

# The French in Texas



**Subject and Grade** Texas History and English Language Arts and Reading, 4<sup>th</sup>

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**Time duration** Two or three class periods

**Objective** To give students a broad understanding of early French exploration and settlement in Texas.

**TEKS** ***Social Studies, Grade 4***

(1C), describe the cultural regions in which American Indians lived such as Gulf, Plains, Puebloan, and Southeastern

(2A), summarize motivations for European exploration and settlement of Texas, including economic opportunity, competition, and the desire for expansion

(2B), identify the accomplishments and explain the impact of significant explorers, including Cabeza de Vaca; Francisco Coronado; and René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle, on the settlement of Texas

(2C), explain when, where, and why the Spanish established settlements and Catholic missions in Texas as well as important individuals

(8B), explain reasons why people have adapted to and modified their environment in Texas, past and present,

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such as the use of natural resources to meet basic needs, facilitate transportation, and enhance recreational activities

(19A), differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources such as technology; interviews; biographies; oral, print, and visual material; documents; and artifacts to acquire information about Texas

(19C), organize and interpret information in outlines, reports, databases, and visuals, including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps; and

(19D), identify different points of view about an issue, topic, historical event, or current event

(21D), create written and visual material such as journal entries, reports, graphic organizers, outlines, and bibliographies

### ***Language Arts, Grade 4***

(6A), establish purpose for reading assigned and self-selected texts

(6F), make inferences and use evidence to support understanding

(6G), evaluate details read to determine key ideas

(12B), compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea and genre characteristics and craft

(13C), identify and gather relevant information from a variety of sources

### **Materials**

1. “French Settlement in Texas Questions”
2. Student copies of “La Salle and Fort St. Louis Research and Writing Directions”

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3. "Class Participation" and "Journal Entry" rubrics
  4. Student copies of "The French in Texas - Researching Notes"
  5. Internet access to the following websites:
    - <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/explorers/page//lasalle.shtml>
    - <http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/belle/index.html>
    - <http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/stlouis/index.html>
    - <https://www.thestoryoftexas.com/la-belle/the-exhibit/artifacts>
  6. Notebook paper, pencils, colored pencils, and/or crayons
  7. Student copies of "French Settlement in Texas Test"

**Activities  
and  
procedures**

**Step 1:** Display "French Settlement in Texas Questions" on the overhead projector. Have students number a sheet of notebook paper from 1-10. Read the 10 statements aloud to students and have them write T for true or F for false by the statement's corresponding number on their paper. When they finish, let them know that they will be learning the answers to these questions over the next two days.

**Step 2:** Give each student a copy of "La Salle and Fort St. Louis" research and writing directions and read it aloud with students.

**Step 3:** Display the two grading rubrics and go over them with students before they begin their research.

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Post hard copies of the rubrics in the classroom for student reference.

**Step 4:** Distribute copies of “The French in Texas - Researching Notes.” Have students work with research partners to view the assigned websites and take notes.

**Step 5:** Using their notes, students will work alone or with a partner to create an illustrated journal with several entries.

**Step 6:** Students will answer questions on the “French Settlement in Texas Test.”

**Student Products:**

1. Research notes
2. A journal entry from the point of view of a Karankawa who battled the French settlers of Fort St. Louis, a French person who accompanied La Salle on his journeys, or a Spanish explorer who discovered the remnants of Fort St. Louis after the French had left.
3. A 10-question test on the lesson’s initial questions

**Closure:** Volunteers may share their journal entries with the class.

**Extension Activities**

1. Students may create a Google Slides presentation about La Salle and Fort St. Louis.
2. Students can research other explorers and write journal entries about their experiences.

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3. Students may work together to create a mural showing what happened with La Salle and the French at Fort St. Louis.

**Assessment** “French Settlement in Texas Test” after finishing all other activities.

## French Settlement in Texas Questions

Directions: Number your notebook paper from one to ten. Read through the following statements. Decide whether you think each statement is true or false. Write T for true or F for false on your notebook paper.

1. Rene Robert Cavalier was also called Sieur de La Salle.
2. La Salle was a French explorer who claimed the land around the Mississippi River for France.
3. Fort St. Louis was built in Texas to claim the Gulf of Mexico for France.
4. Fort St. Louis thrived and was later bought by the Spanish government.
5. La Salle sailed back to France in a ship called the Belle.
6. The Belle sank in Matagorda Bay as it returned with more settlers for Fort St. Louis.
7. La Salle was assassinated by one of his own men.
8. The Karankawa helped the settlers of Fort St. Louis after La Salle was gone.
9. The Belle was preserved for over 300 years in the mud in Matagorda Bay.
10. When archaeologists excavated the Belle in 1996 and 1997, bells, axes, skulls and a cannon were found.



## La Salle and Fort Saint Louis Research and Writing Directions

You have been hired by the Historical Publishing Company to write for them. They will use their time machine to send you back to the 17th century. While you are there, you will visit Fort St. Louis, a French settlement in Texas. Your job is to join up with one of the following groups and write about your experiences.

- French settlers of Fort St. Louis
- French explorers accompanying La Salle on his journeys
- Karankawas whose land was taken when Fort St. Louis was built
- Spanish explorers who discovered the remnants of Fort St. Louis

Use these websites to help you with your research:

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/explorers/page/l/lasalle.shtml>

<http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/belle/index.html>

<http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/stlouis/index.html>

<https://www.thestoryoftexas.com/la-belle/the-exhibit/artifacts>

Your journal should include entries from several days and include several significant pieces of information about La Salle and Fort St. Louis. Make sure that there is at least one illustration in your journal and label the illustration with a caption. Also be sure to include in your journal descriptions feelings and thoughts as well as actions.



Evaluation of Class Participation  
La Salle and Fort St. Louis

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Points Possible</b>	<b>Points Earned</b>
Wise use of class time	20	
Appropriate use of computers	20	
Notes recorded from research	20	
Journal turned in on time	20	
Journal completed	20	



Evaluation of Journal Entry  
La Salle and Fort St. Louis

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Points Possible</b>	<b>Points Earned</b>
Entries from several days.	15	
Information about La Salle included	20	
Information about Fort St. Louis included	20	
Illustration with caption	15	
Feelings and thoughts described	10	
Actions described	10	
Neatness and legibility	10	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	

## The French in Texas---Researching Notes

Who was La Salle?

Where did La Salle explore?

Where in Texas was Fort St. Louis established?

What happened at Fort St. Louis?

What happened to the people at Fort St. Louis?

Who were the Karankawa?

What was the Belle?

What happened to the Belle?

How do you think La Salle's men felt about him?

How do you think the Karankawa felt about Fort St. Louis and La Salle?

How do you think the Spanish in Texas felt about Fort St. Louis and La Salle?

How do you think the French felt about Fort St. Louis?

How do you think the French felt about what happened with the Belle?

Other thoughts and ideas.

**French Settlement in Texas**  
**TEST**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Read through the following statements. Decide whether you think each statement is true or false. Write T for true or F for false in the space before each statement.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Rene Robert Cavelier was also called Sieur de La Salle.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ La Salle was a French explorer who claimed the land around the Mississippi River for France.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Fort St. Louis was built in Texas to claim the Gulf of Mexico for France.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Fort St. Louis thrived and was later bought by the Spanish government.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ La Salle sailed back to France in a ship called the Belle.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ The Belle sank in Matagorda Bay as it returned with more settlers for Fort St. Louis.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ La Salle was assassinated by one of his own men.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ The Karankawa helped the settlers of Fort St. Louis after La Salle was gone.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ The Belle was preserved for over 300 years in the mud in Matagorda Bay.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ When archaeologists excavated the Belle in 1996 and 1997, bells, axes, skulls and a cannon were found.