

The Annexation of Texas

Student Structured Academic The Annexation of Texas

Structured Academic Controversy (SAC)

Student Packet: O

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: _____

[illegible]

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

Possible solutions

Consensus/Common ground reached

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Document A – Secondary Source (0)

Excerpted and paraphrased from *America: A Narrative History* by George Brown Tindall and David E. Shi.

The Lone Star Republic (Republic of Texas) wrote a constitution that made slavery illegal, Sam Houston the first president of Texas, and voted for Texas to be annexed (to join willingly) to the US. Adding a new slave state would cause an argument between free and slave states in the US and could cause a war with Mexico. President Andrew Jackson waiting until his last day in office to officially recognize the Republic of Texas (as a new, independent country).

The US government was not willing to offer Texas annexation right away, and so the Texans decided to try to make it on their own. Under president Mirabeau Lamar, elected in 1838, Texans started talking about expanding their country to the Pacific Ocean. They wanted to make a new country that was as strong and powerful as the US. France and Britain officially recognized the new Texas government and began to trade with Texas. Americans continued to move to Texas, and the population grew from 40,000 in 1836 to 150,000 in 1845. Many people wanted to come to Texas because of the cheap, fertile land. Most of these people who moved to Texas wanted to stay part of America and considered themselves Americans at heart.

Most Texans never gave up on the possibility of being annexed by the US. The US government became nervous about Britain's involvement in Texas and Mexico. Southern slaveholders worried that British involvement would mean the end of slavery in Texas (Britain had already made slavery illegal by the mid 1800s). The US government began to talk to Texas in secret, and wrote a treaty by spring of 1843.

The US Senate rejected the first annexation treaty because they were afraid annexation would cause conflict between the North and the South and with Mexico.

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Source B – (O)

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

Sir,

Information has just been received...that Mexico is about to attack Texas. General Santa Anna is trying to raise money, and recruit an army for the purpose of reconquering Texas. He has already sent a number of troops from Mexico City and is concentrating them and other forces upon the Rio Grande River.

These troop movements seem to indicate that the movement of the enemy has been caused by pending negotiations between the United States and Texas on the subject of annexation.

It was the U.S. president’s impression that he should send troops to the Gulf of Mexico and Texas border if Texas could be in danger.

If the U.S. does not send the required aid, you will probably be instructed to break off all negotiations with the U.S. concerning annexation.

Your obedient servant
(signed) Anson Jones

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Source C – (O)

Ashbel Smith to Isaac Van Zandt

Confidential

January 25, 1843

You are of course aware of the Treaty whereby England agreed to work towards mediating a peace between Texas and Mexico, and of the failure of that mediation.

You are also obviously aware that I was told to invite the Government of France to work together with England and the United States to help Texas and Mexico come to peace – that France was willing to accept that invitation, and told its Ambassador in London to present this subject to the British Government; and that the British Government refused to work together with France and the United States on this matter [peace between Mexico and Texas].

There are many points and facts in our recent discussions with England to which I will call your attention.... The British Government was afraid that Texas might be annexed to America. The British wanted Texas to remain independent for economic reasons, as buyers of English manufactured goods and a producer of cotton that is not taxed by the tariff¹. They wanted us to remain separate to prevent the United States from acting aggressive towards Mexico.

Some people in England want to abolish slavery in Texas. They want to accomplish this with friendly negotiation. They estimate the number of slaves in Texas at 12,000 and would consider paying the slave-owner to compensate him for his lost property.

Is it not important for the American people, especially those from the slave-holding South to look into this subject?

Signed Ashbel Smith

¹ A tax on imported goods.

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Source D – (0)

London, 42 St. James Place

June 24, 1844

Honorable Anson Jones

Secretary of State (Texas)

Sir,

The rejection of the annexation treaty by the American Senate was thought to be nearly or quite certain, and the British government will do nothing until the American Congress has dropped the issue of annexation for the present session. The British and French governments would be willing, if Texas wanted to remain independent, to settle the issue by a "Diplomatic Act": this diplomatic act would ensure peace between Texas and Mexico and settle boundaries between the two countries.

The American government would be invited to participate in the "Act", equally with France and Britain. Mexico will also be invited, and if it refuses it would still be forced to follow the act.

Lord Aberdeen did not use the word Treaty, but it would have the obligations of a treaty and it would remain in effect forever.

Such an act would give Britain and France a right to forbid annexation of Texas to the United States, and any peaceful inclusion of Mexican territory to the U.S.

Your obedient servant

Ashbel Smith

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Document E (O)

John Tyler

President of the United States of America

Greeting

Know that I have given to John C. Calhoun, Secretary of State of United States, full control to meet with Isaac Van Zandt and J. Pickney Henderson, Ministers to the US from Texas, to draw up a treaty for the annexation of Texas by the United States. The president and Senate will ratify the treaty.

By the President,
John Tyler

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Document F (O)

Petition from the Citizens of Vermont Against Annexation of Texas

To the Senate of the United States

Citizens of Vermont protest the annexation of Texas by treaty or other form without all the states agreeing. It is unconstitutional, hurts the states and is dangerous to our peace and econom

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Document G – (0)



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Source H – (O)

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

The Subscribers, Citizens of Philadelphia city and county of Pa.
Respectfully represent:

That they believe that Texas is ours, having purchased it from France, it being part of the Louisiana purchase made by Mr. Jefferson in 1803, and being absolutely in our possession for 16 years until 1819, when we gave it away without the consent of the people who lived there, and it has virtually been ours since. Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Madison, Mr. Monroe, and Mr. Adams all argued that Texas was clearly included in the Louisiana Purchase with the Rio Del Norte as the true boundary on the west.

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

And now after Texas having won its independence, and being acknowledged by the great powers of the world, and her people, flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone, and the great agreement of her people in wishing to become part of the United States, we are bound as patriots, as lovers of freedom, to throw the mantle² of our Constitution over and around and embrace her [Texas] as a member of our great and glorious country.

Therefore we respectfully ask that you may ratify the treaty for reannexation of Texas laid before the Senate by the President of the United States, and if it is not ratified by the Senate, then we respectfully ask that Texas be brought into the Union with a joint-resolution, as a Territory of the U.S.

And we will ever pray.

² A figurative cape or cloak symbolizing authority.

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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