

Lesson 2: The Annexation of Texas

Teacher Edition – Structured Academic Controversy

Procedure: (from student directions)

1. Receive your pair and group assignment from your teacher.
2. Record your original assigned position (pro-annexation or anti-annexation) on the first page of your SAC packet.
3. Read the primary and secondary sources provided in your packet.
4. Take notes on *student note handout #1* in your SAC packet.
5. Share your notes and thoughts about the material with your partner. Plan your presentation. (Hint: focus on the three most important arguments for your position.)
6. One side presents its position (three arguments) to the other side. The other side will listen carefully and take notes on *student note handout #2*. After the first side has presented, the listening pair should repeat the arguments and ask any necessary questions to make sure they understand the other side's argument.
7. Repeat step #6 for the opposite side. The pair that listened first will now present to the other pair.
8. Next you and your partner will be assigned to work with a different pair. You will also switch sides and begin researching for the other position. (For example, if you started as pro-annexation, you will now present the anti-annexation argument.) Take notes on *student note handout #3*. Work with your partner as you did in step #5.
9. One side presents its position (three arguments) to the other side. The other side will listen carefully and take notes on *student note handout #3*. After the first side has presented, the listening pair should repeat the arguments and ask any necessary questions to make sure they understand the other side's argument.
10. Continue asking questions and providing feedback until everyone is satisfied that their argument has been heard and understood, and that they understand the opposing argument.
11. Now the four of you will come to a *consensus* or an agreement about annexation. Should the US annex Texas? You may need to compromise. Use your notes on handouts #1-4 and the background information in your packet. Feel free to change your mind and come up with your own opinion of the issue. Record your group's consensus on *student note handout #5*.
12. Once you have come to a consensus and completed handout #5, you may begin working on your recommendation to President Tyler. We will share our consensus as a class. Be sure to choose a presenter from your group that will share your consensus.

General Rules and Protocol:

- Respect each other.
- You may disagree with a group member's position and argument but don't criticize the person.
- Don't take criticism or disagreement personally.
- Be sure to listen carefully to others' presentations, take notes and ask questions.
- Learn about both positions; feel free to change your mind after reading the background information and listening to presentations.
- Don't talk over each other or interrupt.
- Try to come up with a consensus, don't try to "win" the argument.

Guiding Questions: Visit groups while they are researching and presenting. Ask the following questions to help students through various parts of the activity.

- Research:
 - o What are some pros of annexation?
 - o How will annexation affect Texas' relationship with Mexico, the US and Europe (Britain and France especially)?
 - o What are the potential military consequences of annexation?
 - o How will annexation affect the economies of the US, Texas, Mexico and Europe?
 - o How will annexation affect sectionalism (division within the US based on competing regional beliefs and needs) in the US?
 - o What does the US stand to gain from annexation? To lose?
 - o Why would some Americans oppose annexation? What could they be afraid of/worried about?
- Presenting:
 - o What are some possible counterpoints to this argument/position?
 - o What key points should you record to help you when you switch sides?
 - o How would the pro-annexationists respond to this argument? How would the anti-annexationists respond to this argument?
- Consensus-building:
 - o What are the main pros and cons concerning the annexation of Texas?
 - o What are you willing to give up to reach a consensus?
 - o What action would be the best for the US? Texas? Both?
 - o How will your decision affect Texas and American relationships with Mexico, Britain and France?

Resource links for teachers – Structured Academic Controversy
(Examples, additional explanation)

<http://serc.carleton.edu/sp/library/sac/index.html>

From the website *Pedagogy in Action*. Provides an explanation and rationale for Structured Academic Controversy.

<http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/archive/cl1/CL/doingcl/controv.htm>

From the Wisconsin Center for Education Research. Provides an explanation and example of Structured Academic Controversy.