

Substitute Guide: The Four Regions of Texas

Grade: 4 **Subject:** Social Studies (Texas studies) **Time:** ~45 min core + ~15 min extension Social Studies

Learning goal (plain language)

Students learn that Texas has **four natural regions** — Mountains and Basins, Great Plains, North Central Plains, and Coastal Plains — and that the **geography** of each region (its land, weather, and water) shapes **how people there live and work**. They read four short summaries, look at a simple map and a table, then **compare** two regions and write a short evidence-based explanation. **You do not need a Texas-geography background to run this.** Everything students need is printed in their packet, and you may read any part aloud. This is a Grade 4 packet, so directions are short and there is lots of room to write.

Standards alignment

Framework: 19 TAC Chapter 113 (Grade 4 Social Studies).

- **Primary (geography / Texas regions):** identifying the natural regions of Texas and describing how physical geography and climate shape settlement and ways of life in each region.
- **Skills (social studies skills):** using and interpreting a simple map and a table to locate regions and compare them with evidence.

Provisional — pending educator verification against the current official TAC source.

(Standards are paraphrased here, not quoted, and no specific section number is asserted. Please confirm the codes and wording against your official source. Prompts are kept neutral and factual.)

Setup Before class (5 min)

- Count and hand out one **student packet** per student.
- Confirm each student has a **pencil**. No calculators, computers, or textbooks are needed.
- Write the date on the board and remind students to fill in the name line.
- Keep the **answer key** with you — it is a separate file and is **not** in the student packet.

Materials What's needed

- Printed student packet (4–6 pages) per student.
- Pencil per student.
- This guide and the separate answer key (teacher only).
- No technology, no calculator, no textbooks, no safety hazards.

Timing Suggested pacing (~45–60 min)

Segment	Time	What students do
Start — Find It on the Map	5 min	Q1–Q2 warm-up

Segment	Time	What students do
Build — Read the region profiles	10 min	Read the four profiles, word bank, map (Figure 1), Table 1
Apply — Read the map & table	20 min	Q3–Q8 (map, table, compare, cause/effect, fact/opinion, evaluate)
Explain — CER	10 min	Q9 claim/evidence/reasoning comparing two regions
Close — ACE	5 min	Articulate / Connect / Extend
Continue — early finishers	optional ~15 min	"Which region fits the job?"

Script Read aloud to start

"Today's work is a paper reading activity called *The Four Regions of Texas*. Texas has four natural regions: Mountains and Basins, the Great Plains, the North Central Plains, and the Coastal Plains. You will read four short summaries, look at a map and a table, and answer with a pencil. Work by yourself — no computers or books. Read the parts in order; if one question is tricky, skip it and come back. Write in full sentences when it asks you to explain. Everything you need is in the packet, so you do not need to know any outside facts. You may quietly read aloud to yourself. Put your name, class, and date at the top now. You have about 45 minutes; raise your hand if you need help with a word."

Support When students ask for help

- **You may read any part aloud** to a student or the class.
- If they are stuck comparing, point them to **Table 1** — the four regions sit side by side there.
- For cause and effect (Q6), point to a region's **profile**: the land/weather is the cause, the work is the effect.
- For "fact or opinion" (Q7), point to the **Word Bank**: an opinion says what someone feels or likes (like "best" or "prettier").
- Encourage the printed **sentence stems and starters** for Q6, the CER (Q9), and ACE.
- Do **not** give answers; prompt with "What does the packet say?" or "What is the land or weather like there?"
- It is fine if a student cannot finish the optional early-finisher task.

Access Accommodations & language support

- **Read-aloud** of any passage or question is allowed for all students.
- Point students to the **sentence stems** and the **Word Bank** (region, geography, landform, climate, plain, basin, ranching, port, fact, opinion are all defined for them).
- **Glossary tip**: if a word is hard, read its Word Bank meaning aloud and give a quick example ("a *basin* is a low, dry valley — like a big dip in the land between mountains").
- Extended time is fine; the core can stop after Q9 if time runs short.
- Students may answer in short phrases if writing full sentences is a barrier, as long as the idea is clear.
- The packet is grayscale-safe — it prints and reads clearly in black and white, with roomy writing space and short directions for younger readers.

Tools Allowed & not allowed

Allowed: pencil, the printed packet, quiet self-read-aloud. **Not needed / not allowed**: calculator (no math required), phones, computers, textbooks or outside sources (everything needed is in the packet).

Collect at the end: Collect every packet, whether finished or not, with names on them. Stack them for the teacher. Note on a sticky how far most students got and any words or questions that caused confusion.

Answer key: The **answer key is a separate file** (answerkey.html) and is for the teacher only. Please do not hand it to students.

Teacher follow-up (for the returning teacher)

Watch for students who assume the four regions are the same (Q5/Q8) and for those who mix up the Great Plains and the North Central Plains (both have "Plains" in the name). A quick next-day sort of the four land/climate descriptions, plus reviewing the "geography → how people work" link for each region, would reinforce this well. The CER (Q9) responses show who can compare two regions and cite a profile, the map, or Table 1 as evidence.

G04_SOC_TexasRegions_01 — The Four Regions of Texas Substitute Guide