

PERMANENT EXHIBIT ACTIVITY KIT

Think!



*Founded in 1967 as the
Hidalgo County Historical Museum*



THE GOAL OF THESE EXERCISES is to encourage your students to improve their skills and knowledge of content by presenting them with examples from their own heritage. This process can start with their imagination, in a classroom setting, can be developed through the museum visit, and finalized through writing exercises suggested within this packet. Questions and activities are designed for class use, and suggestions are made for the TEKS and TAKS writing objectives that can be met with any of these activities. For additional research in developing any of these activities, your students may want to look at the annotated bibliography of books geared toward elementary Texas Social Studies, found at

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/resources/sscd/resources>

Please feel free to photocopy any of these activities for your students!

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BACKGROUND: Native Americans of Mexico and South Texas

Codices. A thousand years ago, a chieftain named Eight-Deer Ocelot-Claw ruled a large part of today's Southern Mexico. Eight-Deer became chief at the age of 19, when his father died. He was a Mixtec, a member of a proud community also known as the "Cloud People" because people said that their ancestors came from the clouds. He was so important that there are several books written about him, at that time. These books are a little different than the kind that we read today. These books are called codices. The writing isn't exactly like our writing, but more like pictures. These pictures are called pictographs. Each pictograph contains information that is understandable if you know what the symbols stand for. For example, this symbol (right) means "Tenochtitlan" (or "place of red cactus fruit"), the capital city of the Aztecs, the very powerful tribe who lived in Central Mexico when the Spaniards arrived. Today's Mexico City is in the same location as Tenochtitlan was a thousand years ago. Several different South and Central American Native groups created codices and pictographs.



ACTIVITIES:

- ◇ **Pictograph warm-up:** What are some common symbols that we see every day, that mean specific places or things? Think of *logos* like McDonald's, Taco Bell, or Nike.
- ◇ **Discover your Mixtec name.** The first part of a Mixtec name was given depending on the day and date of birth. For example, Eight-Deer Ocelot-Claw got his first name because he was born on the eighth day of the month of the deer. His second name referred to his animal alter-ego or spirit which may have come to him in a dream. Until this happened, he was known only as Eight-Deer.

We can simulate this by giving each of our months an animal name. Then we would use the day we were born as our number. (A circle indicates '1' and a cigar-shape indicates '5', like the Roman Numerals I and V.) Find out what your first name would be if:

January = Frog	April = Eagle	July = Javelina	October = Sparrow
February = Deer	May = Squirrel	August = Coyote	November = Fox
March = Lizard	June = Fish	September = Bat	December = Horse

Examples: If you were born on October 20 you'd be Two-Sparrow, or on April 16 you'd be Seven-Eagle. Now do your own birth date, then make your own pictograph.



represents Eight-Deer.

Remember, the oval and circles refer to the day's number.

Extra Credit: Which of these month names could not have been a real Mixtec name?

(Answer: December, because there were no horses before the Spanish arrived! Come up with an alternative animal if you would like, but be sure it is native.)

- ◇ **Now "write" your own codex.** Codices (the plural of codex) record the exciting lives of their subjects. Come up with your own pictographs and tell the story of your Mixtec life! Use some of the same symbols throughout your story (for instance, come up with one for your home town) and then write the rest of the action!

(Alternative: Have class design a codex based on one character alone.) *This activity can be performed to fulfill TAKS Objectives, as a **writing exercise**.*

- ◇ **Play language detective.**

BACKGROUND: Life on board Spanish ships.

The duties of a typical ship's crew in the 16th century were:

Captain: The commander

All crew members were required to obey his orders without question. The safety of the ship depended upon his ability to lead the crew and keep strict discipline. He administered punishment if there was need for it. Usually, but not always, he was the owner of the ship.

Master: The business manager

He was in control of everything related to money on the ship. He collected fees for the cargo carried on the ship and purchased supplies for the voyage. He took command of the ship if the captain was absent or injured.

Pilot: The navigator

He gave directions for sailing the ship to its destination. To chart the course, he had to be very skilled in math. Because there were very few maps or charts, and what few there were were very rough, he had to be able to tell the ship's location by studying the sun and stars and observing the coastline. It was also his job to watch for signs of weather changes.

Boatswain (Bo'sun): The bookkeeper

He kept a careful record of the ship's cargo in a book called the manifest. He gave the orders to store the cargo so that the heaviest and least valuable went below deck and the lightest and most valuable went on the deck. He calculated the amount of ballast to put aboard to keep the ship properly balanced. When the ship was in port, he was in charge of keeping rats from eating the sails!

Other important crew members:

Steward: In charge of storing and preparing the food aboard the ship.

Barber/surgeon: Gave haircuts, treated wounds.

Caulker: Made sure that the ship was watertight.

Carpenter: required to bring his own tools to do ship repair, construction.

Shipsboy, page: climbed the masts, hoisted sails, heaved the anchor, stood watch at night, etc.

ACTIVITIES:

◇ Discuss each job description. Role play or write a story about a journey from Cadiz, Spain to Havana, Cuba, then to Vera Cruz, Mexico, using the following narrative outline and ideas. *This activity can be performed to fulfill TAKS Objectives, as an **writing exercise**.*

◇ Which crew member would you have chosen to be? Do you think you would have had a choice? What special skills and training do you think each had to have to perform his responsibilities on board the ship? Who do you think was the most important crew member? Why was that person so important to the running of the ship? *This activity can be performed to fulfill TAAS Objectives 1-4, as a **persuasive writing** or a **classificatory exercise**. Corresponds to TEKS 4.19.*

◇ Why do you think women were typically not ship officers or crew members in the 16th century? What do you know about how women were educated at that time? Why? Are things different today? *This activity can be performed to fulfill TAKS Objectives, as a **writing exercise**.*



board the ship and why? *Use the annotated bibliography for these two extra credit exercises.*

◇ **Read Columbus's journal**—there are copies for young people. Pretend you're a sailor on one of Columbus's ships, just before the discovery of the New World. You have been keeping a journal and things at the moment look bad. Write a journal entry. How do you feel? Or, find today's date in Columbus' journal. He sailed from August 1492 to April 1493. What happened in his journal today? How many years ago was that?

◇ **New World Traveler** — *use this narrative outline with your students as a large unit project or break it up and use as smaller exercises. Read the narrative outline with your students:*

Narrative introduction: You are about to leave your home in Cadiz, Spain, on a voyage to the New World. You have decided to give up your old friends for a new life in Nueva España, or colonial Mexico. The colony has been settled for only a few years, but your family really wants to go in spite of the hardships they might meet. You will be traveling to your new home aboard the ship, San Agapito. However, since quite a few other people will be making the trip, storage has become a problem. Because of the limited space, each family can take only eight items.

◇ Below is a list of things you might find useful in the New World. First mark the thing that you wouldn't have at all with an "X". Then rank, in order of usefulness, the eight things you want to take with you and be able to discuss why you chose them:

__folding cot	__warm coat	__beef jerky	__hunting knife	__party dress
__bible	__axe	__flint lighter	__barrel of flour	__wagon
__shovel	__surfboard	__iron pot	__blanket	__fine china
__vegetable seeds	__musket and powder	__table and chairs	__school books	__candles

Narrative part A.

It is May of 1554. You are boarding another ship, this one bound for Spain. After your success in the New World, you've decided it's time to visit family back in Europe. Your ship is a large one, with many passengers. Others on board include priests, prisoners, policemen, tailors, bankers, politicians—it's like a modern airplane or Greyhound bus. All are headed to the Old World. It is a fine day—clear, cool, and with a good wind.

◇ Look on a map or globe and find Vera Cruz. What type of city is it? Why is it so important? *Using geography resources, this activity can be performed to fulfill TAKS Objectives, as a **writing exercise**.*

◇ You are chatting with the passengers. What kinds of jobs do they have? What kind of job does your father or mother have? Is there a computer salesman? List five people on board with you and list what they do for a living. *This activity can be performed as an individual narrative writing exercise or part of the larger unit.*

◇ List four reasons why you're returning to the Old World from the New World. *This activity can be performed as an individual narrative writing exercise or part of the larger unit.*

Narrative part B.

On the sixth day, a big storm is visible in the north. On the seventh day, The storm hits the ship, and hits it hard. The ship begins to sink.

◇ What do you do then? *This activity can be performed as an individual narrative writing exercise or part of the larger unit.*

Part C.

You have been swimming about 25 minutes—the ship was not very far out to sea—when you finally reach land. The next morning you see that the ship is in pieces, and much was lost, but many people made it with you.

Narrative part C.

You have been swimming about 25 minutes—the ship was not very far out to sea—when you finally reach land. The next morning you see that the ship is in pieces, and much was lost, but many people made it with you. Luckily, you have been able to collect some objects that washed ashore.

◇ Your job now is to make sure your family and the others from the ship arrive safely back in Vera Cruz, many miles south down the hot, sandy beach that will, in about 400 years, become the resort of South Padre Island and the northern Mexican coast. There are no Pizza Huts here now. There are many different Indian groups living along this shore, however, and they don't like strangers. You are allowed to take only three of the items from the wreck with you. You have ten minutes to make your plans. List the items you decide to take and tell how you plan to use them to survive. You can choose:

Crossbow	quiver of 10 arrows	knife	beef jerky	chunk of obsidian	dog
large blanket	bag of dried fruit	big hat	ball of string	hunk of rock salt	parrot
15' of rope	pretty red fabric	large gold bar	barrel of water	an extra set of clothes	
	cannon (counts as two)		a tough but empty leather bag		

◇ Now write the whole episode—from Part A to Part C—as a story of your own! What happened in each part? Who else was on board? Were you injured in the wreck? Did anyone make it back? How? *Students may divide into groups or individually write parts of the story, or brainstorm to write the narrative together. This narrative can fulfill **all TAKS writing objectives** using different revision strategies to achieve the final product.*

VAQUERO LEGACY

BACKGROUND: Do you know who the vaquero is? The Vaquero is the Mexican grandfather of the American Cowboy. The word means a man who works with cattle, and comes from the Spanish word for “cow” – *vaca*. The vaquero comes from the ancient Mexican ranching tradition. Some of the earliest ranches in the United States were in South Texas.

The first vaqueros arrived with the first wave of settlement, under Jose de Escandon, in the mid 1700's, though some say earlier. The settlements that sprang up needed industries. **Salt trading** and **cattle ranching** quickly developed to suit that need. The cattle these settlers raised were the parents of what we now call **Texas Longhorns**. In the language of the early Mexican Vaquero, they were called **llaves torsidas** (twisted horns). They were hardy and did well in the hot dry brush of South Texas. They were also skinny and lanky, with a lot of tough hide, which was fine because they were mostly raised for leather.

The vaquero's job was early to bed, early to rise and in the saddle from sunup to sundown. The vaquero's lunch at noon was camp bread (pan de campo), beans, and meat whenever available. The meat was mainly carneseca or jerky. Sometimes he might kill and butcher a deer, rabbit, or armadillo for his meal. His work consisted of everything from **branding** the cattle and driving them to far away markets to, later, greasing windmills and fixing fences. But working cattle was his art...

ACTIVITIES:

◇ **On the Trail.** You are on your way from your family's home near Roma to Falfurrias in order to meet up with a high-dollar rancher, who will be leading his herd of fine cattle along the Chisholm Trail. You stop and set up camp among a small cluster of trees. After you have unhitched your horse and gear, you eat a bit of supper and fall asleep. As dawn draws near, you awake to find your horse and much of your gear gone. Now what?

You take inventory of your gear and sit down to think. You estimate that you have about 100 miles to go to your destination but you are not certain what lies between you and Falfurrias. This is your first time on this route, but you know it's dangerous. You have heard the rumors about tough outlaws roaming this no-man's land, and you know that there are Indians here, and you don't speak their language. You also know that it gets very hot in the daytime and very cold at night.

◇ Your job, if you accept this assignment, is to decide as a group what things you will do in order to survive the over 100 miles of barren land. Because you can't carry everything, you are allowed to take only three things with you. You have ten minutes to make your plans. List your reasons for choosing the items you did and tell how you plan to use them to survive.

knife sharpener	lariat	bandana	hat	thin raincoat	bed roll
bag full of salt	chaps	empty food bag	spurs	compass	knife
pistol and three bullets		watch	silver dollar	canteen	boots

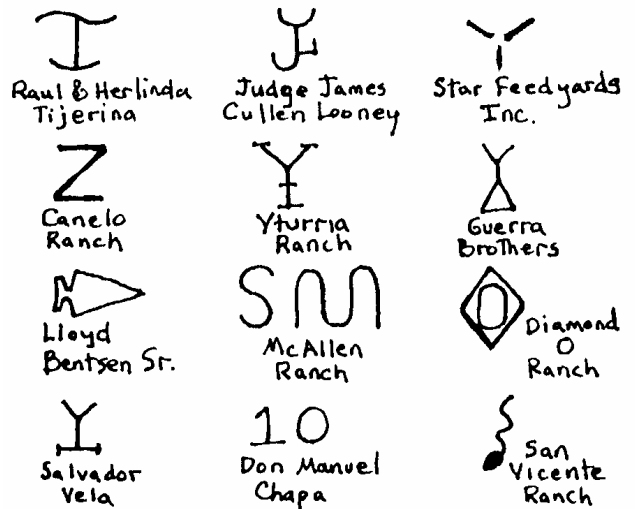
*This activity can be performed as fulfilling TAKS Objectives, as an **writing exercise**, justifying which items should be taken and why.*

◇ **Brands** have been used for centuries to identify cattle. Ancient Egyptians introduced the practice, which then came with the Moors into Spain. The first registered brand in the New World belonged to Hernan Cortés who brought over a herd of cattle of his own. And, along with many ranch practices, brands were adopted as ranching developed in the U.S.

During the spring, the vaquero would round up the cattle and earmark calves. This meant the calf is officially born and on ranch records. In the fall, the young calf was ready to be sold. The yearlings, as year-old calves are called, were delivered to the railroad pens to be sent north. Some were kept behind to bear young. These were then branded and made a part of the rancher's herd.

Brands were important especially in the old days, when different herds grazed all together in the same area. Later, branding made it difficult for cattle rustlers, since it is hard to change brands and branded cattle can only be sold by the owner of the brand.

Original Spanish brands tend to be complicated because of their age—brands often run from one generation to the next, with each generation adding a tick or notch for themselves. Yet the simpler the brand, the better—they are healthier, because they heal faster. Brands often use combinations of letters or symbols and are read from left to right, top to bottom, and outside to inside.



◇ When at the Museum, check the brand stones in the Heritage Courtyard. How do you think they came up with the designs? Discuss the symbolism with a friend or with the class.

Come up with a ranch name that you like (or use your own name if you want to). Now create your own brand!

You might use letters. For example, if your initials are “H” and “C”, this might be your brand:

*This activity can be performed as fulfilling TAKS Objectives, as a **writing exercise**, describing the student's real or imagined ranch. **Other Objectives can be met using appropriate revision techniques.***

THE CHUCKWAGON

BACKGROUND: The **chuckwagon** was the wagon in which cowboys and vaqueros kept their kitchen! A simple wagon with a canvas cover stretched over bows was developed in the 1850's. In the front of the wagon were supplies, a barrel of water, bedding and tools. In the rear of the wagon was a chuck box. The chuck box was a cupboard with shelves and drawers for food and cooking utensils. The hinged door of the chuck box folded down on top of a folding leg to become a worktable or counter space for the cook.

The food that the cook usually had in the chuck box included salt pork, beans, canned tomatoes, onions, potatoes, sugar, molasses, salt, pepper and lard. He also carried flour, coffee and a large jar of sour-

dough. Sourdough bread was a basic food on the trail; it was prepared without yeast, making it longer lasting. Before the driver even started the trip, the cook mixed up batter in a keg. Then the dough was left to sit, fermenting for a day or two. Each day, the cook took some of the batter out of the keg, added lard and soda and kneaded it into dough. Each day he put more salt, water and flour into the jar so the dough fermented all the time. The bread, along with plenty of coffee, beef jerky, and salt pork made up breakfast. The cowboy's lunch was light. Then came dinner: beef jerky or carne guisada, tortillas or pan de campo, beans, and maybe potatoes and onions.

ACTIVITIES:

- ◇ **Plan a cattle trail cookout.** First you will need to find a place for the cookout. Then plan the menu and research how to dress like cattle drivers and cooks. Look for recipes for sourdough bread and biscuits, pan de campo, beans, rice, or other trail recipes. (Don't try this without an adult!!) *This activity can be performed to fulfill TAKS Objectives, as a **writing exercise**, particularly if recipes are solicited from family members.*
- ◇ **Look at your kitchen at home.** How many tools that you see in the kitchen (dishwasher, refrigerator, blender, toaster, etc.) do you think the cook in the chuckwagon had? Did he have a refrigerator? Why do you think so much of the food that the cowboys ate had salt in it? *This activity can be performed to fulfill TAKS Objectives, as a **writing exercise**.*
- ◇ **Imagine that you are the cook on a long trail drive.** Write a story about your cooking and the adventures your team has along the trail. Remember to watch out for Indians, cattle rushers, dry stretches in the trail, stampedes! It all happened! *This activity can be performed as fulfilling TAKS Objectives, as a **writing exercise**, particularly after reading other stories from the SSCED annotated bibliography.*
- ◇ **How has ranching changed over the years?** Interview a retired cowboy or vaquero and write a paper about what changes he's seen! Ask your teacher about "oral history."

VAQUERO & COWBOY WORD ROUND-UP!

Down

1. The Land They work.
2. The sharp attachment to a cowboy boot.
3. A bucking horse.
4. A regiment of horse soldiers.
5. Leather Tool a vaquero or Cowboy Trains his horse with.

Across

1. A cowboy's rope.
2. Leg covering for rough country.
3. A Favorite cowboy game.
4. A pack animal with big ears.
5. A wild, untamed horse.
6. A multipurpose cotton square.
7. A spicy cowboy Food.

Unscramble The given Letters to Find out what language many of these words came from!

Vaquero Word Game:
 Across: 1. Lariat; 2. Chaps; 3. Rodeo; 4. Burro; 5. Mustang.
 Down: 1. Ranch; 2. Spurs; 3. Bronco; 4. Cavalry; 5. Quirt; 6. Bandanna; 7. Chilli.

SERGEANT ALFREDO ‘FREDDY’ GONZALEZ

BACKGROUND: Sergeant Alfredo Gonzalez was a young man who grew up in Edinburg in the 1950’s and 1960’s. “Freddy” went to Edinburg High School where he was an All-District tackle on the EHS Bobcat football team. After graduating in 1965, he joined the United States Marine Corps. He was sent to Vietnam to fight in the Vietnam War. After he had been allowed to return home, he volunteered for a second tour of duty.

In early 1968, his platoon was among the Marines sent to combat the Communist takeover of Hue City. While on route to Hue, his platoon came under fire many times and Freddy was wounded. He rejected medical attention, however, for the sake of those more severely hurt. His platoon continued on, with Freddy in charge in the absence of his regular commander.

Soon, the army progressed to the city itself, where heated battles ensued at the enemy-held Joan of Arc Catholic School. Freddy was in command of his platoon when they were attacked with machine-gun and rocket fire. Freddy then launched a one-man assault with several rocket launchers. Though he destroyed several enemy strongholds, he himself was hit by a rocket launcher and died. His body was sent to Edinburg and buried at Hillcrest Cemetery.

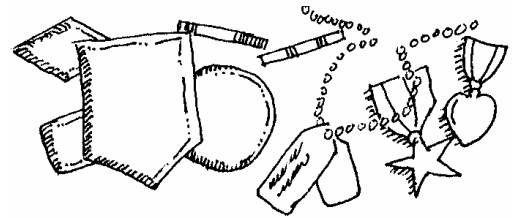
In 1969, Freddy Gonzalez was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the highest award an American can receive. Many memorials remain to Freddy in the Valley, most notably Freddy Gonzalez Blvd. and Freddy Gonzalez School in Edinburg, which was dedicated in 1976.

In Spring, 1995, the United States Navy named its newest battleship the U.S.S. Alfredo Gonzalez. At 505’, it is one of the most powerful military ships in the world.

ACTIVITIES:

- ◇ **Research the war in Vietnam.** How many men and women gave their lives in the battles? Was it a popular war? Why or why not? *This activity can be performed to fulfill TAKS Objectives, as an **writing exercise.***
- ◇ **Where is the USS Gonzalez?** Contact the U.S. Military and have students correspond with military personnel aboard the ship! *This activity can be performed to fulfill TAKS Objectives, as a **personal writing exercise.***

- ◇ Study the medals that have been given to soldiers in the various wars in the United States. Can you identify the Vietnam Service Medal? Draw these medals and provide descriptions of each.



- ◇ Brainstorm what teamwork means to you. Freddy Gonzalez was always known as an outstanding team member—often being a team leader. How does a team work? Is it alright not to be the leader? What would happen if everyone did whatever they wanted? Would it still be a team? How important was Freddy’s team to him? *This activity can be performed to fulfill TAKS Objectives, as a **writing exercise.***

‘The heroism, courage, and dynamic leadership displayed by Sergeant Gonzalez reflected great credit upon himself and the Marine Corps and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.’

*—President Richard M. Nixon
October 31, 1969*

We're here to make learning about history meaningful and fun. If you have comments or suggestions about how to enhance or improve your students' experience at MOSTHistory, jot us a note, or give us a call at 956 383-6911. Thank you for bringing your students to the Museum of South Texas History...



*Founded in 1967 as the
Hidalgo County Historical Museum*

*Special thanks to the educators
and principal of Norma Linda
Treviño Elementary*

*Mrs. Celia Avila
Mrs. Margaret Gonzalez
Mrs. Nora Granado
Mrs. Cynthia Saenz*