

How do we know what we know? *Foundations*

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 to get one person's point of view on this matter.

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

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| ___ 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 |

- ___ 1) According to this source, what was the primary problem facing the government at the time of this meeting?
- a. ~~The Spanish threat to southern Mexican states like the Yucatan.~~
 - b. Congress' inability to agree on what type of government Mexico should have.
 - c. Clashes between Bourbon King and the Mexican emperor for control of the army.
 - d. Congress taking control of the army to institute their own leader.
- ___ 2) Which quote from the passage best supports your answer to question number one?
- a. ~~when on the night of the 18 of May the army stationed in this city proclaimed Iturbide Emperor.~~
 - b. the discord and jealousy manifested from the first day of the session of Congress against the Generalissimo Iturbide (now Emperor) was increasing daily
 - c. in this state of things the government was approximating towards Anarchy,
 - d. 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
- ___ 3) According to the source, what was the resolution to this problem?
- a. A general named Iturbide used the army to take total control of the government, naming himself emperor.
 - b. The majority members of Congress let the Mexican people vote on their desired form of government.
 - c. The Congress lost all control of the government, were overthrown by the people, and anarchy ensued.
 - d. ~~All answers are correct.~~

4) What do observe about this primary source and what can you infer about the people and events discussed based on this excerpt?

| |
|--------------------------|
| I observe _____ |
| _____. I can infer _____ |
| _____ |

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 decreased because of the War for Mexican Independence, and many lacked food and basic supplies. Comanche raids and attacks were frequent, and there was almost no help or support from the Mexican government. Many Tejanos wanted 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**. Many Americans were interested in settling in east Texas **because the land was perfect for cotton farming**. Austin’s idea sounded interesting to 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?

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.

The Spanish government **supported** / **opposed** Austin’s proposal. Evidence that supports this claim is **(A) the governor says “it will be convenient to grant permission” to Moses Austin and says it will improve agriculture and industry in the region.** **(B) the governor infers that American settlers will hurt development in Texas.**

. . . this is the only way to settle and develop this fertile province, and that on the other hand once it is settled with families of integrity and good habits who bring their credentials, as Your Excellency will be informed by said document, I do not think there is anything to fear; and I hope Your Excellency will be pleased to grant said petition . . .

- A letter from Texas governor Antonio Martínez to the Spanish viceroy, January 4, 1821.

1. Did Governor Martínez support Moses Austin’s proposal? Why or why not?

Governor Martínez **supported** / **opposed** Moses Austin’s proposal because **(A)** he says that there is much to fear from American immigrants **(B)** he says that the families will have “integrity” and “good habits”, so they will be good people.

2. Governor Martínez told the viceroy that he “did not think there was anything to fear” by inviting Americans into Texas. What fears do you think the Spanish government might have had about inviting Americans to settle in Texas?

The Spanish government might have been afraid or worried that _____

3. In this lesson, we analyzed three primary sources. Place a checkmark next to all of the **TRUE** statements about the sources we used.

- All of the sources came from letters people wrote
- The sources included opinions and facts
- The sources described things that were happening in the government
- The sources shared mostly negative views about Americans settling in Texas
- The sources talked about events happening in Texas and Mexico at the time
- The sources help us understand how people felt about issues during the Mexican National Era.