Welcome! *I was the first. Vote for Me!* brings to life the important firsts in United States and Texas history who are part of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards for Texas elementary students.

This book enables students to explore 22 historical figures who have made noteworthy contributions to society, paving the way to today. After reading the stories, students can access materials at [texasbar.com/iwasthefirst](http://texasbar.com/iwasthefirst) to vote for the historic first they believe is the most significant. A fictional school will be named after the historic first who receives the most votes.

*I was the first. Vote for Me!* allows for lessons in civics education, citizenship, reading, voting, and math. To view animations of the historical figures and to access additional educational tools, go to [texasbar.com/iwasthefirst](http://texasbar.com/iwasthefirst).

The State Bar of Texas thanks Charlene Randall, Kathy Aldridge, Jeanne Wray, Jerry Perry, and Tim Bryant — the outstanding educators whose tireless efforts made this project a reality that will benefit Texas students for many years to come.

In addition, thank you to the Texas Bar Foundation for its ongoing support for the State Bar of Texas and civics education, especially for *I was the first. Vote for Me!*
I’m George Washington and I was elected the first president of the United States. I never ever failed to do whatever my country needed me to do.

In 1776, I led our troops in a surprise attack against our enemy across the icy Delaware River.

I believed that citizens have a duty to serve their country, work hard, and be truthful. Vote for me!

I was also president of the Constitutional Convention where our nation’s Constitution was written.
I’m Amelia Earhart and I was the first woman to fly alone across the Atlantic Ocean.

During World War I, I volunteered for the Red Cross and also helped wounded soldiers as a nurse’s aid in Canada.

I set many aviation records, including being the first person to fly alone over both the Atlantic and Pacific oceans!

In 1937, I attempted to fly around the world. Unfortunately, no one ever heard from my navigator or me again.

I believe women must try to do things as men have tried. When they fail, their failure must be but a challenge to others. Vote for me!
I’m Martin Luther King Jr. and I was the first American citizen in the 20th century to have a federal holiday designated in my name.

I was a civil rights leader and helped end legal segregation of African American citizens.

In 1955, I organized a major civil rights protest called the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

At age 35, because I fought for equality using peaceful means, I became the youngest man to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. Vote for me!
I'm Irma Rangel and I was the first Mexican American woman elected to serve in the Texas House of Representatives.

I was a teacher for 14 years. I then earned a law degree in San Antonio, Texas, and opened a practice in Kingsville, Texas.

I was a pioneer of Mexican American rights and worked hard to improve education and opportunities for men and women of all races.

As a legislator, I served my South Texas district for 26 years. I was the first and only woman to chair the Mexican American Legislative Caucus.

I believe education and hard work are very important. Vote for me!
I’m one of the Native American soldiers who served as a code talker for the United States Army. During World War I, the first code talkers were Choctaw Indians from Oklahoma.

We sent secret messages in the battlefield using code in our native language. No one could figure out what we were saying, including the Japanese army.

We were able to create an unbreakable code that confused our enemy and helped us win the war. Vote for me!

The Code Talkers Recognition Act of 2008 recognized every Native American code talker who served in the United States military during WWI and WWII.

Other code talkers during World War I included Cherokee, Comanche, Cheyenne, and soldiers from different Indian tribes all over America. Navajo code talkers served during World War II.
I'm Benjamin Franklin and I was the first person in the Americas to invent the lightning rod.

As the minister to France, I helped negotiate treaties such as the famous Treaty of Paris, which ended the Revolutionary War between Great Britain and the United States.

Of all the founding fathers, I was the only one to have signed three of the major documents that helped us become an independent nation: the Declaration of Independence, the Treaty of Paris, and the Constitution.

I was a scientist, inventor, printer, writer, and statesman.

I believe early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise. Vote for me!

I believe early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise. Vote for me!
I’m Barbara Jordan and I was the first African American elected to the Texas Senate.

While helping register African American voters, I was inspired to run for public office.

I received my law degree from Boston University. In 1960, I started working as a lawyer in Houston, Texas.

We believe in equality for all and privileges for none. Vote for me!

I was the first African American woman from the South elected to the United States House of Representatives.

Equality for All
I’m one of the soldiers who served in the United States Army 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Our unit was the first to be composed entirely of Americans of Japanese ancestry.

We fought for our country in World War II even though our families were subject to captivity and there was prejudice against us.

During World War II, we mainly fought in Italy, France, and Germany.

Our motto was: “Go for broke.” We risked it all to win it all. Vote for me!

We were considered to be the most decorated infantry regiment in the history of the United States Army.
I’m César Chávez and I was the first person in American history to organize a successful farm workers union.

After serving in the Navy, I returned to California to work in the fields. I led non-violent marches, called for produce boycotts, and went on several hunger strikes in support of workers’ rights.

The fight is never about grapes or lettuce. It is always about the people. Vote for me!

In 1962, Dolores Huerta and I founded the National Farm Workers Association, which later became the United Farm Workers of America.

As a labor leader and civil rights activist, I dedicated my life to improving working conditions, treatment, and compensation for farm workers.
I’m Sam Houston and I was the first president of the Republic of Texas.

In 1832, I moved to Texas. I became a general in the Texas Army and fought in the war for independence from Mexico.

At the Battle of San Jacinto, my forces defeated Mexican General Santa Anna and his army.

Later, when Texas became a state, I served in Congress and became its first governor.

The city of Houston was founded and named after me in 1836. Vote for me!
Eleanor Roosevelt

I’m Eleanor Roosevelt and I was the first First Lady to openly express my opinions through press conferences, radio broadcasts, and a daily newspaper column.

In 1905, I married Franklin D. Roosevelt, who was president of the United States from 1933 to 1945, longer than anyone else in history.

As First Lady of the United States, I traveled to many places, speaking out in support of human rights. I also visited U.S. soldiers overseas during World War II.

I was the first chairperson of the United Nations Human Rights commission, and I helped write the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

You must do the things you think you cannot do. Vote for me!
I'm Thurgood Marshall and I was our nation’s first African American Supreme Court justice.

I later became the chief counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and argued many civil rights cases before the Supreme Court.

As a U.S. Supreme Court justice, I heard many cases. I always favored human and civil rights. Vote for me!

In 1954, I argued and won a major case before the U.S. Supreme Court that led to ending racial segregation in public schools.

I was also a leader in the civil rights movement and fought for new protections for women, children, prisoners, and the homeless.

In 1954, I argued and won a major case before the U.S. Supreme Court that led to ending racial segregation in public schools.
I’m Neil Armstrong and I was the first person to walk on the moon.

In 1962, I became a NASA astronaut. As the command pilot for Gemini 8, I was the first civilian astronaut to fly in space.

I earned my pilot’s license when I was 16 and later became a pilot in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War. During that war, I flew 78 combat missions and earned three medals for courage and bravery.

I became the spacecraft commander for Apollo 11, the first mission to land a man on the moon.

That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind. Vote for me!
I'm Ruby Bridges and I was one of the first African American children to attend an all-white public elementary school in the South. I was six years old.

The only person who agreed to teach me was Barbara Henry. I was the only student in her class that entire year.

In 2001, President Bill Clinton awarded the Presidential Citizens Medal to me for my bravery and courage.

Federal marshals escorted me to class to protect me from angry people who did not want me to attend the school.

Don't follow the path. Go where there is no path and start a trail. Vote for me!
I’m Wallace B. Jefferson and I was the first African American justice, and later, chief justice of the Supreme Court of Texas.

One of my ancestors was Shedrick Willis, a slave who was owned by a Waco, Texas, judge before the Civil War.

In 1988, I earned my law degree from the University of Texas School of Law.

By the age of 35, I had argued and won two cases before the United States Supreme Court.

If we educate ourselves, we can become anything we want to be. Vote for me!
I’m John Hancock and as president of the Continental Congress, I was the first to sign the Declaration of Independence in July of 1776.

In 1770, I demanded the removal of British forces after the Boston Massacre, where British troops killed five civilians.

I became the first governor of Massachusetts and served through the end of the Revolutionary War.

As a wealthy merchant, I spoke out against unfair British taxes on the colonists.

I was known for my patriotism, and I was dedicated to the American cause for independence. Vote for me!
I'm Raúl A. González Jr. and I was the first Mexican American to serve on the Texas Supreme Court and to be elected to a statewide office.

I was reared in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, where I worked hard in the fields with my parents. They were migrant farm workers from Mexico.

In 1963, I graduated from the University of Texas at Austin and later earned a law degree at the University of Houston.

I was appointed to the Texas Supreme Court in 1984 and served as a justice until 1998.

At a young age, I learned the importance of working hard and getting an education. Vote for me!
I'm Thomas Jefferson and I was the first author of the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

I later became the third president of the United States and lived on a Virginia plantation where I built my home, Monticello.

For 50 years, I served this country in many roles — as a member of the Continental Congress, governor, Secretary of State, vice president, and president.

I was also the first Secretary of State when George Washington was president.

I'm most proud of starting the University of Virginia. Vote for me!
I’m Susan B. Anthony and I was the first woman to have my likeness appear on United States currency, the dollar coin. It was in recognition of my dedication and hard work in obtaining equal rights for women.

Before the Civil War, I was also involved in the anti-slavery and temperance movements.

In 1852, I joined the women’s rights movement and gave speeches across the country, traveling by wagon, stagecoach, carriage, and train.

In 1920, 14 years after my death, the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was passed giving women the right to vote.

I always said failure is impossible. Vote for me!
I’m Dr. Héctor P. García and I was the first Mexican American to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award given by the president of the United States.

During World War II, I served in the U.S. Army and was awarded a Bronze Star and 6 Battle Stars.

When the war was over, I settled in Corpus Christi, Texas, where I started a private medical practice. I treated all patients regardless of their ability to pay.

In 1948, I founded the American GI Forum to help Mexican Americans fight legal and political battles against discrimination.

I believed in the American dream and justice for my people. Vote for me!
I'm Abraham Lincoln and I was the first to issue an order proclaiming all slaves in Confederate territory would be forever free.

I became the 16th president of the United States in 1861. During my presidency, the Union Army defeated the Confederate States Army in the Civil War.

Unfortunately, I was the first president of the United States to be assassinated. I was shot by John Wilkes Booth at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C.

People called me Honest Abe because I believed that telling the truth was important. Vote for me!
I'm Barack Obama Jr. and I was the first African American president of the United States.

In 2008, I was elected president of the United States and reelected in 2012.

America is made up of people who give us the courage to lift one another up, to keep up the fight, to work and build upon all that is good in our nation. Vote for me!

In 2009, I was the fourth president of the United States to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

I was elected to the Illinois State Senate in 1996 and the U.S. Senate in 2004.
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