In Texas, you can find craters! What is a crater? It is a large hollow spot in the ground. Some craters are made when an object from space hits land. That object is a meteor.

Meteors are big chunks of rock or a metal like iron. Meteors travel at a rapid speed in space. Meteors may go so fast that they burn up. You may have seen meteors burning in the night sky. These meteors are called shooting stars. Shooting stars might seem like a space magic show!
If a meteor does not burn up and crashes on a planet instead, its name is changed a little. It’s called a meteorite. Most meteorites are tiny specks and will not cause much damage. But some can be much bigger. A large meteorite can cause real problems and even change our climate. That might affect human life.

A major crater is close to Odessa, Texas. It is the second largest crater in the United States. For a long, long time, the cause of this big hole by Odessa was a bit of a secret. It was not until around 1920 that people realized this big hole was an old crater. A meteorite crashed there thousands and thousands of years ago.

When that meteor hit, it dug a hole about 30 meters deep. That’s more than 100 feet below ground level! This meteor left a hole that is about 170 meters wide. That’s almost as long as six football fields!

Humans study craters to find bits of meteorites. Those bits of rock and metal tell us interesting things about outer space.

You can visit museums that display bits of meteorite. When you do, remember that a meteorite came a long way to visit us.