

The Annexation of Texas

Structured Academic Controversy (SAC)

Student Packet: A

Student Directions – Structured Academic Controversy

Introduction:

Today you will be participating in a Structured Academic Controversy. It's like a debate, but you will have the chance to argue both sides of the annexation issue. You will work in pairs to prepare your arguments. After both pairs have researched and presented for both sides (pro-annexation and anti-annexation), your group must come to a consensus or agreement. See the procedure steps below for specific directions. All of your information will be provided in your SAC packet. You will take notes on handouts in this packet.

Procedure:

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.

Student Note Handout #1

First assigned position: _____

[illegible]

Three Main Arguments	
1.	

1.

2.

3.

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Student note handout #2

General Notes	Questions/Counter-arguments

Student Note Handout #3

Second assigned position: _____

	General Notes

Three Main Arguments	
1.	

1.

2.

3.

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Student note handout #4

General Notes	Questions/Counter-arguments

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Student note handout #5

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Student note handout #5

Possible solutions

Consensus/Common ground reached

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Document A (A)

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, in Congress met:

The Subscribers, Citizens of Phila City and county of Pa.
Respectfully represent:

That they believe in right and justice that Texas is ours, having purchased it from France, it being part and parcel of the Louisiana purchase made by Mr. Jefferson in 1803, and being actually and absolutely in our possession for 16 years until 1819, when we ceded it without the consent of her citizens to Spain, hence it has virtually been ours since. Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Madison, Mr. Monroe, and Mr. Adams all contended that Texas was a clearly included in the Louisiana purchase as New Orleans, and the French Commissioner, Mr. Lausatt when delivering Louisiana to us announced the Rio Del Norte as the true boundary on the west. The Spanish authorities ordered the delivery of all the posts west of the Mississippi, and east of the Rio Del Norte to the United States.

In the 3rd Article of the Treaty we made a solemn pledge to France and the people of Texas to protect them, (the people of Texas) in the free enjoyment of their liberty, property, and religion.

And now after Texas having made a patriotic struggle successfully for Independence, and being acknowledged as such by the great powers of the world, and her people being citizens of this great Republic, flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone, and the great unanimity of her people in wishing to become a member of this Union, we are bound as patriots, as lovers of our free institution, to throw the mantle¹ of our Constitution over and around and embrace her as a member of our great and glorious Confederacy².

Therefore we respectfully ask that your Honorable body may ratify the treaty for re-annexation of Texas laid before the Senate by the President of the United States, and if in case of it not being ratified by the Senate, then we respectfully ask that Texas be received by both houses of Congress into the Union, as a Territory of the United States.

And we will ever pray.

¹ A figurative cape or cloak symbolizing authority.

² In this case, confederacy is another word for union or country.

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Document B (A)

Department of State
Washington Augt 6th 1844
To C.H. Raymond Esq.
Acting Charge d.Affaires of Texas

Sir,

Information has just been received...that Mexico is actually about to make a hostile movement upon this country [Republic of Texas]. Information received from the city of Mexico through the agent of the United States Government...that, General Santa Anna is engaged in raising funds, and recruiting an army for the avowed purpose of attempting to [reconquer]...Texas. He has already dispatched a number of troops from the city of Mexico and is concentrating them and other forces upon the Rio Grande.

[These movements of troops] seem...to indicate that these movements of the enemy have been caused by pending negotiations between the United States and Texas on the subject [of annexation]. I have...called...upon charge d'affaires of the United States General Howard, requesting him to take early action upon the assurances given to this government...that the promised aid might be rendered to Texas by [the U.S.].

It was his impression [the U.S. president] that he should in case of threatened danger to Texas at any time command the aid of the military and naval forces of the United States in the Gulf and upon our frontier.

This government [Republic of Texas] trusts that the action of the United Staets in reference to this subject will be prompt and efficient, a course which you will urge upon him by every consideration in your power to offer.

Should not the required aid be rendered by the United States it is probably you will be instructed to break off all negotiations...[concerning] the annexation of Texas to the United States, nor will we wait beyond a reasonable time for their determination to be made known.

Your obt. svt. [obedient servant]
(signed) Anson Jones

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Document C (A)

Ashbel Smith to Isaac Van Zandt

Confidential

January 25, 1843

You are of course aware of the Treaty whereby England agreed...[in] mediating a peace between Texas and Mexico, and of the utter failure of that mediation.

You are also doubtless aware that I was instructed to invite the Govt of France to act in concert with England and the United States in making a joint representation to Texas and Mexico – that France acceded to that invitation with alacrity and every manifestation of friendly spirit, and instructed its Ambassador at London to present this subject to the British Govt; and that the British Govt positively refused to act in concert with France and the United States in this matter.

There are many points and facts in our recent relations with England to which I would gladly call your attention.... That Govt [English] were afraid that Texas might be annexed to the American Union. They desired our separate existence for commercial reasons, as a consumer of their manufactures and a producer of cotton not subject to the tariff³.... They desired our separate existence as [creating] a barrier to the encroachment of the United States upon Mexico.

It is the purpose of some persons in England to procure the abolition of Slavery in Texas. They propose to accomplish this end by friendly negotiation. They estimate the number of slaves in Texas at 12,000 and would consider the payment for them in full, as a small sum for the advantages...from the establishment of a free State on the Southern borders of the Slave holding States of the American Union.

Until within a few months the British Govt undoubtedly desired the establishment of peace between Texas and Mexico – Texas remaining a slave holding country...from an apprehension, that if the contest continued Texas might be thrown into the American union. That Govt are now convinced that Texas cannot be admitted into this Union, and that a decisive attempt on the part of the southern States to receive Texas would endanger the stability of the Union.

Does it not behoove⁴ the American people particularly of the Slave holding States to look to this subject; and the American Government single handed or [with] France to declare to the world their determination to maintain the Independence of Texas?

Signed Ashbel Smith

To: Hon. Isaac Van Zandt

³ A tax on imported goods.

⁴ To be necessary for

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Document D (A)

London, 42 St. James Place

June 24, 1844

Hon. Anson Jones

Secretary of State

Sir,

His Majesty's Government [Britain] perceive[s] that Texas in agreeing to treat for annexation has been influenced only by the wish to obtain in this way honorable peace after the total and avowed failure of the Mediation of friendly Powers.

The rejection of the annexation treaty by the American Senate was regarded as nearly or quite certain, nothing would be done by this Government [Britain] until the American Congress shall have finally disposed of the subject for the present session. The British and French Governments would be willing, if Texas desired to remain independent, to settle the whole matter by a "Diplomatic Act": this diplomatic act in which Texas would of course participate would ensure peace and settle boundaries between Texas and Mexico.

The American Government would be invited to participate in the "Act" as one of the parties guaranteeing...equally with the European Governments; that Mexico...would be invited to become a party to the Diplomatic Act, and in case of her refusal [Mexico's], would be forced to submit to its decisions.

Lord Aberdeen did not as I remember use the word Treaty, but [used] the phrase Diplomatic Act. It would, however, have all the obligations of a treaty...and it would...be perpetual.

Such [an] act would...give to the European Governments...a perfect right to forbid for all time to come the annexation of Texas to the United States, as also even the peaceful incorporation of any portion of Mexico...which might hereafter wish to unite itself with Texas.

Your obedient servant

Ashbel Smith

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Document E (A)

John Tyler

President of the United States of America

Greeting

Know...that I have given & granted and do hereby give and grant to John C. Calhoun, Secretary of State of the United States, full power & authority...to meet and confer with Isaac Van Zandt & J. Pickney Henderson, Ministers accredited to the Government of the United States from the Republic of Texas, being [given] with the like full powers of & concerning the annexation of Texas to the said United States, and to conclude a treaty upon that subject and all others connected with it for the final ratification of the President of the United States, by & with the advice & consent of the Senate.... Given under my hand at the City of Washington, the fifth day of April eighteen hundred & forty four & of the Independence of the United States....

By the President,

John Tyler

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Document F (A)

Petition from the Citizens of Vermont Against Annexation of Texas

To the Senate of the United States

The undersigned citizens of...Vermont...protest against the annexation of Texas by treaty or in any other mode without the consent of all the states, as unconstitutional – injurious to their rights and interests and dangerous to the peace and prosperity of the Union.

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Document G (A)



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Document H (A)

George W. Terrell to Anson Jones

November 22, 1844

My Dear Doctor, - * * * I have had a long interview with Mr. Saligny...on the subject of annexation. She [France] is *ready* to give the guarantee spoken of...*provided* Texas will pledge herself to hold no further negotiations on the subject of annexation.

Mr. Saligny said to me, *in private conversation*, what he would not say to the Secretary of State...that his Government looked upon itself as having been *very uncandidly*⁵ dealt with by ours, and will be very cautious in interfering further in our behalf.

It is my candid opinion, as I believe I have often expressed it to you, that annexation never will take place. But if it ever could, it is clear that it cannot be done at the approaching session of the Congress of the United States...and annexation, as it should, will slumber forever in the "*tomb of the Capulets*."⁶ This is, at least, my opinion of the matter.

Your friend, sincerely,
G.W. Terrell

⁵ Uncandid – not truthful or straightforward.

⁶ Tomb, or mass family grave of the Capulet family from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

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Who's Who: List of Important People

Texan Politicians and Diplomats

Sam Houston: Led the Texan Army during the War for Texan Independence; elected first president of the Republic of Texas.

Anson Jones: Served as Secretary of State under Houston; elected second president of the Republic of Texas.

Isaac Van Zandt: Charge d'affaires of Texas.

C.H. Raymond, Esq: Charge d'affaires of Texas.

James Pickney Henderson: Minister of Texas to Britain and France; Texas' first governor.

Ashbel Smith: Minister of Texas to Britain and France.

George W. Terrell: Attorney General for the Republic of Texas; charge d'affaires to France, Great Britain and Spain.

British Politicians and Diplomats

Charles Pakenham: The British minister in Washington.

Lord Aberdeen: British foreign minister

French Diplomats

Dubois de Saligny: French foreign minister to Texas

US Politicians and Diplomats

Thomas Hart Benton: Democrat, Missouri