

# **How To Speak Texan In 11 Easy Steps**

**2018 SPE Thermoforming Conference  
to be held in Fort Worth, Texas  
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**There are a lot of folks movin' to Texas these days. Seeing as how a lot of them are coming from exotic places like New York and California, there's undoubtedly a fair amount of confusion on their part when it comes to pickin' up the Texas vernacular. As a favor to y'all that will be visitin the 2018 SPE Thermoforming Conference, I've put together this easy to follow quick-start guide to speakin' Texan.**

# 1. The G at the end of most words is optional

When it comes to pronunciation and spellin' of verbs that end in "ing", the letter n and the apostrophe are your best friends. Where you come from, the "ee-ng" sound is what you probably expect to hear at the end of words like "going", "flying", and "eating". In Texas, "in" is all you'll be hearin'.

And don't try to say that Texans are sloppy or lazy. This is not about laziness. It's all about bein' efficient while speakin'. Don't work harder. Work smarter.

Examples:

"We're goin' fishin' and are fixin' to drive to the bait shop. Are you wantin' to come along?"

"No sir, officer, I sure wasn't speedin'. You must be seein' things."

Notice in the above examples, the verbs are what we drop the last G from, but in the case of the word "things" it stays. As with most language rules, this one is made to be broken occasionally. Kinda like I before E, except in the case of Budweiser.

## 2. Never say “you guys” or “all of you”

**Y'ALL**

This one is incredibly important, and although it's used in other regions of the south, we take a lot of pride in its usage right here in Texas. It's our way of sayin' “you guys” or “all of you”.

It's not one-size-fits-y'all though. When you're talkin' to one person, you still should use the word “you”. When addressin' two folks, go ahead and fire up that good deep y'all. For three or more folks though, add in an “all” to your y'all, for a nice round “all y'all” and you'll be grammatically correct.

Examples:

“Hey Bill, are **you** gonna go to the rodeo this week?”

“Hey Bill and Bubba, are **y'all** gonna go to the rodeo this week?”

“Hey Bill, Bubba, and Denise, are **all y'all** gonna go to the rodeo this week?”

### **3. Contractions are your friend**

The word y'all is a contraction of the words you and all. Did you know that the Texan language allows for you to tack together three words? Talk about efficiency! My favorites are y'all'll and y'all've, which are future and past tenses of the word y'all. Couldn't've, wouldn't've, and shouldn't've are also good ones to sprinkle in as you try to assimilate to our culture.

Examples:

“If you don't stop eating all that queso, y'all'll gain a bunch of weight.”

“I'm glad we stopped at Buc-ee's for a bathroom break. I wouldn't've been able to hold it till we got to grandma's.”

## 4. You're not Texan till you use this one

# AIN'T

Ain't is amazing for several reasons. For one, it just sounds better than "am not" or "have not". It's also super versatile. It's the perfect word to tell someone that they "ain't gonna tell you how to go about your business." It's also great to describe that moron coworker who just "ain't all there in the head." All in all, there just ain't many words that get the attention or give emphasis like this one.

Take it from me: you ain't Texan if you ain't usin' ain't in your daily conversations with folks.

Examples:

"You tell your sister that if she ain't gonna chew with her mouth closed, she ain't eatin' at my table anymore."

"He ain't got two marbles rollin' around in that noggin of his, ain't he?"

## **5. All sodas are “cokes” but not all “cokes” are Dr. Pepper**

If you'd like to order what you people call a “pop,” do yourself a favor and avoid referring to it as that. In Texas, they're called Cokes. Even if you're trying to order a Sprite, first tell the person getting it for you that you'd like a Coke. They'll then respond with “what kind?”. At this point, you can clarify with the flavor.

Dr. Pepper having been born in Texas, before Coca Cola, mind you, is in a class all its own. It's socially acceptable for you to skip the Coke formalities and just say you want a Dr. Pepper.

Examples:

You: “Can I please have a coke?”

Server: “Sure, what kind?”

You: “I'll take a Sprite.”

## 6. Get used to usin' The National Verb of Texas

# FIXIN' TO

In other places, people refer to doing something in the future as “going to do” something. In Texas, the one size fits all verb is “fixin’ to.” Use it without restraint, and you’ll fit in with everyone from the East Texas bubbas to the North Texas dust bowl daddies.

Examples:

“If you keep talkin’ back to your Mom like that, I’m fixin’ ta whoop you, son.”

“I’m fixin’ to eat this entire bowl of chips and salsa by myself.”

## 7. Always be polite, even when you don't want to

# BLESS YOUR HEART

If someone tells you “bless your heart” in Texas, just know that they’re not exactly wishing for God’s blessings to come raining down upon you. Ya see, Texans like to mind our manners, including when we’re having a disagreement here and there. “Bless your heart” was invented for just that kind of situation. It’s a friendly way to say “go to hell.”

# DANG

When it comes to just showin’ your overall dissatisfaction with a situation, the word dang is a good replacement for the word “damn.” It’s more polite, sounds more southern, and gets the point across just the same. Plus, it’s just fun to say.

Examples:

“You don’t think very highly of me? Well bless your heart.”

“Dang! Somebody ate all the chips and queso.”

## 8. Learn Spanglish

Texas is a giant melting pot of cultures, and one of the biggest contributors is Mexican/Tejano culture. If you memorize the words and phrases below, and sprinkle in English for the words you don't know, you will have learned roughly the entire four-year high school requirement of Spanish in Texas, aka Spanglish.

- Gracias – (grassy – ass) – Thank you
- Amigo – (ahh – me – go) – Friend
- Mañana – (mahn – ya – nah) – Tomorrow
- El Baño – (bahn – yo) – Bathroom
- Margarita – (mar – gar – eat – uh) – A delicious lime based concoction
- Cerveza – (ser – vay – sah) – Beer
- No – (noh) – No

“Uno mas cerveza por favor!”  
*Another beer please!*

“¿Donde esta el baño?”  
*Where is the bathroom?*

## 9. Stop using the word “hi” when you say “hello”

# HOWDY

You may or may not know this, but Howdy is a contraction of the words How Do You Do. It also just sounds a heck of a lot nicer without sounding too much like a Northerner. Anyway, we don't really say “hi” or “hello” to anyone. Howdy should be substituted for any of those words.

## 10. Use metaphors to describe everything

Why describe things plainly when you can describe them using a mix of animals, nature, and other funny objects? Take, for instance, the saying “all hat and no cattle.” That’s a much nicer way to say that someone is all talk. Here are a few more to add to your daily usage.

He’s swimmin’ in it.  
*He’s overwhelmed*

She’d foul up a two car funeral procession.  
*She is error-prone.*

Nobody ever drowned in sweat.  
*Hard work never killed anyone.*

She’s got enough tongue for 10 rows of teeth.  
*She sure can talk a lot.*

He was as welcome as a skunk at a lawn party.  
*He was unwelcome.*

You can put boots in the oven, but it don’t make em biscuits.  
*Say what you will, but it won’t change the truth.*

He looks like the dog’s been keepin’ him under the porch.  
*He’s not very good looking.*

She was about as friendly as fire ants.  
*She was not friendly.*

## **11. Forget everything you knew about how to pronounce words correctly**

Because of the aforementioned melting pot nature of our great state, many of the words you see aren't pronounced exactly as they look. We like to add letters that don't exist, and drop others that do. Great examples are the following:

- Gruene – (gr – ee- n)
- Burnet – (burn – it)
- Refugio – (ref – ur – eeh – oh)
- Bexar – (bay – err)
- Kuykendahl – (ker – ken – dahl)
- Bowie – (Boo – eee)
- Boerne – (burn – knee)
- Waxahachie – (walks – uh – hatch – ee)

## Summary

Congratulations! You've now completed your first lesson on how to speak Texan. Given enough time and alcohol, even you can begin to start sounding more Texan. Don't get frustrated if you don't get the hang of it immediately. Native Texans won't make fun of you. They'll just respond with "you ain't from around here are ya?"

I'm lookin forward to seein y'all at the conference next year in Fort Worth. We are gonna dust off our boots, kick up our heels and have ourselves a rip roarin grand old time.

Jim Arnet

2018 Conference Chairman