

Substitute Guide: Texas Turning Point — The Railroads Arrive

Grade: 7 **Subject:** Social Studies (Texas History) **Time:** ~45 min core + ~15 min extension Social Studies

Learning goal (plain language)

Students learn that the spread of **railroads across Texas in the 1870s–1880s** was a **turning point** — an event after which things were clearly different. They read two short summaries and study a timeline, then practice **cause and effect** (what led to the railroads, and what changed because of them) and **source analysis** (who made a source, when, and what kind it is). They finish by writing a short evidence-based explanation. **You do not need a history background to run this.** Everything students need is printed in their packet.

Standards alignment

Framework: 19 TAC §113.19 (Grade 7 Social Studies, Texas History).

- **Primary — 7.6 (era/history):** major events and developments in Texas from 1865 to the early 1900s, including railroad expansion and its effects on population, towns, and ranching.
- **Skills — 7.21 (social studies skills):** analyzing sources and applying cause-and-effect and sequencing to interpret historical change.

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

(Standards are paraphrased here, not quoted. Please confirm the codes and wording against your official source. Prompts are kept non-partisan and in historical context.)

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 — Notice & Predict	5 min	Q1–Q2 warm-up
Build — Read the sources	5–10 min	Read Source A, Source B, word bank, timeline; Q3
Apply — Analyze the sources	20–25 min	Q4–Q8 (source obs., cause/effect chain, fact/interpretation/opinion, compare, evaluate)
Explain — CER	5–10 min	Q9 claim/evidence/reasoning
Close — ACE	5 min	Articulate / Connect / Extend
Continue — early finishers	optional ~15 min	"Remove a cause and predict"

Script Read aloud to start

"Today's assignment is a paper history investigation called *Texas Turning Point: The Railroads Arrive*. You will work by yourself with just a pencil — no computers or textbooks. First read the two short summaries and study the timeline. Then answer the questions in order; if one is tricky, skip it and come back. Write in complete sentences where it asks you to explain. Everything you need is printed in the packet — you do not need to know any outside facts. You may quietly read the passages aloud to yourself. Put your name, class period, and date at the top now. You have about 45 minutes; raise your hand if you need help understanding a word."

Support When students ask for help

- **You may read any part aloud** to a student or the class.
- If they are stuck on a cause or effect, point them to **Source A** and the **timeline** — the ideas they need are visible there.
- For "fact / interpretation / opinion" (Q6), point to the **Word Bank** definitions; an "opinion" usually states a preference, an "interpretation" says "probably" or "because."
- Encourage the printed **sentence stems** for the CER (Q9) and ACE sections.
- Do **not** give answers; prompt with "What do the sources say?" or "Did that come *before* or *after* the railroads?"
- 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** (definitions of turning point, cause, effect, fact, interpretation, opinion are provided).
- Extended time is fine; the core can stop after Q9 if time runs short.
- Students may answer in 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.

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 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 the common mix-up between a **cause** (before) and an **effect** (after) in the Q5 chain, and for students marking a reasoned "probably..." statement as a plain fact in Q6. A quick next-day discussion sorting a few statements into fact / interpretation / opinion, plus reviewing why railroad towns grew while skipped towns shrank (Q8), would reinforce this well. The CER (Q9) responses show who can cite a source or timeline date as evidence.

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