

Looking Ahead *Advanced*

Unit 6: The Republic of Texas

Name:

Date:

Period:

So, Texas is part of the United States . . . Now What?

In 1841, Mexican President Santa Anna appointed a man named Juan Almonte to serve as Mexico's minister to the United States. Almonte moved to Washington D.C. where he worked for years to represent the interests of Mexico to the U.S. government. Much of his time was dedicated to opposing Texas annexation. Almonte, like many in the Mexican government, believed that Texas rightfully belonged to Mexico.

On March 6, 1845, just five days after the United States Congress passed the resolution to annex Texas, Almonte resigned his position in Washington, D.C., packed his bags, and returned to Mexico. Before he left, he wrote a letter to the U.S. Secretary of State, John C. Calhoun. In his letter, he wrote that Texas' annexation was essentially ***"an act of aggression, the most unjust which can be found recorded in the annals of modern history – namely, that of despoiling a friendly nation, like Mexico, of a considerable portion of her territory."*** He further argued that Mexico had the right to do whatever it took to get its lost territory back.

1. How did Almonte view the annexation of Texas to the United States based on the quote from his letter to John C. Calhoun?
2. Almonte said the U.S. ***despoiled*** Mexico of "a considerable portion of her territory." Despoil means to steal or violently remove valuable or attractive possessions. What do you think is the significance of this word choice in Almonte's letter?

On the Road to War . . .

In 1845, the president of the United States was a man named James K. Polk. One of Polk's goals for his presidency was to expand the United States all the way to the west coast of North America. Expanding to the Pacific Ocean meant easier access to new trade opportunities in the highly profitable markets of Asia. There was also a belief at that time that it was destiny, or even God's will, for the United States to expand west across the continent. This belief was often referred to as Manifest Destiny. There was one problem, however. Most of the land in the west belonged to Mexico. But Polk had a plan.

Polk first made an offer to buy California and New Mexico from Mexico. When the Mexican government refused his offer, Polk moved on to Plan B.

In July 1845, four months after Juan Almonte left his position in Washington D.C., President Polk sent an American army under the leadership of Zachary Taylor to Texas. Taylor marched his army to Corpus Christi at the Nueces River and then eventually to the Rio Grande River, into the disputed territory between Texas and Mexico. Taylor's army pointed its cannons across the Rio Grande at the Mexican army in Matamoros. Then, they waited.

According to the United States, the American army was stationed on American soil with the goal of ensuring the defense of its southern border. According to Mexico, a foreign army had just crossed into Mexico's sovereign territory, which was an act of war.

On April 25, 1846, Mexican troops crossed the Rio Grande and launched an attack on Taylor's troops near Matamoros. The U.S. - Mexico War had begun.

1. What was one of Polk's primary goals for his presidency, and why did he want to accomplish this goal?
2. What steps did Polk take to attempt to accomplish his goal? What was the outcome of those attempts?

3. Explain the term “Manifest Destiny,” and explain the role it played in the U.S. – Mexico War.

4. Complete the graphic organizer below.

The United States government believed that Mexico started the war because ...	The Mexican government believed that the U.S. started the war because ...

5. Consider the different points of view you explained above. In your own opinion, which argument do you think is most valid – Mexico’s or the United States’? Why?

6. ***Make a prediction about the next unit:***

What do you think will be the outcome of the U.S. - Mexico War? How will this war most likely affect Texas?