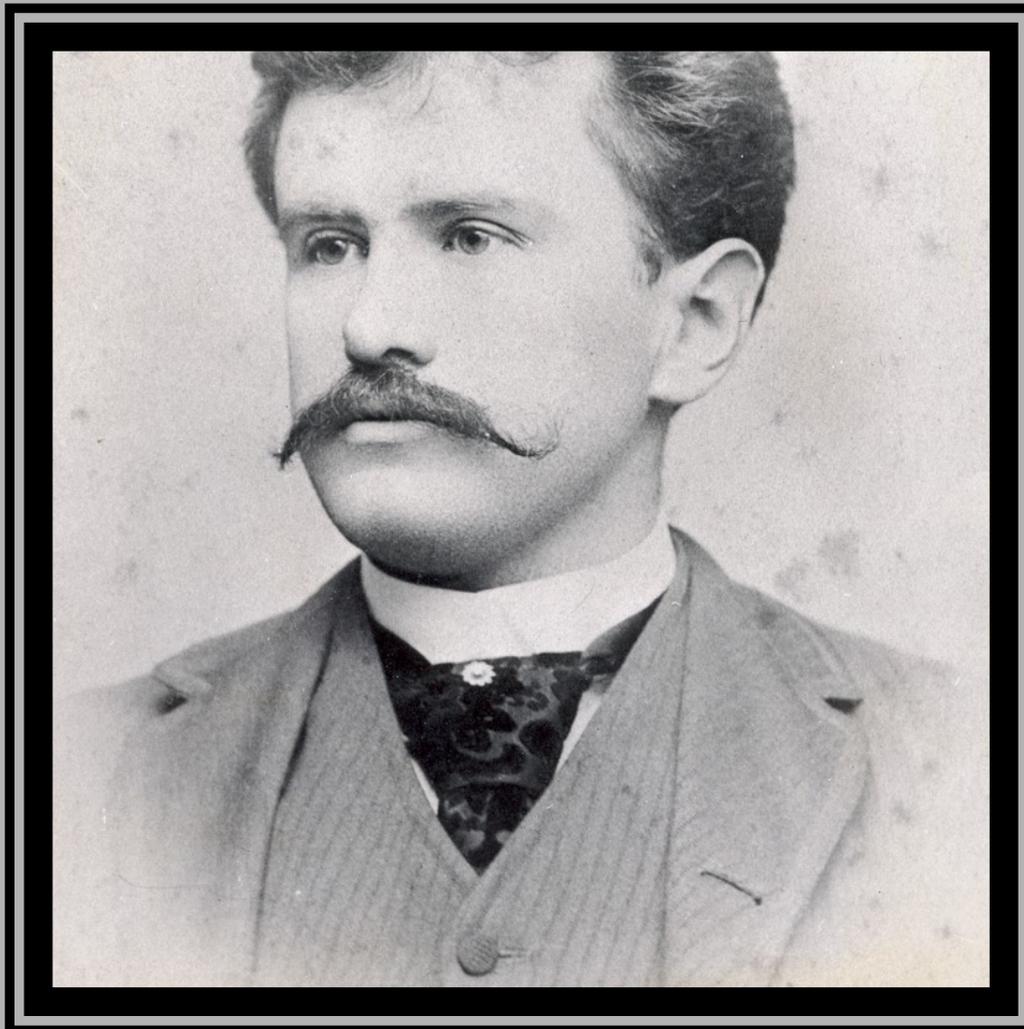


# Spirit of Texas Storyteller

## Traveling Trunk

Lesson Plans, Grades K-5

### O. Henry's Early Texas Experience (Late 1800s)



409 East 5th Street

Austin, Texas 78701

Open 12 to 5pm, Wednesday - Sunday

Admission: Free

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*O. Henry*

THE O. HENRY MUSEUM

EST · 1934

# Trunk Contents

## Lesson Plans

- Life on a Texas Sheep Ranch
- Tell Your Texas Story

## Learning Artifacts

- Spurs
- Drop Spindles
- Wool
- Rope
- Leather
- Cow horns (to rope)
- Cowboy Hat
- Vaquero Hat
- Wool Cards

## Books

- Joe and Billy by W.S. Porter
- The Gift of the Magi by O. Henry and Sonja Danowski
- Stories for Young People by O. Henry
- The Legend of the Poinsettia by Tomie dePaola
- The Legend of the Bluebonnet by Tomie de Paola
- The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush by Tomie dePaola

## Images

- Assorted

## Lesson Plan Resources

- Markers
- Sheep Crafts
- Sheep Wool Game

# Introduction

## Goal

William Sydney Porter (O. Henry) came to La Salle County, Texas in 1882 to live with Mr. and Mrs. James Hall and their 4 sons. He was 20 years old. Life on a Texas ranch must have been very different from his old life as a pharmacist in Greensboro, North Carolina! William learned all about ranching and the culture in this Texas frontier country. It also gave him some time to develop his talents as a cartoonist, and may have inspired him to write, Joe and Billy. Joe and Billy is special, as it was his only (long unpublished) story for children, and you can find it right in our Sprit of Texas Storyteller Trunk! This trunk explores the early Texas ranching life that Porter experienced when he first arrived in Texas. Life on a Texas ranch in the late 1800s, discovering the roots of Texas cowboy culture, and how to tell our own Texas stories can all be discovered with materials in this trunk.

## Background Information

The early settlers to Texas came from many different places. As a matter of fact, Texas has had 6 different flags fly over parts of the current territory of Texas: Spain, France, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, the Confederate States of America, and the United States of America. Even before early Spanish settlers arrived in the 1500s, Texas had been inhabited by people from before 12,000 BCE. These Native American Tribes were still living in Texas as Spain attempted to create their new colony and many settlers and Native Americans died during this time of conflict as the Spanish moved into territory that was already inhabited. The Spanish sent missionaries along with the Conquistadors to attempt to convert Native Peoples to Christianity and indoctrinate them into Spanish culture.

Eventually, this new land called Mexico also fought for independence from Spain, and won it in 1821. At that time, Texas became a largely unsettled territory of Mexico and conflict still existed between new settlers and the Native Americans who lived there. Mexico encouraged settlers to also come from the United States and new settlers began arriving from the United States in 1824 with Stephen F. Austin. But these settlers too became unsatisfied with how the Mexican government managed their territory and began a movement for independence as well. By 1836, Texas had declared its independence from Mexico. This opened up a new wave of immigration from the United States, and changed the landscape yet again. Eventually, Texas became the 28th state in 1845. The Texas that greeted William Sydney Porter in 1882 was still a rough territory with growing towns and cities. The economy was largely fueled by farming and ranching which had helped Texas to recover from the depressed economy of the Civil War. This trunk contains items and lesson plans to explore the culture he encountered, how it inspired his stories, and can inspire your story too!

**VISIT** the O. Henry House Museum to learn more about his life and Texas adventures in the late 1800s.

# Lesson Plan 1

## Life on a Texas Sheep Ranch

When William Sydney Porter arrived in Texas (1882), he was promptly introduced to ranching, which was a driving force in the economy for Texas at that time. The Texas landscape was rugged and tough to exist in, but many Texas cowboys were working hard and making a living in this industry. African Americans, Hispanic vaqueros, Anglo settlers, and some women all made the cowboy life their own. The Spanish introduced livestock, including cattle and sheep, in Mexico as early as the 1500s. These very tough Spanish cattle were the ancestors of the famous Texas Longhorn Cattle. The tough sheep had their place on the ranch as well and provided much needed wool and mutton. However, as German and Scottish settlers came from to Texas in the 1850s, they brought their own sheep or bred them with the original Spanish herds. At this point, wool became more important than mutton, and most of the sheep were used to make wool for mills in New England. At first, sheep ranching was done using the *partido* system, in which the owners hired herders to tend the animals. These *vaqueros* and *pastores* tended the sheep under contracts for wages. Eventually, as cattle ranches became larger, sheep herds were mixed in with the cattle and all were kept in the same fenced in pastures. The fenced pastures reduced the need for sheep herders.

Sometimes special crews were hired to help during lambing and shearing season as all of the work needed to be completed at the same time, and often, there were more than 1000 sheep on a ranch. The early shears were actually scissors, but as time went on, these were later replaced with electric clippers. The work was hard, but this was also a time that the community came together to help each other and socialize.

**Time required:** 60-90 minutes

**Subject Areas: Social Studies:** History, Economics, Government, Culture

## Learning Objectives

After completing this lesson plan, students will be able to:

1. Identify different tools that ranchers used to take care of sheep and harvest their wool.
2. Gain experience using tools to make yarn from wool as people did in late 1800s in Texas and still do today.
3. Analyze, categorize, and compare historic tools with those tools we use today.

## Steps

1. Begin lesson by placing tools on table and placing photographs beside them. Use the photographs as clues to identify how the tools are used.
2. Discuss how we use these same tools today and where we use them. Are there any tools that are no longer in use?
3. Ask students how ranching methods have changed due to changing technology, culture, and economic needs. We still need wool today, but where do we get it and how is it processed?

# Lesson Plan 1 Activity—Spinning Yarn!

## You will need:

1 Wooden Drop Spindle (supplies in trunk)

1 section of wool (supplies in trunk-please keep section of wool)

## Time: 15-20 minutes

1. Cut 4 inch section of wool and gently pull on the ends of the section to stretch it out without separating it completely. It should be pulled apart and stretched but still be a single piece (this takes practice).
2. Place end section of wool around the hook as shown in video. Begin spinning the drop spindle.
3. As shown in the video, slide the yarn off of the hook and wrap it around the base of the drop spindle as it gets too long. Then pull more yarn up and spin.

You made your own yarn from unfinished wool and can take it home to show it off! In the 1800s, this job could keep you busy for a while and provided much needed yarn to make clothing, blankets, and other essential items. The whole process of harvesting wool from the sheep, cleaning it, spinning it, and then fabricating clothing with the yarn is very time consuming. As with many other products, changing technology has allowed for easier harvesting, spinning, and fabricating with wool such as electric clippers, spinning wheels, looms, and textile mills.

## To access lesson on video:

## Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

Kindergarten: **§113.11**-2a, 2b, 5b, 6a, 6b, 6c, 7a, 7b, 11a, 11b, 12a, 12b, 13a, 13b, 13c, 14a, 14b, 14c

Grade 1: **§113.12**-6b, 6c, 7a, 7b, 8a, 8b, 8c, 9a, 9b, 9c, 10a, 10b, 16a, 16b, 16c, 17a, 17b, 17c

Grade 2: **§113.13**-3a, 3b, 6c, 7a, 7b, 7c, 7d, 9a, 9b, 10a, 10b, 10c, 17b, 18a, 18b, 18e

Grade 3: **§113.14**-2a, 2b, 2c, 3c, 4b, 7a, 7b, 7c, 14a, 16b

Grade 4: **§113.15**-2a, 3a, 3b, 3d, 7a, 8a, 8b, 8c, 9a, 9b, 10b, 12a, 12b, 12c, 12d, 12e, 12f, 13c, 14b,

Grade 5: **§113.16**-1a, 4c, 4f, 4g, 7a, 7b, 8a, 8b, 8c, 9a, 9b, 10a, 12a, 12b, 13a, 13b, 13c, 13d, 13e

# Lesson Plan 2

## Tell Your Texas Story

When O. Henry ( William Sydney Porter) came to Texas in 1882, he lived on a ranch near San Antonio, Texas in LaSalle County with his friends, Mr. and Mrs. Hall. During this period, he surely discovered many new characters and customs that were very different from his life back in North Carolina. Ranch life must have been very different from his former work as a pharmacist in his Uncle Clark's drugstore. The rugged landscape, Native Americans, vaqueros, newer ranchers from back East, and multitudes of colorful characters he encountered influenced his many Texas ranch stories. O. Henry is perhaps most famous for being skilled at observing the people and the environment around him and turning these observations into wonderful stories that captured life in the United States during his lifetime.

**Time required:** 60-90 minutes

**Subject Areas:** Social Studies, Fine Arts

## Learning Objectives

After completing this lesson plan, students will be able to:

1. Construct a simple storyline using prompts or photographs.
2. Observe their environment and use these observations to construct a story.
3. Practice different methods for storytelling.

## Steps

1. Begin lesson by talking briefly about the importance of storytelling in preserving history, culture, and memories.
2. Read a few of the short stories from the trunk or your own classroom.
3. Place photographs from trunk out on tables and have students discuss in small groups or as a class what they observe in the pictures. This is a great time to note the setting for the pictures, talk about what is happening in them, and imagine the stories behind the pictures.

**To listen to some stories:**

# Lesson Plan 2 Activity— Construct Your Texas Story

## You will need:

Texas Picture Prints (supplies in trunk)

Paper

Pencil (supplies in trunk)

Optional: Smartphone for making video stories or recorded stories, markers, colored pencils, or stickers for making picture stories

## Time: 40-60 minutes

1. Direct students to choose either a Texas Picture Print, an item or items from our Storyteller Trunk, or bring an item from home that they would like to tell a story about.
2. Have students construct a story using the their item for inspiration. The story should include a setting, main character/characters, and a basic plot.
3. Students may construct their stories by writing them out, acting them out, making a picture story, or recording their story according to instructor preferences.

Encourage children to make their own Texas stories by imagining the stories behind what they observe just like William Sydney Porter did or maybe just to preserve memories. Stories are part of all of our lives. They entertain us, preserve our history, and help us learn. We can experience stories through movies, books, video games, songs, comic strips, and more. Best of all, storytelling is fun!

## Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills

Kindergarten: **§110.2**-1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 2d, 2e, 3a, 3b, 3c, 4, 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e, 6f, 7a, 7b, 7c, 7d,

Grade 1: **§110.3**-1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 5, 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e, 6f, 6g, 6h, 6i, 7a, 7b, 7c, 7d, 7e, 7f, 8a, 8b, 8c

Grade 2: **§110.4**-1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 4, 5, 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e, 6f, 6g, 6h, 6i, 7e, 8a, 8b, 8c, 8d, 11a, 11b

Grade 3: **§110.5**-1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 4, 5, 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e, 6f, 6g, 8a, 8b, 8c, 8e, 8d, 10c, 11a, 11b, 11c

Grade 4: **§110.6**-1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 4, 5, 6f, 7e, 8a, 8b, 8c, 8d, 11a, 11b, 11c, 11d,

Grade 5: **§110.7**- 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 4, 5, 6d, 6e, 8a, 8b, 8c, 8d, 10a, 10b, 10c, 11a, 11b, 11c, 11d, 12a