

# Looking Ahead *Grade Level*

## *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. His job was to represent the interests of Mexico to the U.S. government. He dedicated much of his time to opposing Texas annexation. Almonte, like many in the Mexican government, believed that Texas belonged to Mexico.

On March 1, 1845, the United States Congress passed a resolution in support of Texas annexation. Five days later, 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<sup>1</sup> a friendly nation, like Mexico, of a considerable portion of her territory."*** He also 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?
  - a. Almonte opposed Texas annexation and viewed any U.S. attempt to annex Texas as an act of war.
  - b. Almonte remained in a position of neutrality in relation to the issue of annexation, believing that he did not have the authority in his present position to speak on the matter.
  - c. Almonte was hesitant to accept Texas annexation, but later came to realize the benefits that annexation would bring to Mexico.
  - d. Almonte was an early supporter of Texas annexation and advocated that the Mexican government declare their support in the matter.

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<sup>1</sup> **Despoiling:** Stealing or violently removing valuable or attractive possessions

## 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 that the United States would have more opportunities to take part in the highly profitable trade with Asia. Some people also believed 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, 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. This land was 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 on American soil defending 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. One of President Polk's goals was to expand the United States west to the Pacific Ocean. What were two reasons in the reading for this goal? Choose TWO answers.
  - a. Polk believed that the Mexican government had stolen the western lands from the United States.
  - b. Polk had formed an alliance with the British who occupied the northwestern portion of the territory, and they planned to govern the land together.
  - c. Polk was angry at Mexican President Santa Anna for his role in the centralist uprisings and the Texas Revolution.
  - d. Polk supported the belief in Manifest Destiny – that it was the United States' destiny to expand west.
  - e. Polk wanted the United States to have better access to trade with Asia across the Pacific Ocean.

2. What steps did Polk take to attempt to accomplish his goal? What was the outcome of those attempts?

First, Polk tried to \_\_\_\_\_  
 but \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Then Polk \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

3. 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 ...

4. 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?

I think **Mexico's / the United States'** argument is most valid because \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5. **Make a prediction:**

How do you think the U.S. – Mexico War might affect Texas in the next unit?