

Cemetery Program

Pre-Visit Activities

1. Discuss the notion of a family tree with the class. Create one for a famous Texan or have the students create their own. Family plots in the cemetery group family gravestones together so that it is easy to see the connections and time frame.
2. Using the life span of a famous Texan, use math skills to determine his/her age at certain times. These may include their age during the revolution, statehood, civil war, or at the time of their death.
3. The Texas State Cemetery in Austin is the final resting place for many of the state's most notable sons and daughters. There are tour guides and site maps available as well as activities for the classroom. Contact the cemetery at www.texasstatecemetery.com or 909 Navasota Street, Austin, TX 78702.
4. Veterans of wars in the United States have special markers on their gravesites commemorating their military participation. Discuss the wars which have veterans represented in Morton Cemetery. Predict what may be found on your visit to the cemetery (cemetery was founded in 1825). (Note: The only veteran of the American Revolution buried in Fort Bend County is Alexander Hodge. He is buried in the small Hodges Bend Cemetery located near Marcario Garcia Middle School.)

You can find graves of soldiers from the following wars:

Texas War for Independence – 1836

Civil War – 1861-1865

Jaybird/Woodpecker War – 1889

World War I – 1914-1918

World War II – 1941-1945

Korean War – 1950-1953

Viet Nam – 1961-1973

Gulf War – 1991

Cemetery Program

Post-Visit Activities

1. Have students list some of the decorations and sayings they noticed on the tombstones at the cemetery. Note the differences between the older headstones and the newer ones. Discuss the decorations seen and decide some of the reasons for them. Try to decipher the meaning of some of the symbols, such as the clasped hands or the crown.
2. Create a tombstone for a famous Texan, a member of the community or a character from a book the class has read. Decorate it with symbols that represent his or her life. Explain why you chose those symbols.
3. An epitaph is the engraving on a tombstone that commemorates the life of that person. Write epitaphs for Texas heroes that describe the person's impact and contributions to the state. Be descriptive but factual. Explain why you chose those descriptions for them.
4. Have students write an epitaph for themselves, explaining their choice of descriptive terms and symbols.
5. Design a new tombstone for Jane Long, the Mother of Texas, or Mirabeau B. Lamar, the state's 2nd president and the Father of Texas Education. Have a class discussion on appropriate symbols for the graves of these two important Texans from our area.
6. Many families visit cemeteries on Memorial Day or have a special Decoration Day to clean up the area. Survey parents to learn about each student's family traditions concerning their loved ones. Share the information orally or make a class book with the stories.
7. National cemeteries play an important role in our nation. Research the history of the national cemeteries, such as Arlington, and some of the rituals that occur there. Create a state or national map that shows the location of these memorials.

Handout for Cemetery Activities (please make enough copies for each student if you want to use these on your field trip and bring pencils)

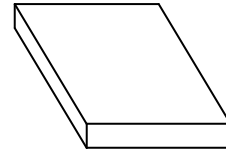
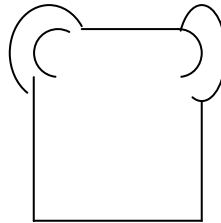
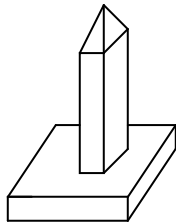
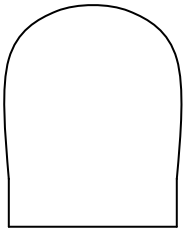
Name _____

1. Locate these graves and find out when each person was born and died:

Mirabeau B. Lamar	Jane Long	Robert Gillespie	Walter Moses Burton
Born _____	Born _____	Born _____	Born _____
Died _____	Died _____	Died _____	Died _____

You might need to do some subtraction to work this out!

2. These are styles of tombstones – write the dates you find on each type of stone – this will tell you when they were popular in Texas.



TABLET _____ OBELISK _____ BLOCK _____ LAWN _____

What type of stone is used for each of these? _____

Why do you think they are different shapes? _____

3. Find a tombstone that has a lamb statue or drawing on it. Look at the dates of the person buried at this tombstone. Fill out the name and date:

Name _____ Born _____ Died _____

By looking at the dates of birth and death, you can figure out that the lamb means that the person who was buried there was probably a _____.

4. Find at least one grave of a person who served in the military. (Many gravesites have a metal marker telling the date and branch of service)

Name _____ Date of death _____

Type of Military service _____ Which war? _____

Cemetery Scavenger Hunt (please make one copy for each student if you want to use these on your field trip – and bring pencils)

Name _____

For each letter below, find a grave stone that has a last name beginning with that letter of the alphabet – include date of death.
(Example: A = Adams, 1888)

A _____

N _____

B _____

O _____

C _____

P _____

D _____

Q _____

E _____

R _____

F _____

S _____

G _____

T _____

H _____

U _____

I _____

V _____

J _____

W _____

K _____

X _____

L _____

Y _____

M _____

Z _____

Make sure that you look at the tombstones – many are true works of art!

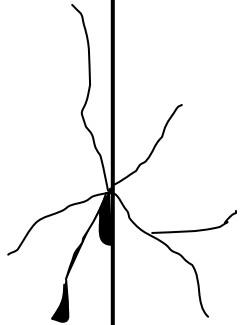
EPITAPH

NAME _____

Here Lies

Born: _____

Died: _____



TOMBSTONE

NAME _____

