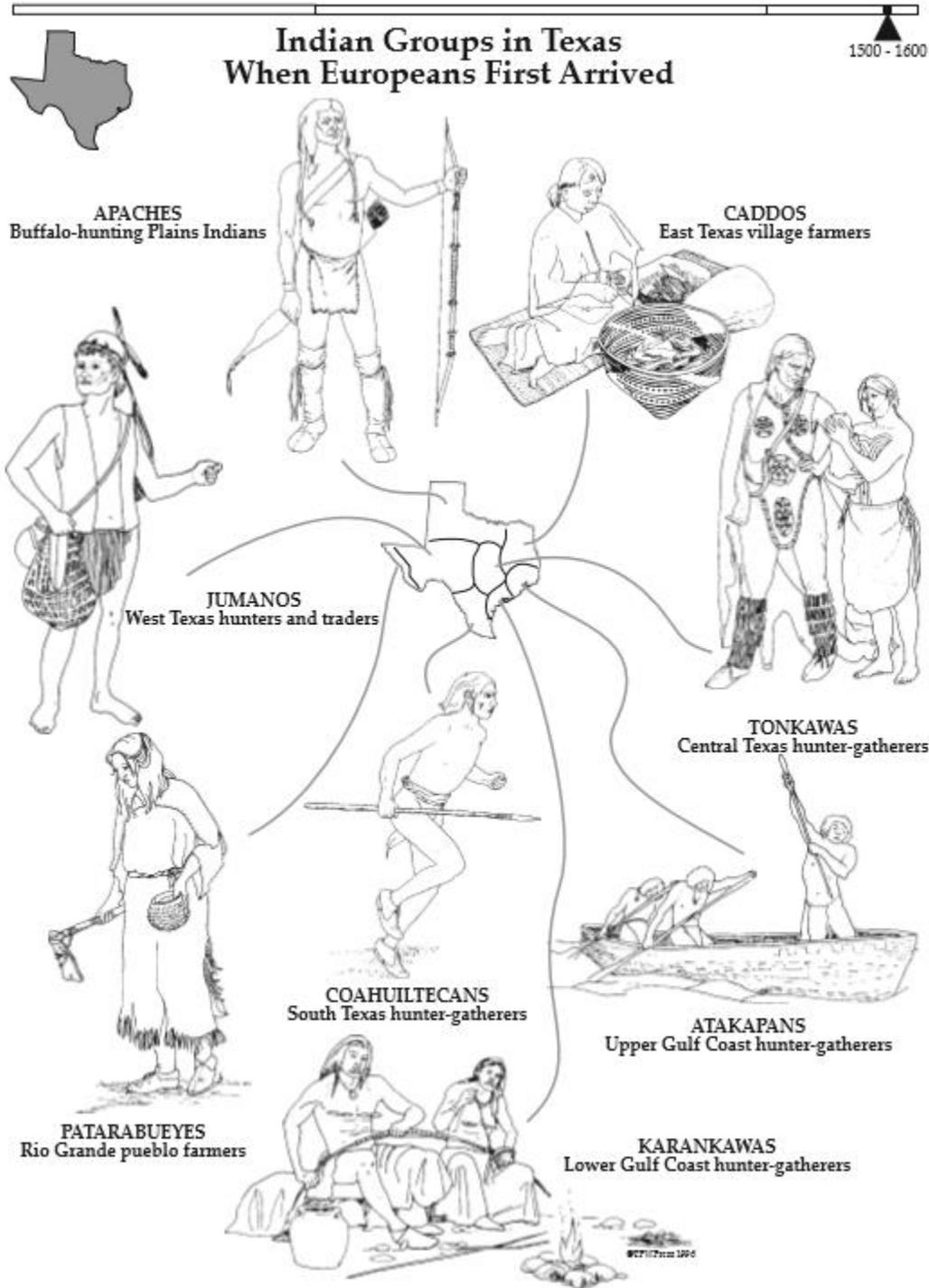
Questions for Photographic Mosaic 1

- 1) Select one piece of the photographic mosaic and describe the object or objects in your own words.
- 2) Imagine you are an archeologist, a person who excavates culturally significant objects of human history, create a story about the discovery of the clay statuette of the man.
- 3) What objects featured in the photographic mosaic would have been created for storage?

Putting it all Together

Pre-Site Visit Activities

Activity 1: Indian Groups in Texas



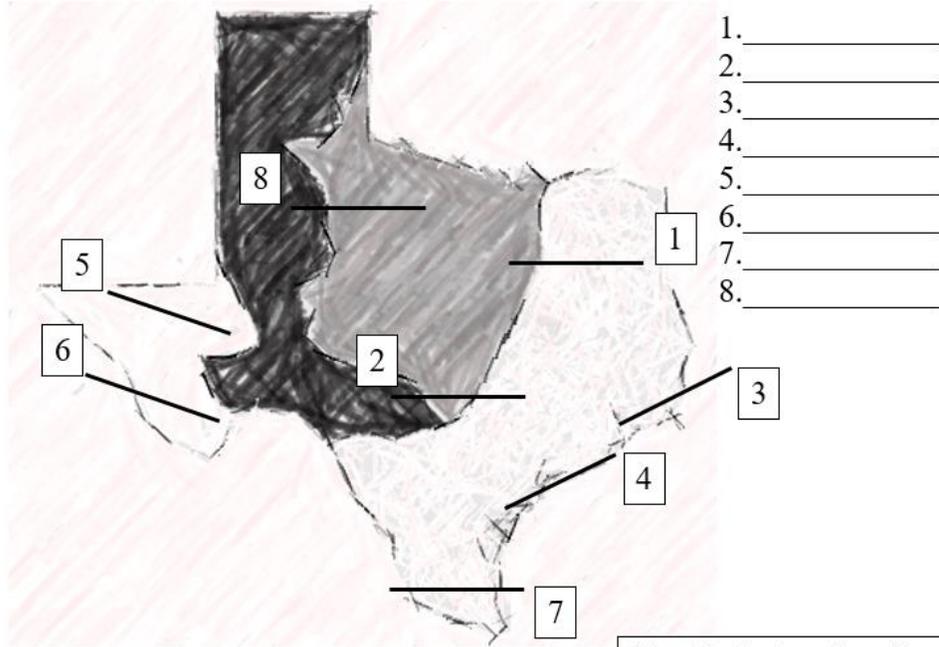
Courtesy of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department,

tpwd.texas.gov/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd_bk_p4000_0016.pdf

Using the map above and your knowledge of Texas history, complete the information below and label the physical regions of Texas on the map.

Warm-Up Work

Patarabueye
Atakapans
Jumano
Caddo
Apache
Karankawa
Coahuiltecan
Tonkawa



Identify the location of Native American tribes living in Texas before European exploration.

Activity 3: Analyzing Indigenous People of Texas

Using textbooks, Texas Almanac, and supplementary resources (1-4), complete the table below.

	Apaches	Caddos	Tonkawas	Atakapans
Location in Texas				
Hunter, Fisherman, Gatherer, Trader, Hunter-Gatherer, Farmer, or Herdsman				
Types of Food				
House Type				
Kind of Government				
Similar to Other Tribes (Y/N) and Name Tribe				
Other Interesting Facts				

	Karankawas	Coahuiltecan	Patarbueyes	Jumanos
Location in Texas				
Hunter, Fisherman, Gatherer, Trader, Hunter-Gatherer, Farmer, or Herdsman				
Types of Food				
House Type				
Kind of Government				
Similar to Other Tribes (Y/N) and Name Tribe				
Other Interesting Facts				

Post-Site Visit Activities

Activity 1: Secret Door Foldable

Students go through their completed responses to questions, graphic organizers, notes, and photographs from the site visit and select the most important information to summarize on their foldable. The foldable will have a title page on the front of the foldable, "Caddo Traditional Stories." Next, on the immediate inside, students will write summaries and draw pictures representing the most important information collected. Finally, the hidden picture will be a student drawn picture of one of the five selected stories from the book, Traditions of the Caddo, Collected Under the Auspices of the Carnegie Institution of Washington; by George Amos Dorsey (1903).

Activity 2: Cereal Box Dioramas

Students will collect images and color pages from Supplementary Resources (1-3), utilize their onsite field notes, completed classwork, and notes to create a 3-D diorama featuring the Caddo. Students will find inspiration in the directions from the ERIC database file, "Making Cereal Box Dioramas of Native American Historic Homes and Culture." The images necessary for the completion of the project will need to be either found on the Internet or student-created, because the file doesn't contain direct references to Caddo homes or culture.

Supplementary Resources

Web Links

- 1) Texas Archeology in the Classroom: A Unit for Teachers
<http://www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/archeology/archeology-publications-resources>
- 2) "Learn About Texas Indians," Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
http://tpwd.texas.gov/publications/pwdpubs/media/pwd_bk_p4000_0016.pdf
- 3) "American Indians in Texas," by Michael Perri, Texas A&M University
<http://www.tamut.edu/academics/mperry/TX/TXHIS.htm>
- 4) History of Texas
<http://www.worldcat.org/title/history-of-texas/oclc/884543990/viewport>
- 5) Caddo Traditional Dances performed at Caddo Mounds State Historic Site 10/06/12
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAI-jumuFRZ9KCUosoCx0ww>
- 6) Cricket Rhoads-Connywerdy presents excerpts of Native American stories
<http://www.wisdomoftheelders.org/turtle-island-storyteller-krieket-connywerdy/>
- 7) PEGS (Political, Economic, Geographic, Social) Graphic Organizer
http://curriculum.austinisd.org/soc_stud/resources/strategies.html
- 8) Making Cereal Box Dioramas of Native American Historic Homes and Culture <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED507242>