

# Mexican Independence & the Filibusters *Grade Level*

## *Unit 3: The Spanish Colonial Era*

Name:

Date:

Period:

**Directions:** Read each passage to learn about significant information pertaining to the War for Mexican Independence and the filibusters. Answer the questions that follow.

Introduction	
<p>What were some of the major changes that took place at the <b>turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century</b> according to the reading?</p>	<p><b>What was going on in Texas?</b> Spain had begun the process of ending the Mission Presidio System in Texas in 1793. The system never achieved its goals. It did not establish a strong Spanish presence in Texas, and it did not assimilate Texas Indians into Spanish culture. The Spanish population in Texas was still very small, and the true power in the region was Native tribes like the Comanche.</p> <p><b>What was going on in New Spain?</b> Centuries of the Spanish <b>caste system</b> had left most of New Spain's population deeply unhappy with their lack of rights. The lower classes in the caste system were increasingly angry with their <b>oppressive</b> government and many were desperate for change.</p> <p><b>What was going on in the world?</b> During the late 1700s and early 1800s, several different countries in the world were carrying out <b>revolutions</b> against their kings. The thirteen British colonies in North America successfully won their independence and established the United States of America. The people of France overthrew their own <b>monarchs</b> and established the first French <b>Republic</b>. The idea of people being free to govern themselves was spreading.</p>

___ 1) Caste System	a) A war to change the government of a country.
___ 2) Oppressive	b) A king or queen
___ 3) Revolution	c) The change from one century to the next
___ 4) Monarch	d) A way to divide society into lower and higher classes of people
___ 5) Republic	e) A government with elected representatives
___ 6) Turn of the century	f) Unjustly cruel or harsh on a group of people

1. What were three significant developments that occurred at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, or the 1800s? Place a checkmark next to THREE options below.

- The missions in Texas failed and the Comanche mostly controlled the region.
- Spain and the United States of America formed an alliance against France.
- Many people in New Spain were very unhappy about the social caste system.
- People in other countries wanted to get rid of their kings and make their own governments – some countries succeeded.
- The government of Spain gave up control of its North American colonies.

<h1>Causes of the War for Mexican Independence</h1> <p>Why did so many people in New Spain want to overthrow their government?</p>	<p>The society of New Spain was based on a caste system. People were divided into different social classes based on which group they were born into. People born in Spain (<i>Peninsulares</i>) were granted the highest status and the most power. Spanish people born in the Americas (<i>Criollos</i>) were the second most powerful group. The lower social classes were the children of Spanish and Indigenous parents (<i>Mestizos</i>), American Indians, and Africans.</p> <p>The majority of the people in New Spain were in the lower classes. After centuries of Spanish rule, many of the lower classes wanted to <b>overthrow</b> the <i>Peninsulares</i>. The <i>Criollos</i> fought against the <i>Peninsulares</i> for more power, though most of them didn't support the <i>Mestizos</i>, American Indians, or Africans who were also taking part in their own fight against the <i>Peninsulares</i>.</p> <p>In short, society was in <b>turmoil</b> in New Spain during the early 1800s. The majority of people wanted a drastic change, and many were willing to fight or even die to achieve it.</p>
--	--

___ 1)	Peninsulares	a) A time of disturbance, confusion, or uncertainty.
___ 2)	Criollos	b) People of Spanish and Indigenous heritage
___ 3)	Mestizos	c) Spanish people born in Spain with the most power in New Spain.
___ 4)	Overthrow	d) Spanish people born in the Americas with the second most power.
___ 5)	Turmoil	e) To use force to take away someone's power.

1. What was the primary reason so many people in New Spain wanted independence from Spanish rule?

The primary reason so many people in New Spain wanted independence from Spanish rule was \_\_\_\_\_

## The War Begins!

What event began the War for Mexican Independence?

In 1810, a man named Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla gave a speech that would change the course of Mexican history.

Father Hidalgo was a Criollo priest and teacher in the central Mexican town of Dolores. As a religious leader, he worked for years to **advocate** for the rights and equality of the *mestizo* and **Indigenous** members of his church community.

In the early 1800s, Hidalgo joined a secret, **pro-independence** group in Dolores. When the **government** learned of the group, he and other members were urged to **flee** for safety. Instead, on September 16, 1810, Father Hidalgo rang his church bell and gave a speech declaring the need for a rebellion against Spain. His speech became known as the *Grito de Dolores*, or the “Cry of Dolores.” This speech and his leadership encouraged thousands in the lower classes of the caste system to join the fight for independence from Spain.

___ 1) Advocate	a) Supporting freedom
___ 2) Pro-Independence	b) To publicly support a specific cause
___ 3) Flee	c) The people who run a country
___ 4) Indigenous	d) The original inhabitants of a place
___ 5) Government	e) To run away for safety

1. What event began the lower social classes' fight for independence from their colonial government in New Spain?
  - a. The government's oppression of pro-independence groups like the one Father Hidalgo had joined.
  - b. The people in the lower classes in New Spain had to flee for safety.
  - c. Father Hidalgo advocated for rights for the people of New Spain.
  - d. Father Hidalgo gave a speech calling for people to join the revolution.

## Filibusters in Texas

What were the different motivations and actions of the filibusters in Texas?

In the middle of the War for Mexican Independence, there were some people who migrated to Texas for many different reasons. We often refer to these people as filibusters. Many filibusters, though not all, were Americans.

The United States had become a country only about thirty years earlier. Some people in the U.S. were interested in moving west into places like Texas. Spain's failure to build the population of Texas and establish control over the region left it open to individuals like the filibusters who wanted adventure, land, resources, or to aid in the fight for Mexican Independence.

### Philip Nolan

A filibuster from Kentucky named Philip Nolan made several trips into Texas in the late 1790s and early 1800s. He wanted to gain resources like mustangs, or wild horses, for trade between Texas and Louisiana – trade that was **prohibited**. The government in New Spain began to grow suspicious of foreign activity in Texas during the War for Mexican Independence. On Nolan's last trip into Texas on March 21, 1801, he was killed by Spanish troops in Nacogdoches. He is considered the first filibuster in Texas.

### The Gutierrez-Magee Expedition

José Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara was a follower of Father Miguel y Hidalgo and a supporter of Mexican independence. In 1811, he traveled to Washington D.C. to seek help from the U.S. government in Mexico's fight for freedom. Though the U.S. supported Mexican independence, they offered no aid.

On his way back to Mexico, Gutiérrez met an American named Augustus Magee in New Orleans. Together they assembled a group of 130 men in America and set off for Nacogdoches, Texas. Their numbers grew to 300 as more men in Texas joined their

cause. Though Magee died in a fight with the Spanish military in 1813, Gutiérrez and the rest of the men persisted.

Gutiérrez's numbers continued to grow. He and his men went on to force the surrender of the Spanish army in San Antonio, where Gutiérrez ordered the **execution** of several Spanish officers. Hearing the news of this, the Spanish government in Mexico City sent General Joaquín de Arredondo to seek out the rebels, stop their resistance, and deliver punishment for their actions.

On August 18, 1813, Arredondo caught up with Gutiérrez near the Medina River south of San Antonio. A battle broke out that lasted four hours, and by the end, most of Gutiérrez's 1,400 men had been killed. The Battle of Medina is the bloodiest battle in Texas history.

Arredondo and his troops returned to San Antonio where they imprisoned anyone who he suspected of helping the rebels. Arredondo had 327 **Tejanos**, primarily the family members of Gutiérrez's men, executed in retaliation for the rebellion. Many other Tejanos fled Texas in fear of the destruction and terror of Arredondo's **retribution**. All of this left Spanish settlements in Texas even weaker and less populated than ever.

### **Jean Lafitte**

Jean Lafitte was a French pirate and privateer who established a colony in Galveston, Texas in 1817. Lafitte ran his **smuggling** and slave trading business from Galveston from 1817 to 1820, when he finally fled Galveston under pressure from both the United States and Spanish government.

### **Dr. James Long**

James Long was a filibuster from Virginia who entered Texas in 1819 with approximately 300 men in order to attempt to take control of Texas. Long attempted to gain the support of Jean Lafitte, though the French pirate was more interested in his illegal businesses in Galveston. Long attempted to take over Nacogdoches in 1819 and La Bahía in 1821. He was ultimately captured, imprisoned, and killed in Mexico City.

- 1) Prohibited
- 2) Execution
- 3) Tejano
- 4) Smuggling
- 5) Retribution

- a) A Mexican who calls Texas home.
- b) Retaliation, or pay back.
- c) Putting someone to death as a form of punishment.
- d) Moving goods illegally in and out of a country.
- e) Not allowed.

1. Each filibuster entered Texas for their own, unique reasons. Name one filibuster and explain why he went to Texas during the War for Mexican Independence.

2. Comparing points of view: How do you think the filibusters saw themselves? How might this be different from how the Spanish government saw them?

I think the filibusters probably saw themselves as \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

while the Spanish government probably saw the filibusters as \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What was the Battle of Medina and why was it significant?

- a. It is the bloodiest battle in all of Texas history.
- b. It was a victory for the Tejanos and their allies who were fighting for their independence.
- c. Spain's punishment for the battle reduced the population of Spanish Texas even more.
- d. Answers A and B
- e. Answers A and C
- f. Answers B and C

## The War Ends!

What is the  
significance of the  
end of the War for  
Mexican  
Independence?

The War for Mexican Independence lasted more than a decade, from 1810 to 1821, and a lot of important things happened over the years. In the end, a royal military leader named Augustín de Iturbide teamed up with an African-Mestizo rebellion leader named Vicente Guerrero to bring the war to an end.

Iturbide and Guerrero decided the terms of peace in a document called the Plan of Iguala. In it, they offered three guarantees: to grant Mexico its independence from Spain as a constitutional monarchy, to preserve the Catholic religion, and to grant the equality of Spaniards and Criollos.

The Treaty of Córdoba was signed on August 24, 1821. The war officially ended, and Mexico at last gained its independence.

___ 1) Decade	a) A period of 10 years
___ 2) Terms	b) A document that makes peace between conflicted parties
___ 3) Guarantees	c) Requirements or obligations
___ 4) Treaty	d) A government where a king or queen shares power with a government organized by the people
___ 5) Constitutional Monarchy	e) Promises

1. What was the result of the War for Mexican Independence? How do you think this will affect Texas?

The result of the War for Mexican Independence was \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

I think this will affect Texas by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.