

# The Big Picture *Grade Level*

## Unit 4: The Mexican National Era

Name:

Date:

Period:

### Part I: Analyze an Image

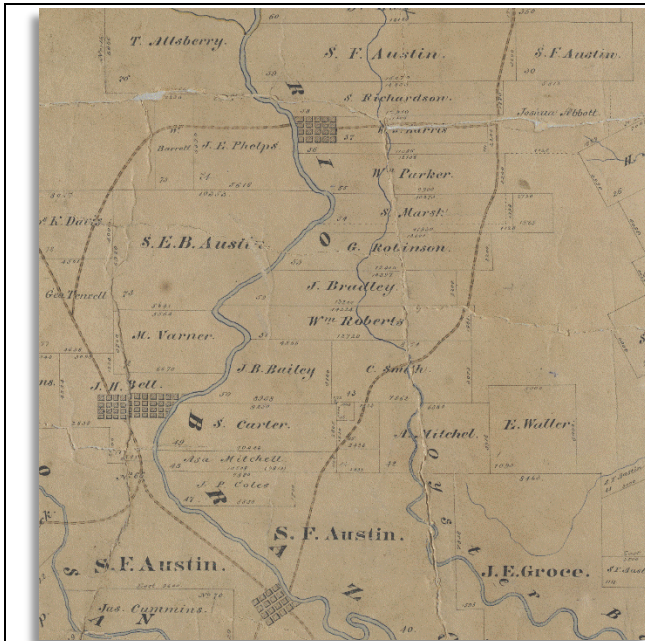


Figure 1 "Connected Map of Austin's Colony" from the Texas General Land Office.

1. What are two things you observe about this image?

2. What can you infer about this era of Texas history based on your observations of the image?

3. What is one thing you predict we will see in this unit based on the image above?

## Part II: Essential Ideas Reading Passage

At the end of the Spanish Colonial Era, **Mexico had just won its independence from Spain in 1821.** While the war against Spain was over, in many ways, the work had only just begun. **The leadership of Mexico needed to create a brand-new government,** but what type of government should they choose? Who would hold power? How much power should they have? What powers would the states, like Texas, have? What happens when people don't agree on these issues?

In addition to the enormous task of creating a government, **the war for independence had left Mexico weak and vulnerable.** The war had destroyed the Mexican economy along with a lot of land and property. Many groups of people couldn't agree on how the government should run. **These different groups all fought for power within the government.** In short, Mexico was really struggling. Many people across the country were eager for political, social, and financial stability.

In the middle of all the post-war turmoil throughout the country, **Texas was especially weak.** Previously, Spain had never provided the support necessary to strengthen Texas. The Spanish population in Texas had never been big, and the war had decreased its size even more. The Texas economy was incredibly weak. Many Tejanos lived in poverty, unable to afford the rising cost of necessities like food and medicine. The Comanche continued to dominate the region, carrying out raids on the unprotected Mexican settlements. Many Tejanos were eager for any opportunity to grow the population of their state, strengthen their communities, improve the economy, and protect their homes and families in Texas.

Meanwhile, just across the border in the southern United States, **there was a new cash crop making many people rich.** Cotton was beginning to replace wool as a cheaper, lighter, better fabric for clothing around the world. The American South provided the perfect environment for growing this profitable cash crop. Some Anglo Americans in the United States were eager to purchase their own land in fertile southern states like Mississippi to make their own fortunes growing cotton.

Unfortunately, **in 1819 there was a financial crisis in the United States which caused a lot of banks to fail.** Many people lost their life savings, their businesses, and went into debt. For some people, cotton appeared to be a chance to start over, but they couldn't afford to buy land in America to establish their own plantations. Many Americans were eager for cheap, fertile land, economic opportunities, and a fresh start.

The goals of the Mexican government, the Tejano people, and many Anglo-Americans come together in this unit to bring us into a new era of Texas history: **The Mexican National Era.**

## Part III: Cause and Effect

**Directions:** Read each event under the “Cause” column. Explain **one or two** of the effects of each event according to the passage on the previous page.

Historical Event	Effect
1. Spain had never provided adequate support to Texas during its colonial rule.	
2. Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821.	
3. Cotton was becoming a popular fabric for clothing in the U.S. (and around the world.)	
4. In 1819, there was a financial crisis in the United States.	

5. Considering the goals of the Mexican government, the Tejano people, and some of the Anglo Americans in the United States, how do you predict that these groups could work together to improve the situation in Texas during the Mexican National Era?