

**Lesson title:** The French in Texas

**By:** Mary Janecek-Friedman

**Subject:** Texas History & English Language Arts and Reading

**Grade Level:** 4

**Rationale:** This lesson will give students a broad understanding of early French exploration and settlement in Texas.

**Materials:**

- Transparency of “French Settlement in Texas Questions”
- Student copies of “La Salle and Fort St. Louis Research and Writing Directions”
- Overhead transparencies of “Class Participation” and “Journal Entry” rubrics
- Student copies of “The French in Texas - Researching Notes”
- Internet access to the following websites:
  - [http://www.civilization.ca/vmnf/explor/expLCD\\_e.html](http://www.civilization.ca/vmnf/explor/expLCD_e.html)
  - <http://www.enchantedlearning.com/explorers/page//lasalle.shtml>
  - <http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/belle/index.html>
  - <http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/stlouis/index.html>
  - <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/belle/lasbelleartifacts.html>
  - <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/belle/lasbellephoto.html>
- Notebook paper, pencils, colored pencils, and/or crayons
- Student copies of “French Settlement in Texas Test”

**Lesson Duration:** 2-3 class periods

**Objectives:**

- Social Studies 113.6 (2A), summarize reasons for European exploration and settlement of Texas and the Western Hemisphere
- Social Studies 113.6 (2B), identify the accomplishments of significant explorers such as Rene Robert Cavelier, Sieur de la Salle and explain their impact on the settlement of Texas
- Social Studies 113.6 (11A), identify the economic motivations for European exploration and settlement in Texas
- Social Studies 113.6 (22A), differentiate between, locate, and use primary and secondary sources such as computer software; interviews; biographies, oral, print, and visual material; and artifacts to acquire information about the United States and Texas; and
- Social Studies 113.6 (23D) create written and visual material such as journal entries
- English Language Arts and Reading 110.6 (10A) use his/her own knowledge and experience to comprehend
- English Language Arts and Reading 110.6 (10C) monitor his/her own comprehension and make modifications when understanding breaks down such as by rereading a portion aloud, using reference aids, searching for clues, and asking questions;

- English Language Arts and Reading 110.6 (10E) use the text's structure or progression of ideas such as cause and effect or chronology to locate and recall information;
- English Language Arts and Reading 110.6 (10I) find similarities and differences across texts such as in treatment, scope, or organization;
- English Language Arts and Reading 110.6 (11B) interpret text ideas through such varied means as journal writing, discussion, enactment, media;
- English Language Arts and Reading 110.6 (13D) interpret and use graphic sources of information such as maps, graphs, timelines, tables, and diagrams to address research questions.

**Activities:**

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. 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:**

- Research notes
- 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.
- A 10 question test on the lessons initial questions

**Closure:**

Volunteers may share their journal entries with the class.

**Modifications:**

- For students who need the structure, a graphic organizer may be provided to help in their research.

- Journal entries may be typed in a word-processing program or hand written. For students who have difficulty with written work, a visual journal (similar to a comic strip) may be created.

**Assessment or Evaluation:**

Have students take “French Settlement in Texas Test” after finishing all other activities.

**Extensions:**

- Students may create a PowerPoint presentation about La Salle and Fort St. Louis.
- Students can research other explorers and write journal entries about their experiences.
- Students may work together to create a mural showing what happened with La Salle and the French at Fort St. Louis.

Mary Janecek-Friedman  
Cypress Elementary School  
Leander ISD, Leander Texas

## 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 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.



## 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, or
- Spanish explorers who discovered the remnants of Fort St. Louis

Use these websites to help you with your research:

[http://www.civilization.ca/vmnf/explor/explcd\\_e.html](http://www.civilization.ca/vmnf/explor/explcd_e.html)

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

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

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

<http://www.thc.state.tx.us/belle/lasbelleartifacts.html>

<http://www.thc.state.tx.us/belle/lasbellephoto.html>

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.



## 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.

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>	

## 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.

French Settlement in Texas  
TEST Answer Key

1. T

2. T

3. F

4. F

5. F

6. T

7. T

8. F

9. T

10. T