

Texas: Prelude to Civil War

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Instructional Kit

OVERVIEW

This instructional kit contains two lessons that may be taught consecutively or as stand-alone lessons that teach students about the settling and annexation of Texas.

TEACHING THESIS

The settling and annexation of Texas had a major impact on the course of the United States and its relationship with the world powers of the nineteenth century.

SUGGESTED GRADED LEVEL AND LENGTH OF ACTIVITIES

This instructional kit is designed for US History to 1865 (5th or 6th).

The kit consists of two independent lessons. Each lesson is planned for a 55 minute period. Lessons may be taught together, sequentially or individually as stand-alone lessons.

SIGNIFICANCE AND RELEVANCE

The content in these two lessons covers a Virginia SOL (USI.8a), reinforces understanding of the growing sectional tension in the US and causes of the Civil War (USI.9a), and provides students with important information in terms of US history and cultural literacy (the Alamo). By spending two days on the settling and annexation of Texas, students will not only understand the acquisition of Texas but will also come away with a strong foundation of the causes of sectional tension in the US during the mid nineteenth century and causes of the Civil War. When teaching the causes of the Civil War, teachers can refer to these lessons when activating prior knowledge about the origins and impacts of sectionalism in the US.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- The student will be able to explain the motivations of Americans to settle in Texas.
- The student will be able to explain the origins of the War for Texan Independence, the significance of the Alamo in this war and the war's impact on American and World History.
- The student will be able to interpret and analyze primary sources.
- The student will be able to sort through various events and place them in a timeline demonstrating knowledge of chronology of the subject.
- The student will be able to analyze various perspectives on the annexation of Texas, including those of Europe.
- The student will be able to participate in a Structured Academic Controversy and come to a consensus with group members concerning the annexation of Texas.

- The student will be able to write a recommendation to President Tyler regarding the annexation of Texas.
- The student will be able to explain the origins of the Mexican-American War including President Polk's role.
- The student will be able to analyze different perspectives regarding the Mexican-American War and create an assessment of the war and its impact.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Lesson 1

Students will learn about the settling of Texas through direct instruction about colonization, the War for Texan Independence and the Alamo. Students will then read a letter written by Col. William Travis and will analyze the document in small groups, pairs or individually. Students will then share their analysis of the Travis letter and will complete a menu assessment that will evaluate their understanding of the impact of the Alamo and the War for Texan Independence on Texas, Mexico and the US.

Lesson 2

Students will review the settling of Texas and the War for Texan Independence with an individual starter and class discussion.

Students will then participate in a Structured Academic Controversy (SAC) during which they research and prepare arguments for and against American annexation of Texas. Student mastery of objectives will be demonstrated during SAC discussions, class consensus discussion and individual recommendations to President Tyler.