In a word
The name Texas is from the Caddo Indian word "Tejas," meaning friends or allies. The state’s motto is "Friendship."

Lay of the land
Texas is the second-largest state (by area) and second most populated of the 50 states. If it were a country, Texas would be the 40th largest, behind Chile and Zambia. The diverse landscape includes coastal swamps, piney woodlands, grassy plains and hills, desert and the mountains of the Big Bend. Many people associate Texas with deserts, but less than 10 percent of the land is desert.

Cowboys
Cattle have played a long and important role in the Texas economy and are often associated with the images of rodeos and cowboy. In the 1800s, the Spanish/Mexican vaqueros (cowboys) were adopted when the Republic of Texas became the 28th state.

Did you know?
• Texas is the only state to have had six different nations fly their flags over it.
• The King Ranch in Texas is bigger than the state of Rhode Island.
• More wool comes from Texas than from any other state.
• The beverage Dr Pepper was invented in Waco in 1885.
• The first suspension bridge in the U.S. was the Waco Bridge crossing the Brazos River. Built in 1870, it is still used by pedestrians.
• The state’s cattle population is estimated at 16 million.
• Edwards Plateau in west-central Texas is the top sheep-growing area in the country.
• The Aransas Wildlife Refuge is the winter home of North America’s last flock of whooping cranes.
• Texas has been the birthplace of two U.S. presidents:
  • George W. Bush is elected president of the United States.
  • Lyndon B. Johnson is 36th U.S. president (1963–1969)

A brief overview of historic events
For millennia, various tribes of native Americans occupied the region that is now Texas. Some of the major tribes that existed at the time of the first European exploration included the Apache, Atamak, Atakapa, Caddo, Cherokee, Choctaw, Comanche, Creeks, Kostati, Kora, Kowa, Muskogee, Pueblos, Quapaw, Shawnee, Waco and Wichita.

1685: French explorer René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle claims Texas for France. He establishes Fort St. Louis at Matagorda Bay.
1716-1789: Spain establishes several Catholic missions and the towns of San Antonio, Goliad and Nacogdoches.
1812: The Gutierrez-Magee Expedition crosses the Sabine from Louisiana in a movement against Spanish rule in Texas.
1830: Mexico bans emigration into Texas.
1836: Mexico expels the United States. The Texas Declaration of Independence.
1843: Mexican-Texan truce is signed.
1861: Texas joins the Confederacy States of America.

The monarch butterfly became the state insect in 1995. The monarch is the only species of butterfly that does not hibernate, but migrates in changing seasons.

The bluebonnet is a hardy winter annual native to Texas and commonly seen along sunny roadsides throughout the state.

SOURCES: World Book Encyclopedia; World Book Inc.; www.50states.com; www.history-timelines.org

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The large white star was first used on Texas flags in the 1830s.

The bluebonnet is a hardy winter annual native to Texas and commonly seen along sunny roadsides throughout the state.