

TEXAN DICTIONARY



Marco Hanson

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Forward

The following sample of colloquial Texan English was compiled from a number of historical and contemporary sources. Thank you to all curators of good ol' down-home wit. Fewer and fewer Texans speak this way today, but we hope this little book will whet your appetite to learn more about our unique and charming state. "Texas... it's like a whole 'nother country!"

Marco Hanson,
A Certifiable Texan

A as in Armadillo

acceptable: close enough fer govment work

admit: fess up

afraid: skeerd

aggravated: aggervated

aggressive language: fightin' words

all right: a'ight

almost: pertnear

almost did: like to have done

angled: slaunchways

angry: wrathy

angry, to get: pitch a hissy fit

another: nuthern

any direction away from the speaker: yonder

anything: an'thang

are not: ain't

argumentative, to be: she could start a fight in
an empty house; he's so contrary he
floats upstream

aren't you?: ain'tcha?

aunt: aint

B as in Brazos

backwards: backerds

bad-tempered: crusty

barbed wire: bob wahr

Baptist: Babbist

be careful: you were too hard to raise to take
chances; whistle before you walk into a

stranger's camp; a dead bee can still
sting; don't plow too close to the cotton

be patient: take a tater and wait

be unpleasant to: be ugly to

beat up, to: whoop up on; knock you plumb
into next week; cleaned his plow

become sunny: fair off

boiled: bald

borrowed: bard

brother and sister: bub 'n' sis

C as in Cowboy

call: holler

capable, to be: got plenty o' horse sense; a right
smart windmill fixer; could find a
whisper in a whirlwind

carry: tote

catch a cold: ketch cold

coffee: Arbuckle (an early brand name)

certain to do: bound to do

chat: chaw the rag

choose your punishment: pick yer switch

cold front: norther, blue norther (even colder)

come on: vamanoose

completely: plumb

confused: he don't know whether to scratch his
watch or wind his butt; I can splain it to
ya, but I can't understand it for ya

conquer: whup

consumed by, to be: eat up

convenience store: ice house

cook: gut robber, belly cheater, biscuit shooter,
Sallie, bean master

could: might could

crazy: she's got a big ol' hole in her screen
door; he's lost his vertical hold; she's
one bubble off plumb; two sandwiches
short of a picnic

creek: crick

D as in Dallas

damnation: tarnation

dance: daints

darn it: dad gummit, dag nabbit, dad blame it

dead: buzzard bait; he gave up his guitar for a
harp

deciding factor: kicker

deeply moved: all choked up

defeat a powerful opponent: whup one's weight
in wildcats

definitely: come hell 'r high water

determined: come hell or high water

diagonal to: annygoddlin'

did you eat yet?: jeatyet?

did you see?: jucee?

dishonest, to be: so crooked that if he
swallowed a nail, he'd spit up a
corkscrew; slicker 'n a slop jar;
wouldn't trust 'm farther 'n I could
throw 'm

do you want any?: yontnee?

dresser: chester drawers

dull (boring): as much fun as chopping wood;
as exciting as a mashed potato
sandwich

dull (knife): you could ride all the way to Big
Spring on it and never split a hair

dumb, to be: a few pickles short of a barrel

E as in Enchiladas

enamored, to become: take to you like a hog to
persimmons

everybody: all creation

everything: ev'thang

exceedingly: than all git-out

experienced: this ain't my/his/her first rodeo

F as in Frito Pie

fall over, to: tump over

false: that dog don't hunt

far: I won't say it's far, but I had to grease the
wagon twice before I hit the main road;
two hoots and holler away; a fur piece

farm, ranch: place

fast: right quick

fatigued: wore out

feel very sorry for someone stupid, to
(sarcastic): bless his/her cotton-pickin'
heart

food: truck

football: ball

force to leave town: ride out o' town on a rail

fornication: eating supper before saying grace

frolicking: carryings-on

G as in Gun

gain employment, to: to get on at

get upset: have conniptions, raise a ruckus

give me: gimme

gluttonous: fat as a town dog; so big he looks
like he ate his brother; he'll eat
anythin' don't eat him first

gloss over faults: whitewash

guess: reckon

H as in Harlingen

happy: like a gopher in soft dirt; pert as a
cricket; fat and sassy; fine as frog fur;
happy as a clam at high tide

having no intention to: not about to

heavy rain: gully washer, frog strangler

hell, devil: Sam Hill

help: hep

hello, how do you do?: howdy

higher power: har par

hollow: holler

honest, to be: you can hang yer hat on it; you
can take that to the bank

hopefully: Lord willin' an' the creek don't rise

I as in Interstate

I: ah

I am going to get: Ahmo get

I support Texas A&M University: Gig 'em!

I swear: I'll swan, I swany

if I were you: fizyu

ignorant: ignert

in a beeline: as the crow flies

inept: useless as two buggies in a one-horse town; she could fall up a tree; tie a quarter to it and throw it away, then you could say you lost somethin’

insolent: updee

interfering: done stopped preachin’ and gone to meddlin’

isn’t it?: idn’t it?

K as in Kerrville

knock down violently, to: poleax

L as in Lone Star

large amount: hobunch

lazy: like a blister – he don't show up till the
work's all done; she hangs out more
often than mama's washin'

left quickly: lit out

let's go: ándale (AHN-dah-lay)

let's go eat: squeat

liar, to be a: crooked as a dog's hind leg

likely to: libel ta

limp, to have a: gotta a hitch in his gitalong

living life to the fullest: in tall cotton

loner: maverick

lots: more 'n you can shake a stick at

lousy: sorry excuse for

lucky: riding a gravy train with biscuit wheels;
always draws the best bull; could sit on
the fence and birds would feed ‘m

M as in Midland

man under age 50: boy

may I help you?: melpya?

might possibly: might could

miles per hour: mallnower

mind your own business: tend to yer own rat-
killin’

minnows: minners

mirror: mere

miscellaneous items: notions

miserly: tighter ‘n bark on a tree

mosquito: skeeter

much less: let alone

N as in Nacogdoches

naked: nekkid

needlessly stressed, to get: all worked up over
nothin'

no: nuh-uh

no way: n'ombre (NOME-bray)

nonsense: that dog don't hunt

northerner: yankee (anyone from the east coast,
Midwest, California, etc.)

not at all: not by a jugful

not doing well: bad off

not fitting properly: whomperjawed

O as in Oil Well

obstinate: contrary

offended: huffy

okay: fair ta middlin'

old and bad-tempered man: ole cuss

old rascal: galoot

on fire: afahr

out of line: catterwumpus, cattywampus

over there (prep): over yonder, ouchonder,
o'vair

overweight: she's warm in winter, shady in
summer

P as in Pony

petroleum industry: awhl bidness

pirate: algerine

pond (man-made): tank

powerful blow: sockdologer

pregnant: got 'r a bun in the oven; she's been
storked; sittin' on the nest

preparing to: fixin' ta

present oneself as, to: hold yerself out to be

pretend: play like

pretentious: he's all hat and no cattle

pretty/fairly: purt

pretty girl: looker; she cleans up real nice; so
pretty she'd make a man plow through
a stump; cute as a speckled pup under a
red wagon

R as in Rifle

rambunctious, to be: raisin' cane

really: sure'nuff

recommence, to: tak'n ta

relax: don't gecher cows runnin'

reliable: you'll do to run the river with

resemble her father: favor her father

rich, to be: runnin' with the big dogs; got more
'n she can say grace over; they didn't
come to town two-to-a-mule

right here: ritcheer

right on: órale (OH-ray-lay)

ring: rang

ruffian: rowdy, plug-ugly

ruined: rurnd

rich: in tall cotton, eatin' high on the hog, ridin'
high

rinse: rench

S as in Shotgun

self-absorbed: all swole up

she has easy virtue: she's just naturally
horizontal

short amount of time: a spell

short distance: a piece

should: ortta

show off: show out

side dishes: fixins

soak up: sop up

soda: sody pop

soft drink: coke (includes Coca-Cola, Pepsi,
Mt. Dew, Big Red, Dr. Pepper, etc.)

something else entirely: whole 'nother thang

someone who is tired and worse for wear: looks
like he been rode hard and put up wet

smashed flat: pole-axed

something else entirely: a whole 'nother thing

soon: dreckly

smart: bright as a new penny; smart as a whip;
no flies on my mama

spank: tan your hide

spill: tump

spoiled milk: blinky milk

started liking it: taken to it

stingy, to be: tight as a tick; she has short arms
and deep pockets; he's so tight he
squeaks when he walks

strong coffee: it'll walk into yer cup; it'll raise
a blood blister on a boot; it'll put hair
on yer chest

suppose: imagine

supposed to: spozeta

sure enough: shownuf

sure is: shoiz

swallow: swoller

T as in Taco

talk back to: sass

tall and broad-shouldered: corn-fed

take a drink: smile

temper tantrum: hissy fit

thing: thang

think that, to: reckon

throw: chunk

timid, to be: he wouldn't bite a biscuit; she
stays in the shadow of her mom's
apron

tire: tar

tired: tard, done, tuckered

turn off the light: cut off the light

two problems, to have: got two different
buckets o' possums

U as in Uvalde

ugly: got whapped with the ugly stick; looks
like ten miles of bad road

unable to do what one wants: got'm an ox in
the ditch

unacceptable: I don't cotton to it; nothin' to
write home about; that dog won't hunt

unsophisticated: so country he thinks a seven-
course meal is a possum and a six-pack

unwelcome: welcome as an outhouse breeze;
welcome as a porcupine at a nudist
colony; welcome as a wet shoe

upset: fit to be tied

used to: yoosta

V as in Vaquero

varmint (any unwanted animal): varmit

vain: she's got more airs than an Episcopalian;
he's so spoiled, salt couldn't save 'm;
she broke 'r arm pattin' herself on the
back

very brave: he's got more guts 'n you could
hang on a fence; she'd shoot craps with
the devil himself

very busy: busier 'n a cat tryin' to cover up
crap on a marble floor; busy as a
funeral home fan in July; so busy you'd
think she was twins

very cold: cold as an ex-wife's heart; cold'r 'n
cast-iron commode; hog-killin' weather

very common: common as cornbread

very dark: blacker 'n midnight under a skillet;
dark as the devil's ridin' boots; dark as
truck stop coffee

very difficult: like trin' to bag flies; like putting
socks on a rooster; easy as pissin' up a
rope

very drunk: he wasn't born, just squeeze out of
a bartender's rag; tighter than bark on a

log; commode-huggin', knee walkin'
drunk; drunk as Cooter Brown

very dry: so dry ahm spittin' cotton; the catfish
are carryin' canteens; the birds 'r
buildin' their nests outta bob wahr

very dumb: if dumb was dirt, he'd cover about
an acre; he don't know diddly-squat;
she can't ride and chew at the same
time; he carries his brains in his back
pocket; dumb as a praire dog

very easy: easy as pie; slick as a whistle; no hill
for a stepper

very fast: fast as small-town gossip; quick outta
the chute; hell-bent for leather; jumped
like a duck on a June bug

very fine: fine as frog's hair

very good: can't beat that with a stick

very hot: hotter'n a stolen tamale, so hot the
hens are layin' hard-boiled eggs; hotter
'n a fur coat in Marfa

very good: good 'nuf to make a rabbit spit in a
bulldog's face

very jealous: to be eat up with jealousy

very large: big as hell an' half o' Texas

very mad: madder 'n a wet hen

very mean: wolverine mean; rough as a cob;
tough as whang; so low you couldn't
put a rug under 'm

very poor, to be: ain't gotta pot tah pee in; so
poor I had a tumbleweed as a pet; if a
trip around the world cost a dollar, I
couldn't git to the Oklahoma state line;
so poor their Sunday supper is fried
water

very nervous: jumpy as spit on a hot skillet, like
a long-tailed cat in a room full o'
rockin' chairs

very noisy: like two skeletons dancin' on a tin
roof; louder 'n grandpa's Sunday tie;
he learned to whisper in a sawmill

very rare: scarce as rain barrels; scarce as hen's
teeth

very ready: rarin' to go

very rural: livin' so far out in the country, the
sun set between their house 'n town

very rushed: like the dogs was after 'im

very sad: lower 'n a gopher hole; sad enough to
bring a tear to a glass eye

very serious: serious as the business end of a
.45; serious as a heart attack

very skinny or small: thin a gnat's whisker; no
bigger than moles on a chigger; he'd
have to stand up to look a rattler in the
eye; nothin' between the horns and
hooves but hide

very straight: straighter 'n a fast trip to the
outhouse

very talkative: he's got a ten-gallon mouth; she
talk talk the gate off its hinges; he's a
chin musician; she shoots off her
mouth so much, she must eat bullets for
breakfast

very tired: tuckered out; one wheel down and
the axle draggin'

very ugly: he looks like the dog's been keepin'
him under the porch, so ugly the tide
won't take her out, plug-ugly

very useful: as handy as hip pockets on a hog

vex, to: to get all riled up

visit: go over at

vomiting excessively: calling for Earl

W as in Waxahachie

wait: hold your horses

wash: warsh

wasting time: preachin' to the choir; burnin'
daylight; hollerin' down a well

wealthy: right well-off

what did you say?: howzat?

who would have thought that?: hoodathunkit?

wire cutters: dikes

worse, getting: goin' to hell in a handbasket

worthless: sorry

would you prefer corn or flour tortillas?:
cornerflour?

wow: híjole (EE-hoe-lay)

wrestling: rasslin'

Y as in Yee-haw

you (pro): you (singular), y'all (plural), all y'all
(for emphasis)

you go ahead: go ahead on

you don't say: ah'll be dawged

young: knee-high to a grasshopper

your: yer

your (plural possessive): y'all's, all y'all's

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