

How can I best use these materials to support the Social Studies TEKS for Grade 7?

Students will view their own “place,” South Texas, through the eyes of two perceptive individuals to see the social and political issues, economic activities, and scientific advances in agriculture and science which laid the groundwork for the towns and cities they live in today. Activities involving the writer O. Henry and his stories and the photographer I.N. Hall offer opportunities for multidisciplinary study of the lives and times of South Texans with Language Arts and perhaps Art or Science (photography) classes. The highly motivating content of this issue directly supports the content goals for 7th grade in the following ways:

Key individuals, events, and issues. O. Henry’s stories set in the parts of Texas in which he lived (see Timeline activity) suggest the distribution of population within those regions and factors that caused Texas to change from an agrarian society of sheep and cattle ranches to the present urban society of small towns amidst farmland and hunting leases which support their own economy by serving city neighbors in new ways.

Primary resources such as O. Henry’s stories, Hall’s photographs, and Mrs. Wood’s speech offer students an opportunity to glean important information firsthand, like a historian or social sciences researcher does.

Social Studies skills may be learned and practiced specifically in the “Creating and Using a Timeline” activity.

Integrate Social Studies content with Language Arts and Science. A Language Arts colleague may read O. Henry’s stories aloud (or assign reading to enriched classes) or design a story-writing assignment based on the anecdotes in Mrs. Wood’s speech. The lesson plan link for “A Home for the Texas Horned Lizard” offers opportunity to integrate Social Studies with Science.

Activities support the Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS):

- **History.** Students can apply absolute and relative chronology in the preparation and consideration of the “Creating and Using a Timeline” activity (7.1 B) for the period between Reconstruction and the early 20th century (7.6). Use ITC’s Digital Storytelling Tour and O. Henry’s “Hearts and Crosses” to illuminate changes in cowboy life during the trail drive days vs. ranch life after barbed wire and the railroad (7.6 A). Use O. Henry stories to consider the breadth of issues related to race and ethnicity, such as the blending of cultures through marriage (Rosita McMullen Lane in “A Chaparral Christmas” and Santa McAllister Yeager in “Hearts and Crosses”) and the clash of cultures between Mexican Texans and Anglo-Texans living together in the Nueces Strip (“A Caballero’s Way” or “Jimmy Hayes and Muriel”) (7.7 C). (Refresh your own background by reading Phyllis McKenzie’s subchapter “The Political Landscape”). Use other O. Henry stories for a glimpse at child labor (“A Chaparral Prince”) and the role of women (“Hearts and Crosses,” “The Princess and the Puma”) in turn-of-the-20th-century society.
- **Geography.** Use Hall’s photographs as a primary resource for observing the interaction of physical and human factors in the brush country (7.9 C; 7.10 A and B).
- **Economics.** Use Hall’s photographs as a primary resource to understand the changes within agrarian society and the connections to and need for cities that ultimately led to greater urbanization (7.12 A and C).
- **Government.** For a fun view of the functions of state government in the mythical sense, read aloud the O. Henry story “Art and the Bronco” (7.15 A).
- **Culture.** Use O. Henry stories for a view of the clash of cultures in the Nueces Strip during the period between the U.S. Civil War and the Mexican Revolution (7.19 B). “Jimmy Hayes and Muriel” and “A Caballero’s Way” both show how Texas Rangers viewed Mexican Texans, but how did Mexican Texans view Texas Rangers? Use the I.N. Hall photographs to see clear evidence of the racially hierarchical social order of the day—as seen by a Canadian Texan. Also, his ranch romances show the blend of cultures, especially the marriage of Irish from the San Patricio settlements and the earlier Mexican immigrants to the region (“A Chaparral Christmas Gift,” “The Princess and the Puma”; “A Chaparral Prince,” set in the Fredericksburg area, illustrates the efforts of the German immigrants to make their way in the new state and the attitude of some Anglos toward their different language and customs.
- **Science, technology, and society.** Use stories such as “Hygeia at the Solito” and “The Reformation of Calliope” to compare past and present understanding of diseases such as tuberculosis and alcoholism.
- **Social Studies Skills.** Use the photographs and Mrs. Wood’s speech as artifacts (7.21 A) from which historical information may be sifted by careful study. Organize and interpret information (7.21 C) using the “Creating and Using a Timeline” activity, then analyze that information, make predictions, and draw inferences from it (7.21 B). Consider O. Henry’s point of view and frame of reference of a participant (7.21 B).