

Texas Annexation *Advanced*

Unit 6: The Republic of Texas

Name:

Date:

Period:

The Long Road to Annexation

For nearly a decade after winning its independence in 1836, the Republic of Texas struggled as an independent nation. Texas' national debt grew every year causing significant economic hardship in the Republic. Texas struggled to establish diplomatic and commercial partnerships with other countries. There were ongoing violent clashes with Texas Indians and the constant threat of being invaded and occupied by Mexico.

During this time, the Republic of Texas applied for annexation to the United States in 1836 and again in 1844. Both applications were rejected, which was a harsh blow to Texas. From the American point of view, however, annexing Texas could lead the U.S. into war with Mexico, and would almost certainly upset the balance of political power between slave and free states in America. For many American politicians, it was not worth the risk.

Then in 1845, the U.S. Congress finally approved Texas' annexation. For most American politicians, it was still such a controversial issue that the United States nearly rejected Texas for a third time. For most Texans, annexation to the U.S. was a cause for great celebration. Becoming a state in the United States would finally bring Texas economic stability and military protection.

The Republic of Texas accepted the United States' terms for annexation on December 29, 1845, becoming the 28th state in the union.

1. What benefits would Texas gain from annexation to the United States? In contrast, what challenges might the U.S. face by annexing Texas?

The Terms of Texas Annexation to the United States

Term 1: Some states joined the United States of America as territories rather than states. The U.S. federal government managed the territories until they met the requirements to apply for full statehood. The terms of Texas' annexation, however, admitted Texas **not** as a territory, but as a state with full representation in Congress and the ability to write its own constitution.

1. Which of the following advantages did Texas have in joining the U.S. as a state rather than a territory? Check all that apply.
 - ☐ Texas could run its own state government.
 - ☐ Texas could declare war on Mexico to protect its borders.
 - ☐ Texas could write its own state laws as long as they followed the U.S. constitution.
 - ☐ Texas could elect its own leaders like a governor and state representatives.
 - ☐ Texas could make slavery legal within its borders.
 - ☐ Texas could elect two senators and at least one representative to the federal congress in Washington D.C.
 - ☐ Texas could apply for statehood when it met all the requirements.

Term 2: The Republic of Texas assumed that the United States would take responsibility for its debt when it became a state in the Union. The annexation offer that the U.S. congress made to Texas, however, required Texas to maintain responsibility for its own debt when it joined the Union.

Term 3: When most states joined the Union, they typically gave up control of their public lands to the federal government. The federal government could then use or sell the lands as it saw fit. According to Texas' terms of annexation, however, the state government of Texas was granted the right to maintain control over its public lands.

2. In one or two sentences, summarize terms 2 and 3 above. Why do you think the U.S. government included these two terms?

Term 4: Texas agreed to turn over control of its public buildings and military sites and equipment to the United States government. This included structures like the Alamo and military items like Texas' navy ships.

Term 5: The United States government and military assumed responsibility for protecting Texas from threats and enforcing its borders as claimed by the Texas government. This included the southern border at the Rio Grande and the lands on Texas' western frontier, both of which were strongly disputed by Mexico.

3. In 1842, the Mexican army invaded the Republic of Texas and occupied San Antonio twice. According to terms 4 and 5, what would be the result if the Mexican army marched into Texas after annexation to the U.S.?

Term 6: Texas has the ability to divide its territory into five separate states if it ever chooses to do so.

4. Why do you think the United States included this term? Choose all answers that you think are likely to be correct based on your prior knowledge.
- ☐ The U.S. believed that Mexico would be less likely to declare war over the issue of Texas annexation if it was no longer one unified state.
 - ☐ The U.S. hoped to decrease Texas' economic power in an attempt to convince Great Britain to lose interest in Texas cotton.
 - ☐ It could prove difficult for one state government to manage such a large area.
 - ☐ It provided the opportunity to add more slave or free states to the Union in order to maintain the balance of power between the two groups in congress.
 - ☐ The vast regional differences in the state might be better served by governments local to their specific region.