

How do we know what we know? *Advanced*

Unit 4: The Mexican National Era

Name: Date: Period:

Part I: Challenges in Mexico

The Mexican National Era was filled with numerous challenges to the newly formed nation of Mexico. The first order of business facing the new country was to establish a government, but what type of government should they choose? Different groups in the country had very different ideas about who should have power in the government. At times, this led to disputes and conflicts between various groups within the country. Read the excerpt from a letter below for one person's perspective on this issue.

City of Mexico November 22nd, 1822.

[Dear] Sir,

When I arrived here Congress were sitting but progressing very slowly, the discord and jealousy manifested from the first day of the session of Congress against the Generalissimo Iturbide (now Emperor) was increasing daily and everything was at a stand - There were three distinct parties in Congress, one for a Bourbon King, one for an Emperor from this country, and the other for a Republic, in this state of things the government was approximating towards Anarchy, when on the night of the 18 of May the army stationed in this city proclaimed Iturbide Emperor.

- A letter from Stephen F. Austin to Edward Lovelace

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| ___ 1) Congress | a) A supreme ruler |
| ___ 2) Emperor | b) Disagreement, lack of harmony |
| ___ 3) Distinct | c) Having no organization or leader in charge. |
| ___ 4) Discord | d) A government where people elect representatives |
| ___ 5) Republic | e) Different and separate |
| ___ 6) Anarchy | f) A group of lawmakers |

Part II: Challenges in Texas

Texas was caught in the middle of the Mexican political power struggles at a time when most Tejanos were incredibly eager to improve conditions in their state. The Tejano population of Texas had been dramatically reduced by the War for Mexican Independence, and many lacked access to food and basic supplies. Comanches could launch raids against them any time they wanted, and there was almost no help or support from the government in Mexico City. Many Tejanos were desperate to do something – *anything* – to improve conditions in their state.

A year before Mexico won its independence from Spain, an American named Moses Austin arrived in San Antonio with an interesting proposal for the governor of Texas. Austin proposed to bring American families from the United States to settle in Texas. Most of these Americans would be cotton farmers, as the land in east Texas was perfect for growing cotton. Austin's idea intrigued many Tejanos, who wanted to grow the Texas population and economy. It could be beneficial for both Tejanos and Americans, but would Spain accept Austin's proposal? Let's hear some different perspectives on the matter.

It will be very convenient to grant the permission requested by Moses Austin so that the Three Hundred families that are said to be desirous of settling in the Province of Texas may do so, provided they do so under the precise conditions indicated in the representation that he made to this effect to the Governor of that Province . . . very strong hopes can be formed that the province will receive a known increase in its branches of Agriculture, industry, and Arts by the new inventions that can take him.

- *A letter from Texas governor Antonio Martínez to Moses Austin, discussing the Spanish government's views on Austin's proposal, February 8, 1820.*

1. According to this source, how did the Spanish government view Austin's proposal? Provide evidence to support your answer.

