SAM RAYBURN HOUSE
STATE HISTORIC SITE
Bonham, Texas

Pre-Visit Guide HS

Overview: Meet Mr. Sam

In preparation for a visit to Sam Rayburn House, students will meet "Mr. Sam" Rayburn, longest serving Speaker of the House in American history. They will learn about Rayburn's rise to political success and his leadership throughout some of the most turbulent times in American history.

U.S. History Studies Since 1877 TEKS

(2) History. The student understands traditional historical points of reference in U.S. history from 1877 to the present. The student is expected to:

(C) apply absolute and relative chronology through the sequencing of significant individuals, events, and time periods; and

(D) explain the significance of the following years as turning points: 1914-1918 (World War I), 1929 (the Great Depression begins), 1939-1945 (World War II), 1957 (Sputnik launch ignites U.S.-Soviet space race)

(29) Social studies skills. The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including electronic technology. The student is expected to:

(A) use a variety of both primary and secondary valid sources to acquire information and to analyze and answer historical questions;

(B) analyze information by sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing and contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations, making predictions, drawing inferences, and drawing conclusions;

(H) use appropriate skills to analyze and interpret social studies information such as maps, graphs, presentations, speeches, lectures, and political cartoons.

Materials

- Historical images
- Activity worksheets
- *Mr. Sam, Mr. Speaker* video link https://youtu.be/3ks41sLE6qs

Vocabulary

- **representative:** someone elected to act for others
- **Speaker of the House of Representatives**: The leader of the House of Representatives. He or she directs all activities on the House floor, including recognizing members who attempt to speak or make a motion and appointing members to committees that review all bills. The Speaker is third in line for the presidency after the vice president.

Activity: "Another American Success Story"

10 minutes

Display the **political cartoon, "Another American Success Story**." Tell students to study the drawing and answer the following questions:

- What is this political cartoon about? Who are the characters in the cartoon?
- Does the cartoonist have a personal opinion about the subject? How can you tell?
- How can political cartoons affect state or national opinion on a subject?

Discuss student answers. Tell students that this cartoon references the unanimous 1940 election of Sam Rayburn as Speaker of the House of the U.S. Congress. Rayburn, a Democratic Congressman from Bonham, Texas, would become the longest-serving Speaker, a distinction that still holds today.

Activity: Mr. Sam

10 minutes

Introduce students to "Mr. Sam" and display the **image Mr. Sam Rayburn, Speaker of the House**.

Share:

- Sam Rayburn was elected to the Texas House of Representatives when he was 24 years old.
- In 1911, at age 29, Mr. Sam was elected Speaker of the House—the youngest Speaker in Texas history.
- In 1913, Mr. Sam was elected to the United States House of Representatives by the Texas 4th District. He served in the U.S. House for 48 years—through eight different presidencies, two World Wars, and the Great Depression.
- Mr. Sam was elected Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives ten times, serving for a total of 17 years. At this point, he remains the longest serving Speaker in American history.
- Mr. Sam was a trusted advisor to Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and John F. Kennedy. He was also a mentor to Lyndon B. Johnson.

Display and read the following newspaper quote about Sam Rayburn's childhood ambition:

> "This was pretty good going for a poor country boy, born the eighth child of 11 in the Tennessee hills and raised on 40 acres in Texas. With nothing to do by chop cotton and read history books, young Rayburn had picked his career before he was 10. He built it on $25, hard work, and the will to succeed."

Citation: Eleazer, Frank. [Newspaper Clipping: Mr. Sam Mingled With--And Was One of Nation's Greats], clipping, Date unknown. University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, crediting Sam Rayburn House Museum, (texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth787658/m1/1/) Accessed June 11, 2018.

Ask: *What problems or obstacles did Sam Rayburn overcome to meet his goal?*

[Answers may include: poverty, many siblings meant money and attention were likely stretched, he was raised in the country and not a city which usually meant that education and other resources were harder to find, he worked in the fields at a young age.]

Ask: *According to this newspaper article, Sam Rayburn built his success on what three things?*

[$25, hard work, and the will to succeed]

Context: As a very young man, Sam Rayburn knew he wanted to represent his fellow citizens in the House of Representatives. “Mr. Sam,” as he was called by many, was known to welcome his constituents, or voters, into his own home in Bonham, Texas. In his sitting room, Rayburn and his fellow citizens discussed their interests, local needs, and the politics of the day.

Although his work in Washington, D.C. solidified his place in history, Rayburn always maintained his interest in the family farm and in the work of his 900-acre ranch. He remained rooted in family and the land, and this kept him relatable to the voters in his district.

Sam Rayburn’s home outside of Bonham, Texas, was completed in 1916.

Sam Rayburn working in his garden, circa 1955.

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Timeline Activity: Half-Century of Public Service

25 minutes

In this activity, students will research to build a timeline of the presidents, major world events, and landmark legislation that Rayburn experience throughout his 48 years of public service. Students may use their textbooks, other references, and reputable online sources such as the White House Historical Association at www.whitehousehistory.org.

Context: Rayburn's long political career meant he was involved in many historical events that impacted the nation beyond his term of service. In 1941 as Speaker of the House, Rayburn signed the Declaration of War leading the United States into World War II. One of his major accomplishments was expanding the House Rules Committee which paved the way for the success of many of JFK's policies and legislative priorities such as the Civil Rights Act of 1963.

Distribute **Timeline Events and Timeline worksheets** and explain the assignment. Review results once all students have finished.

Answer Key

Presidents	Major Events	Landmark Legislation
Woodrow Wilson (1913-1921)	World War I	Federal Reserve Act
Warren G. Harding (1921-1923)	Teapot Dome scandals	Fordney-McCumber Tariff
Calvin Coolidge (1923-1929)	Great Mississippi Flood	Indian Citizenship Act
Herbert Hoover (1929-1933)	Great Depression	Emergency Relief and Construction Act
Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933-1945)	World War II	Social Security Act
Harry S. Truman (1945-1953)	Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings	National Security Act
Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953-1961)	Brown v Board of Education	Federal Aid Highway Act
John F. Kennedy (1961-1963)	Cuban Missile Crisis	Civil Rights Act of 1963

Follow-up discussion questions may include:

- What is the relationship between the executive branch of government and the legislative branch?
- How would a change in presidential leader (and political party) impact the work of the legislature?
- How can expected/unexpected world events affect the direction of legislation?

Activity Resource: Timeline Events

Sam Rayburn served as a congressman in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1913-1961, under eight presidents and throughout some of the most significant events of the 20th century.

The lists below are in random order. Sequence the presidents, major events, and landmark legislation below in chronological order on the **Timeline Worksheet**. You may use textbooks, other references, and reputable online sources such as the White House Historical Association at www.whitehousehistory.org.

Citation: John F. Kennedy, Sam Rayburn, and Lyndon Baines Johnson, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Rayburn (Sam) Papers, 1906-1990, http://www.cah.utexas.edu/db/dmr/image_lg.php?variable=di_01478.

Presidents (random order):
Herbert Hoover, Franklin D. Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy, Woodrow Wilson, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Harry S. Truman, Warren G. Harding, Calvin Coolidge

Major Events (random order):
Teapot Dome scandals, Great Depression, Cuban Missile Crisis, Brown v. Board of Education, World War I, Atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Great Mississippi Flood, World War II

Landmark Legislation (random order):
Federal Aid Highway Act, Civil Rights Act of 1963, Emergency Relief and Construction Act, Federal Reserve Act, Social Security, Fordney-McCumber Tariff, National Security Act, Indian Citizenship Act

Assessment

Evaluate student participation and printouts for completeness and understanding.

Take-Home Extension

Tell students to create a **KWL Chart** to take home. Have them complete the "What I **K**now" and "What I **W**ant to Know" columns about Sam Rayburn. After completing all pre-visit preparations and the on-site field trip, have students complete the "What I **L**earned" column for learning assessment.

Additional Resources & Extensions

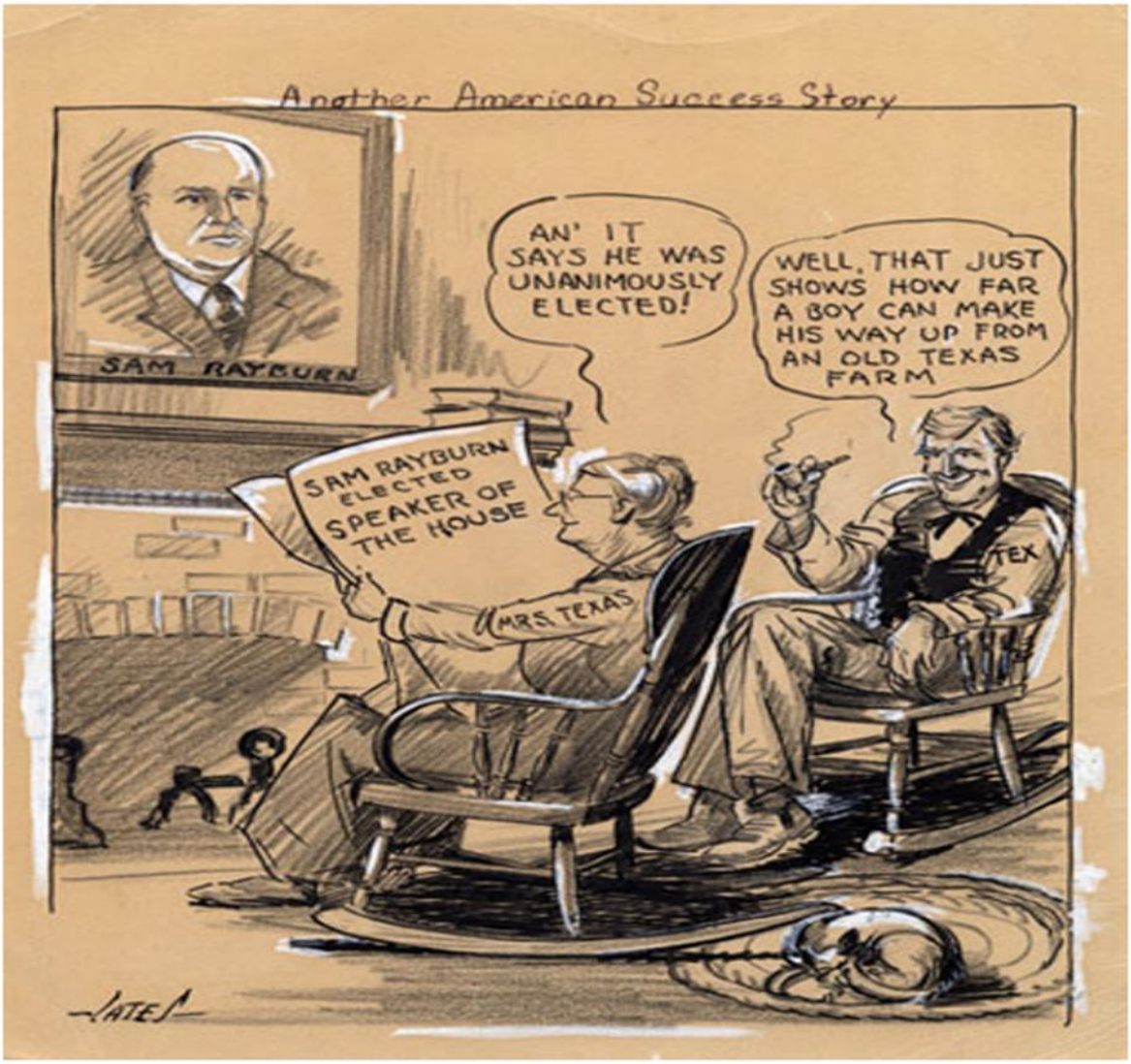
The Portal to Texas History
https://texashistory.unt.edu

The Handbook of Texas Online
https://tshaonline.org/handbook

Library of Congress
https://loc.gov

Activity Image: "Another American Success Story" political cartoon

Citation: Cates. "Another American Success Story," *Dallas Times-Herald*, September 16, 1940, Rayburn (Sam) Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin. http://www.cah.utexas.edu/db/dmr/image_lg.php?variable=di_02039 (Accessed July 20, 2018).



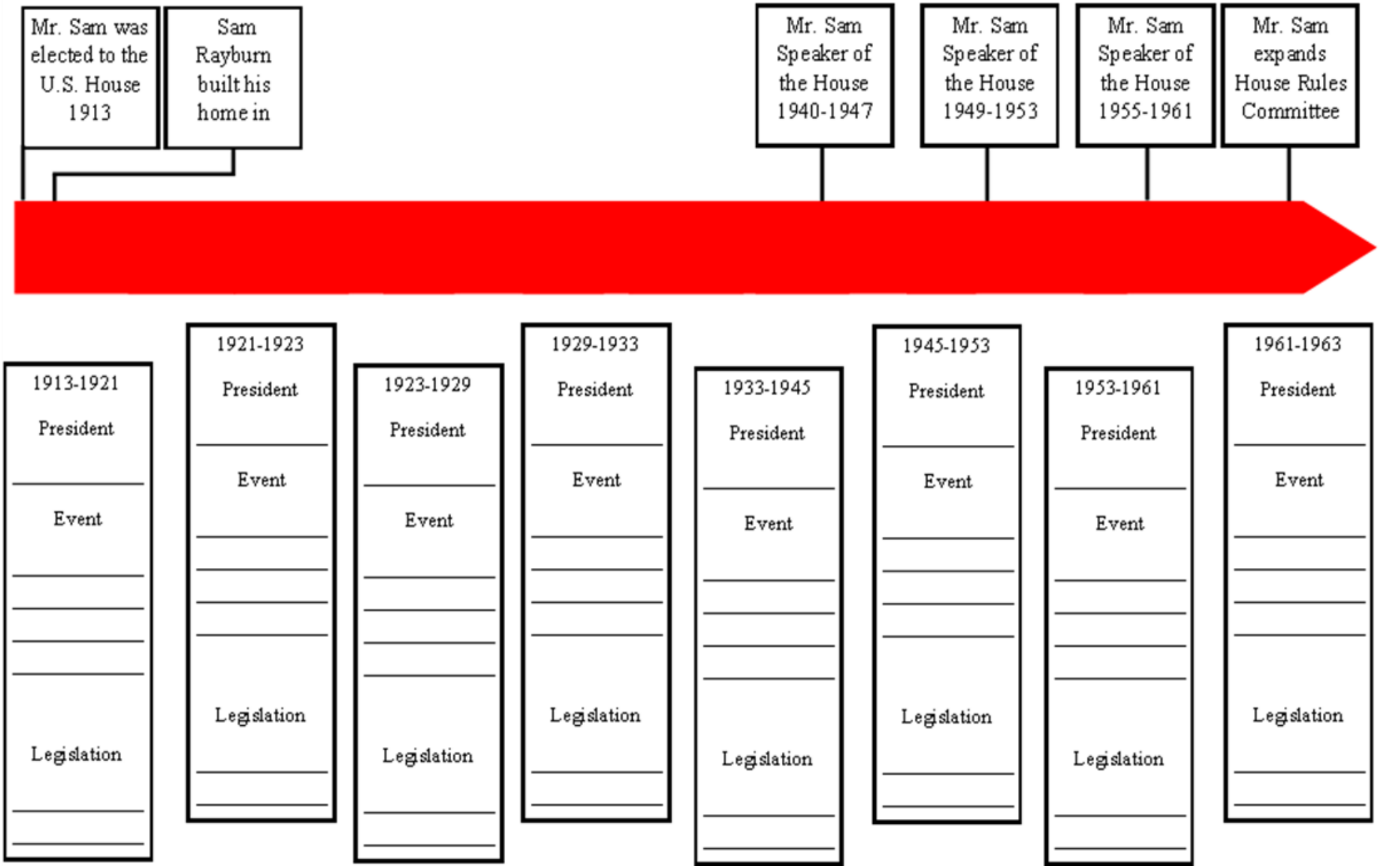
Activity Image: Mr. Sam Rayburn, Speaker of the House

Citation: Stone, E. *Painting of Sam Rayburn*, artwork, date unknown. University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, texashistory.unt.edu, crediting Sam Rayburn House Museum. texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth183488/m1/1/ (Accessed June 9, 2018).

Activity Resource: Timeline Worksheet

A Half-Century of Public Service

Use references to sequence the presidents, events, and legislation from the Timeline of Events worksheet in chronological order in this graphic organizer.



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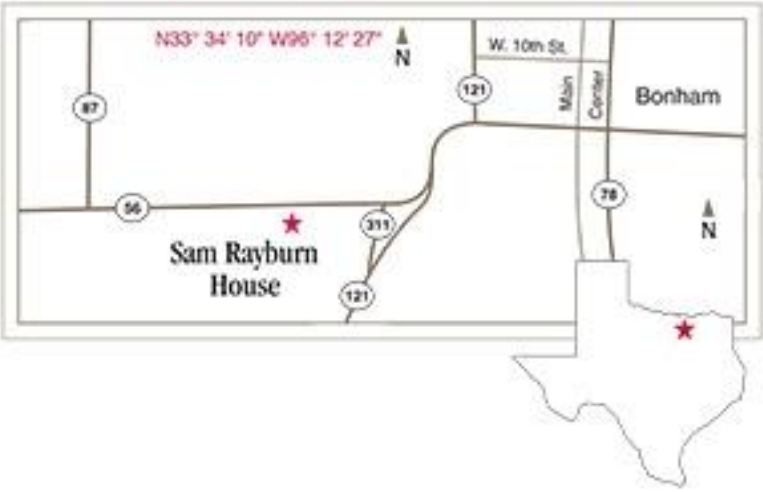
Site Visit Recommendations

- Complete the pre-visit lesson or other introductory lessons prior to your field trip.
- Divide students into small groups, each with an adult chaperone.
- Make sure students bring pencils. Pens and markers are not allowed in the exhibits.

Information

To schedule a site visit field trip for your students, please call 903-583-5558.

For admission prices and hours of operation, please visit us online at http://visitsamrayburnhouse.com.



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