

Texas Declaration of Independence *Grade Level*

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 the American Declaration. In this activity you will answer questions based on excerpts from both the Texas and the American Declarations of Independence.

Texas Declaration of Independence	American Declaration of Independence
"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..."	"...that among these [rights] 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..."

1. What words, phrases, or ideas are similar in each excerpt?
2. Do you notice any differences between the two excerpts?
3. Where do governments get their power from according to BOTH excerpts?
 - a. From the lives and powers of its leaders
 - b. From the people of the country
 - c. From the institutions of men
 - d. From legitimate powers and property

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.

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...

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.

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.

1. What was one major political cause for Texas separation from Mexico, according to the first paragraph?
 - a. The centralists changed the government without the approval of the people
 - b. The government restricts the military and religion making people enemies
 - c. The people promised to support the government, but they no longer do.
 - d. The states want to combine their power against the government.

2. According to the third paragraph, how did Santa Anna's actions influence the Texans' decision to separate from Mexico?

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.

1. Which items from the list below are grievances listed in the Texas Declaration of Independence? Choose **THREE**.
 - a. The centralist government granted people freedom of religion.
 - b. The centralist government refused to grant Texas separate statehood.
 - c. The centralist government ended representative government.
 - d. The centralist government upheld trial-by-jury for its citizens.
 - e. The centralist government abolished the constitution without people's approval.
2. Consider all of the grievances from your matching cards. Which grievance do you think was most important to the Texans? Why?

I think the most important grievance to Texans was probably _____

because _____
