

## Small Town Texas Educator's Guide

An educational tool to accompany the exhibition  
Small Town Texas: Photographs by Ricardo Romo.





## **NOTE TO THE EDUCATOR**

This guide was prepared by the Education and Interpretation Department of the Institute of Texan Cultures.

This curriculum study guide will serve as an educational tool to accompany the exhibition, Small Town Texas: Photographs by Ricardo Romo on exhibit at the institute from March 21- June 27 . Designed to enhance a classroom visit to the museum, or to act as an independent resource for educators, the curriculum teaches how stories are told through the exhibition and how to collect and produce materials for your own display.

The guide was written for grades 6-8. The teacher educator can adjust the activities to be grade-appropriate. The content and activities of the guide can easily translate to the Social Studies and Language Arts state requirements, but; it can also be also used across the curriculum. The teacher is encouraged to adapt the units to the individual curriculum, time available, and students' interest and abilities. The unit will take approximately one week to complete.

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## ***Preface***

**T**he photographs of Dr. Ricardo Romo convey the learned observations of a historian. The works in this exhibit examine the historical nature of small towns in Texas. A dedicated observer of the small communities that dot the Texas horizon, Dr. Romo embarked on a photographic journey with the



goal of documenting the cultural and social features of a fading way of life. Poetic landscapes captured in, Floresville, Devine, Pearsall, Kingsbury, Cuero, Yoakum and Nixon explore the distinct local histories of people and places in Texas.

*Exhibition Curator  
Arturo Almeida*

**O**ver the years that I have lived in Texas, I have visited many parts of the state and numerous small towns. Like many travelers, I spent little time getting to know these towns as I passed through them on the way to a bigger city of my destination. I regret that I never really stopped to see what life was like in these small communities. For this exhibit, I spent time appreciating and understanding a bit of the history, culture and uniqueness of selected small towns of this great state. Many of these towns are part of my own personal journey through Texas. These towns represent what is ever so special and great about the Lone Star State.

*Ricardo Romo, 2009*



## ***Small Town Texas Background***

As the president of The University of Texas at San Antonio, Ricardo Romo has traveled across the state on business, passing through countless small towns with no time to stop. As a historian and photographer, he always wanted to spend time in these Texas communities – and over the past 15 months, he did.

During an undergraduate college trip to London, Romo decided to buy a camera and take pictures of the places he visited. In graduate school, the camera became a bigger part of his life, as he set out to document the barrios of East Los Angeles. The bakeries, bridges, people and events were all elements that contributed to the cultural makeup of the community.

Romo undertook a personal journey through 100 Texas small towns, amassing more than 2,000 images. These were places he felt connected to, but never had the opportunity to explore. He may have passed through some of them on a family trip to Garner State Park or the Texas coast; competed there as a high school athlete; or passed through on the way to California for college each year.

“Small Town Texas is bigger than I thought,” Romo said. “Where did their names come from? What were they like in their heyday? Our small towns are a unique treasure and an important part of Texas history. They are part of oil discoveries and mineral wealth. They supplied the cattle drives. Farms brought their cotton and produce to the small town railheads. Before it changes too much, I’m interested in capturing what’s there.” The exhibit includes 37 photographs from communities that Romo has traveled through: Batesville, Castroville, Crystal City, Cuero, Devine, Floresville, Gonzales, Kingsbury, Marfa, Nixon, Pearsall, Pryor and Yoakum.

## Sample Photographs from the Exhibit



Gonzales Emporium, Gonzales, Texas



Antique Capital of West Texas, Baird, Texas



Charlotte, Texas



Katy, Texas

# Lesson Plan

## Creating a Classroom Exhibit

**Grade Level:** 6-8

### Activity Overview

Students create a museum exhibition on the selected topic related to their town.

### Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Choose a theme for a museum exhibition.
- Select appropriate objects and other materials for the exhibition.
- Write concise interpretive materials for the exhibition.

### TEKS

Social Studies:

6.2 A, 6.4 B, 6.7C, 6.15B, 6.18D, 6.21C, 6.22D, 6.22E, 7.19B, 7.21A, 7.21C, 8.10A, 8.11B

Language Arts (6-8):

13C, 13D, 13E, 13F, 13G, 13G, 13I, 15C, 16A, 16B, 16C, 16 D, 16E, 16F, 17B, 18A, 18B, 18C

### Materials

1. Paper and pens or pencils
2. Poster board
3. Other materials as needed for building the exhibition
4. Photos for exhibition
5. Cameras

### Procedure

#### I. Class Activity

Visit the Small Town Texas exhibition at the Institute of Texan Cultures

#### II. Classroom Exercise

Talk about what the students saw in the exhibition:

- Ask students what constitutes a museum and present the definition of a museum.
- Next, ask for their ideas about how museum objects are arranged in their displays.

- Explain that they are usually tied together thematically in an exhibition.
- What is the main theme of the exhibition?
- Ask students to identify the different physical devices used for storytelling in the exhibitions they saw

III. Study the photo with and without reading the caption.

What can you tell from looking at the picture?

How does the caption help explain the picture?

IV. Student Museum Activities:

### ***Group activity***

1. Using the photos and captions in the Handout A, work with the students to figure out which go together. Use context clues to help determine which photos go with the caption.
2. Once the students have an idea how to do this activity, divide the class into three groups. Have each group work with photos and captions in Handout B independently. Students should match pictures with right captions.
3. Once they have completed the exercise, the class can come together to share their results and explain why they matched them the way they did (i.e., they identify relationships). What other information could be included in the text?

### ***Individual Activity***

Find an image of a location in your region and write an expanded caption that describes the significance of the chosen place. To learn more about expanded captions, refer to Glossary and Museum Tips sections.

### ***Museum Tips***

#### Photographs

- Wide-angle shots can help locate a story, because they place a subject in its surroundings.
- Close-up shots can help focus on specific details of the story.
- Shots with action can add information on the activities of the people represented.
- Shots with tools will help provide information on cultural practices, occupations, and technology.

#### Captions

While the role of a good caption is to answer the obvious questions any reader will have about the photograph, a it also may include information on what happened before and after the photograph was taken. If you accept that the average shutter speed is 1/125 of a second, it takes 125 photos to capture even one full second of life at school.

The expanded caption is a mini-news story. An expanded caption adds more information to a one-sentence caption. It gives context and information not immediately apparent in the photo. It can conclude with a direct quote from someone pictured. Designers must plan for extended captions, which can run to 75 words or longer.

## Assessment

Use the rubric below to evaluate students' performance

### Caption Rubric

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**5=outstanding 4=very good 3=acceptable (needs a revision)**

**1 or 2= not yet acceptable (revise thoroughly)**

Skill	Description	Scores and Remarks
<b>Reporting</b>	<p>Accurately answers the 5 W's and H: who, what, when, where, why and how.</p> <p>Caption provides background information insights not obvious in the photo.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>4</p> <p>3</p> <p>2</p> <p>1</p>
<b>Word choice</b>	<p>Employs active verbs.</p> <p>Uses descriptive nouns.</p> <p>Strong, specific words match the action of the photo.</p> <p>Generalities are omitted; every word counts.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>4</p> <p>3</p> <p>2</p> <p>1</p>
<b>Lead-in</b>	<p>Serves as mini-headline for the caption.</p> <p>Draws readers' attention and verbally links the caption and the photo.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>4</p> <p>3</p> <p>2</p> <p>1</p>
<b>Style and grammar</b>	<p>Names are spelled correctly.</p> <p>Spelling is checked and grammar is correct.</p> <p>The summary sentence is written in present tense. Font and size are consistent with section style.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>4</p> <p>3</p> <p>2</p> <p>1</p>
<b>Total Score:</b>		

# Glossary

## *Exhibit Components*

**Museum:** An institution which collects, conserves, researches, exhibits, and interprets objects of lasting interest or value for the purposes of study, education and enjoyment

**Exhibition:** A large public display, as of goods or works of art

**Floor Plan:** Physical layout of exhibition

**Panel:** Display board used for attracting text, images, and objects

**Text:** Written materials that can include:

- Exhibit and Thematic Titles
- Descriptive text
- Captions-descriptions or contextual information used to accompany images
- Labels-descriptions accompanying objects
- Quotations- quotes from the people featured or from related sources
- Credits-names of people or organizations that worked on or helped with the exhibition in some way, or funded it

**Images:** Photographs, photo murals, illustrations, maps, diagrams, or drawings, which may be original or taken from books, magazines, newspapers, flyers, the Internet, or other publications

**Artifacts:** Objects or parts of objects, which can include art work, crafts, things used every day, and occupational materials and tools

**Audio/Visuals:** Recorded audio or visual materials generally presented on a TV monitor, computer screen, or listening station

**Interactives:** Activities to involve the public, using artifacts, computer programs, or other exhibition components

## Handout A

**Directions:** Match the caption to the picture

**Pictures:**



**Captions:**

1. Mrs. T.S. Jennings holding injured rabbit. Mrs. T.S. Jennings and Dragalong, a crippled rabbit of mixed breed. S/Sgt. Margaret Layne took the rabbit for a pet and trained her to use her crippled leg. Dragalong was adopted by Lackland lab personnel as a mascot.
2. Army wives aid Red Cross. Here you see Mesdames C.M. Parkin, C.D. Eddleman and Evan H. Humphrey working with the Third Army group. They meet every Tuesday at the home of one of the members. More than 1,215 garments have been completed since December. Photographed in San Antonio, Texas.

## Handout B

**Directions:** Link the caption and the photo by writing the appropriate caption number next to the picture.

# \_\_\_\_\_



1. Female recruits in bed of military truck. Open end of a military truck shows group of new recruits into the WAF (Women's Air Force) entering Lackland Air Force Base. These women will undergo medical exams, including x-rays, dental, inoculations, blood typing, etc. They will undergo testing to determine their skills before beginning their basic training.

# \_\_\_\_\_



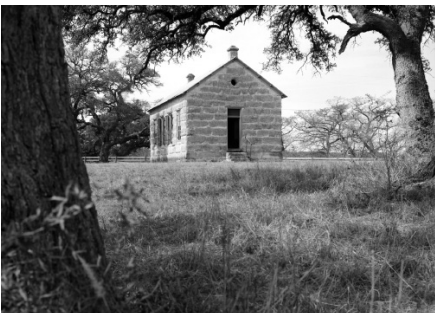
2. Exterior of one-room limestone school, Sisterdale, Texas. Photograph shows the stone structure that was built in 1893.

# \_\_\_\_\_



3. San Antonio Academy football team. Photograph shows 16 unidentified young men of a football or rugby team of the San Antonio Academy (Dr. Seeley's School).

# \_\_\_\_\_



4. San Antonio Traction Company employees posed beside streetcar. Photograph shows San Antonio Traction Company employees posed beside new 500-509 type streetcars that just arrived by train.

## References

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