

**Texas: Prelude to Civil War**  
**Lesson 2: The Annexation of Texas**

Teresa Goodin

Texas, annexation

US History to 1865 (5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade)

One 55 minute class period

(Note: may be used in conjunction with lesson 1 or as a stand-alone lesson.)

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| <b>Lesson Overview</b>   | This lesson analyzes the debate over the annexation of Texas, pro and con arguments as well as the French and British perspective and involvement in the event. Students will participate in a Structured Academic Controversy during which they will present both sides of the annexation argument and will come to a consensus. Then students will use what they have learned to write a recommendation to President Tyler in favor or against annexation. |
| <b>Guiding Questions</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Why did the US want to annex Texas?</li><li>2. Why did Texas want to be annexed by the US?</li><li>3. Why were some Americans opposed to annexation?</li><li>4. How did Britain and France respond to the annexation controversy?</li><li>5. How would the debate over the annexation of Texas lead to division and disunion in the US?</li></ol>                                                                   |

**Objectives**

1. The student will be able to explain various perspectives on the annexation of Texas including those in favor, those against, Mexican, French and British.
2. The student will be able to come to a consensus with group members on the annexation of Texas.
3. The student will be able to write a recommendation to President Tyler that argues either for or against annexation, using primary and secondary sources as evidence.
4. The student will be able to relate the issue of annexation to greater causes of the Civil War.

## **Standards of Learning**

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### **Explicitly Taught:**

- USI.8a      The student will demonstrate knowledge of westward expansion and reform in America from 1801-1861 by
- a) describing territorial expansion and how it affected the political map of the United States, with emphasis on the Louisiana Purchase, Lewis and Clark expedition, and the acquisitions of Florida, Texas, Oregon and California.

### **Supports:**

- USI.9a      The student will demonstrate knowledge of the causes, major events, and effects of the Civil War by
- a) describing the cultural, economic, and constitutional issues that divided the nation.

## **Historical Skills (as outlined by OAH)**

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- Historical comprehension
- Historical Analysis and Interpretation
- Historical Issues – Analysis and Decision Making

## **Assessment Tools**

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- Structured Academic Controversy handouts
- Participation in class discussion
- Recommendation to President Tyler

## **Materials/Resources**

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- Structured Academic Controversy packet
  - o Primary source readings:
    - *Petition from Citizens of Pennsylvania in Favor of the Annexation of Texas*
    - *Petition from Citizens of Vermont Against Annexation of Texas*
    - *Joint Resolution for Annexing Texas*
    - Excerpts from *How to Conquer Texas before Texas Conquers Us* By Edward Everett Hale
    - Excerpts from *Thoughts on the Proposed Annexation of Texas* by Theodore Sedgwick
    - Excerpts from *Address on the annexation of Texas, and the aspect of slavery in the United States* by Stephen C. Phillips

- Excerpts from *Letters Relating to the History of Annexation* by Anson Jones.
  - Letter from Ashbel Smith to Anson Jones (British perspective)
  - George W. Terrell to Anson Jones (French perspective)
- o Student processing graphic organizer
- Discussion questions
- Recommendation assignment
- Whiteboard/chalkboard/smartboard

### **Modifications**

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- There are three levels of SAC packets, A (advanced), O (on-grade level), S (needs extra support).
- Primary sources in SAC packet may be rewritten/excerpted or otherwise modified. Teacher can combine sources from three packets to meet individual student needs.
- Student graphic organizers in SAC packet may be modified.

### **Instructional Procedures/Process**

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1. Starter: post the following question for students to respond to on the board.  
“Why did Americans immigrate to Texas in the mid 1800s? Why did Texas declare its independence and fight for it during the War for Texan Independence? How did the Alamo impact Texas, Mexico and the War for Texan Independence?”

Note: if you plan to use this as a stand-alone lesson, review of these topics/activation of prior knowledge will be necessary at the beginning of class. Those who preceded this lesson with lesson one will need to spend less time on review.

2. Review Structured Academic Controversy procedures with students. (See teacher guide and student directions in SAC packets.)

Note: depending upon how familiar your students are with SAC, you may modify this step. See student directions handout and teacher guide.

3. Students are divided into pairs. Then student pairs join another pair to create a group of four. Each pair is assigned to a side: pro or anti annexation of Texas by the US.
4. Students spend about 10 minutes researching their assigned side (pro or anti) and taking notes. (Students will use primary and secondary sources and graphic organizers provided in SAC packet.)

5. Following research time, each pair takes turns sharing its position with the other pair, following the guidelines of the SAC.
6. Student pairs are then assigned to another pair, creating a second group of four. Students then take on the opposite position. (i.e. Student pairs that started with pro-annexation will switch and argue an anti-annexation position.) Remind students that during this second part of the SAC they will need to include French and British perspectives in their argument.
7. Students spend about 7 minutes researching their new position being sure to include French and British perspectives.
8. Students then repeat step 5, arguing the opposite side of the annexation issue.
9. Students remain in their second group of 4 and enter the consensus-building part of the SAC. Student groups will attempt to come to a consensus on the annexation issue. Students will decide whether or not the US should annex Texas. Groups record consensus on graphic organizer in SAC packet.
10. Student groups elect one presenter to present their consensus.
11. Presenters share consensuses with class and class evaluates the positives and negatives of each proposed consensus. (See teacher guide for guiding questions.)
12. Once the SAC is concluded, students may begin work on the wrap-up assignment: write a recommendation to President Tyler. (See wrap-up assignment handout, can also be displayed on whiteboard/chalkboard and answered in student notebook.)

### **Closure**

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Student understanding will be assessed through teacher observation during SAC, sharing of consensuses and Tyler recommendation. (See SAC observation guidelines in teacher SAC packet and rubric for grading the recommendation.)