

Texas Declaration of Independence *Advanced*

Extension Lesson

Unit 5: The Texas Revolution

Name: Date: Period:

Part I: Introduction

The Texas Declaration of Independence was signed on March 2, 1836, at the Constitutional Convention of 1836 at Washington-on-the-Brazos. It was modeled on the American Declaration of Independence of July 4, 1776, that had been written sixty years earlier. The Texas Declaration used similar language and structure as its American counterpart. In this activity you will answer questions based on excerpts from both the Texas and the American Declarations of Independence.

| The Texas Declaration of Independence | The American Declaration of Independence |
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| <p>When a government has ceased to protect the lives, liberty and property of the people, from whom its legitimate powers are derived, and for the advancement of whose happiness it was instituted, and so far from being a guarantee for the enjoyment of those inestimable and inalienable rights, becomes an instrument in the hands of evil rulers for their oppression...</p> <p>Nations, as well as individuals, are amenable for their acts to the public opinion of mankind. A statement of a part of our grievances is therefore submitted to an impartial world, in justification of the hazardous but unavoidable step now taken, of severing our political connection with the Mexican people, and assuming an independent attitude among the nations of the earth.</p> | <p>When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.</p> <p>We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.-- That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed....</p> |

| Words or Phrases that are the same or similar in the two documents | Ideas or themes that are the same or similar in the two documents | Notable Differences between the two documents |
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1. In your own words, what is the role or responsibility of a government according to the Texas Declaration of Independence?
2. How did the authors of the Texas Declaration of Independence feel about the centralist government that was in control at the time? Explain in your own words, and provide a quote from the excerpt to support your answer.
3. Based on the excerpt of the Texas Declaration of Independence, why were the authors writing the document?

Part II: Causes for Separation

In the first paragraphs of the Texas Declaration of Independence, the Texans explain why they feel the need to separate Texas from Mexico. Read the following excerpts from those first paragraphs and answer the questions accompanying the excerpts.

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| <p>When the Federal Republican Constitution of their country, which they have sworn to support, no longer has a substantial existence, and the whole nature of their government has been forcibly changed, without their consent, from a restricted federative republic, composed of sovereign states, to a consolidated central military despotism, in which every interest is disregarded but that of the army and the priesthood, both the eternal enemies of civil liberty, the ever-ready minions of power, and the usual instruments of tyrants...</p> <p>The Mexican government, by its colonization laws, invited and induced the Anglo-American population of Texas to colonize its wilderness under the pledged faith of a written constitution, that they should continue to enjoy that constitutional liberty and republican government to which they had been habituated in the land of their birth, the United States of America.</p> <p>In this expectation they have been cruelly disappointed, inasmuch as the Mexican nation has acquiesced in the late changes made in the government by General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, who having overturned the constitution of his country, now offers us the cruel alternative, either to abandon our homes, acquired by so many privations, or submit to the most intolerable of all tyranny, the combined despotism of the sword and the priesthood.</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What was one major political cause for Texas separation from Mexico, according to the first paragraph? 2. What expectation did Anglo settlers in Texas have when they left the U.S. to settle in Mexico? 3. According to the third paragraph, how did Santa Anna's actions influence the Texans' decision to separate from Mexico? |
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Part III: Grievances

After the Texans explained why they were declaring independence from Mexico, they wrote a list of grievances, or official complaints, against the centralist government of Mexico. They wanted to give specific examples of how the centralist government had violated their constitutional rights under the Constitution of 1824.

Step 1: Matching.

The gray cards have excerpts of the grievances from the Texas Declaration of Independence. The white cards provide a modern-day translation of each grievance. Match the Excerpt card with its correct translation.

Step 2: Comprehension Questions

Use the cards to complete the graphic organizer below. Review the grievances from the matching activity. Then, choose the THREE that you think were most important to the Texans. Briefly summarize each grievance in your own words, and explain why you think it was one of the most important grievances to the Texans.

| I think the following were the most important grievances to the Texans: | I think these were the most important because . . . |
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