

The Big Picture *Advanced*

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 three 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 are two things you predict we will see in this unit based on the image above?

Part II: Essential Ideas Reading Passage

At the conclusion 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, and how much power should they have? Where would the states, like Texas, fit into this power structure? What happens if and 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 devastated the Mexican economy and destroyed a lot of land and property. Power struggles between different groups with different ideas about how the country should run created instability within the government and throughout the country. In short, Mexico was really struggling, and many within the government were eager for political, social, and financial stability.

In the midst of all the post-war turmoil throughout the country, Mexican Texas was especially weak. Previously, Spain had never provided the support necessary to strengthen Texas. The already small Spanish population had been drastically decreased due to the war. The Comanche continued to dominate the region, carrying out raids on the unprotected Mexican settlements. The Texas economy was incredibly weak, and many Tejanos lived in poverty, unable to afford the soaring cost of necessities like food and medicine. 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, a relatively new cash crop was bringing a lot of wealth to the Anglo communities of the South. Cotton was beginning to replace wool as a cheaper, lighter, more appealing fabric for clothing around the world, and 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 collapse. 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 converge 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 at least three 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?