

**Lesson Name:** Death on Board *La Belle*: Finding Clues from Old Bones!

**Subject Areas:** Science, Math, Social Studies, Technology Applications

**Grade Range:** 4<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>

**Rationale or Purpose:**

This lesson introduces students to the different types of scientific inquiries used to analyze human skeletons and learn about life in the past. Students will complete an illustrated online interactive based on the actual analysis of the skeleton found on La Salle's shipwreck, *La Belle*, to determine what the French sailor's life was like.

**Lesson Duration:** one or two 45-minute class periods

**TEKS:**

**Science, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade**

- Science 112.6 (2B), use scientific inquiry methods during field and laboratory investigations to collect information by observing and measuring.
- Science 112.6 (2C), analyze and interpret information to construct reasonable explanations from direct and indirect evidence.
- Science 112.6 (4A), collect and analyze information using tools including meter sticks.

**Social Studies 4<sup>th</sup> Grade**

- Social Studies 113.6 (22B), analyze information by categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions.

**Science, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade**

- Science 112.7 (2B), collect information by observing and measuring.
- Science 112.7(2C), analyze and interpret information to construct reasonable explanations from direct and indirect evidence.
- Science 112.7(2D), communicate valid conclusions.

**Science 6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

- Science 112.22 (2B), collect data by observing and measuring
- Science 112.22 (2C), analyze and interpret information to construct reasonable explanations from direct and indirect evidence.
- Science 112.22 (2D), communicate valid conclusions.

### Science, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

- Science 112.23 (2B), collect data by observing & measuring
- Science 112.23 (2C), make inferences from direct and indirect evidence
- Science 112.23 (9A), identify the systems of the human organism

### Social Studies 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

- Social Studies 113.23 (2B), identify important individuals and events related to European exploration and colonization of Texas

### Technology Applications, Grades 3-5

- **126.3(5A)**, acquire information including text, audio, video, and graphics
- **126.3(8B)**, use interactive technology environments, such as simulations, electronic science or mathematics laboratories, virtual museum field trips, or on-line interactive lessons, to manipulate information.

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### Materials:

- **Skeletal Report Form:** Student Handout
- **Skeletal Report Form:** Teacher Guide and Answer Key
- **Skeleton Chart:** Teacher Guide
- **Skeleton Chart-**Student Handout
- **Computer lab with Internet access** to [www.texasbeyondhistory.net/belle/kids.html](http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/belle/kids.html)

### Activity:

Step 1: Introduce the La Belle shipwreck as one of La Salle's ships that was wrecked off the coast of Texas in 1686. The French explorer La Salle had been trying to locate the mouth of the Mississippi in order to establish a French colony there. His ship hit a sandbar during a storm, and later sunk in Matagorda Bay midway between present-day Galveston and Corpus Christi, Texas. At least one sailor went down with the ship. About 300 years later, archeologists excavated the shipwreck, including the skeleton of the sailor. Explain that by using different types of scientific inquiry to analyze skeletons and other evidence, a great deal can be learned about life in the past, including a person's age, physical appearance, and health. Students will do an online activity based on the analysis of the skeleton to determine what this sailor's life was like.

Step2: Distribute a copy of the Skeletal Report Form and the Skeleton Chart student handouts to each student. Have students go through the Internet activity: "Death on Board La Belle! Finding Clues from the Bones" at [www.texasbeyondhistory.net/belle/kids.html](http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/belle/kids.html).

Step3: Students will fill out the forms based on what they learned in the activity.

Step4: Have students discuss their findings with the class, and share their answers to the "thought" questions on the student handout. The Skeleton Chart-Teacher's Guide (included) from the activity may be used as an overhead projector prompt.

**Student Product:** Completed Skeletal Report Form and Skeleton Chart student handouts.

**Assessment or Evaluation:** Students will correctly complete the answers to the handout questions and discuss their findings with class.

**Extension:** Have students view the Texas Beyond History webpages on La Belle [www.texasbeyondhistory.net/belle/index.html](http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/belle/index.html) and <http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/stlouis/index.html> to learn more about La Salle, the shipwreck, and his temporary colony at Fort St. Louis near Victoria, Texas.