

# Texas Today *Foundations*

## Unit 2: Age of Contact

Name:  Date:  Period:

The Spanish and Indigenous people we have been studying lived over 500 years ago. Even though it's been centuries since they walked the land we now call Texas, we can still see remnants of their influence on the world around them just by looking at some of the geographic names on a current Texas map.

**Directions:** Read the short passages about several Texas locations on the following page. Use the clues in each passage to identify locations on the map below. Circle or highlight the name of the correct location in each multiple-choice box.

**C**

- Llano Estacado
- Palo Duro Canyon
- El Paso

**D**

- Llano Estacado
- Palo Duro Canyon
- El Paso

**E**

- Waxahachie
- El Paso
- Nacogdoches

**F**

- Waxahachie
- El Paso
- Nacogdoches

**B**

- Llano Estacado
- Palo Duro Canyon
- El Paso

**A**

- Waxahachie
- Llano Estacado
- Rio Grande

## The Llano Estacado

The Llano Estacado is a **geographic landform** that contains primarily grasslands and **mesas**, or flat-topped hills with steep sides. This area covers a large portion of the **Great Plains** of Texas. **Francisco Vazquez de Coronado** named the Llano Estacado. The past translation is the “**palisaded plains**” or “**stockaded plains**.” The mesas likely provided **protection from outside threats**, similar to a palisade or stockade. In modern Spanish, *llano estacado* translates to “the staked plains.”

## The Palo Duro Canyon

The Palo Duro Canyon is a **geographic landform** that is also located in the **Great Plains** in the **Panhandle** of Texas. It is the **second largest canyon in the United States**, after the Grand Canyon. The term *palo duro* means “**hard wood**” in Spanish. The Palo Duro Canyon received its name from **Spanish explorers** who passed through the area and noticed all the **mesquite** and **juniper trees** that grow there.

## The Rio Grande & El Paso

The **large river that forms the border between Texas and Mexico** has had many names over the centuries. The name that has continued to the present day – **Rio Grande** – simply means “**big river**” in Spanish. This name was first given by the conquistador **Juan de Oñate** in the year **1598** as he crossed the river near the present-day west-Texas city of **El Paso**. Oñate is also gave El Paso its original name – **El Paso del Norte** – or the pass of the north. He and other Spaniards traveled through *El Paso del Norte* on their way north into present-day **New Mexico**. Today, El Paso has grown into a large city with more than 678,000 people.

## Waxahachie

Waxahachie today is a **small city** of approximately 50,000 people, just south of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. It was officially founded, or established, as a Texas city in the year **1850**, however, Waxahachie had been inhabited by **American Indians** for thousands of years before that. The name **Waxahachie** likely came from an American Indian word meaning “**buffalo creek**,” however the exact meaning and origin isn’t certain.

## Nacogdoches

Nacogdoches, (na-kuh-**doh**-chus) is another **small city** of approximately 32,000 people in the **Coastal Plains** region of Texas. It is located near the border of Louisiana in the **Piney Woods Forest**. Nacogdoches was founded, or established, in **1779** by the Spanish and is considered to be one of the oldest towns in Texas. Before the Spanish ever arrived, however, it had been home to various American Indian tribes including the **Nacogdoche** band of the **Caddo Confederacy**.