

Westward Expansion and Manifest Destiny through the Mexican-American War

The Basics

Subject Area and/or Course Title:

Westward Expansion and Manifest Destiny through the Mexican-American War

Targeted Grade Level:

8

Time Required:

Four 90-minute lessons (+ additional time for DBQ, if desired)

Related Standards:

California State Standards for 8th Grade History and Social Studies:

8.5.2. Know the changing boundaries of the United States and describe the relationships the country had with its neighbors (current Mexico and Canada) and Europe, including the influence of the Monroe Doctrine, and how those relationships influenced westward expansion and the Mexican-American War.

8.8.2. Describe the purpose, challenges, and economic incentives associated with westward expansion, including the concept of Manifest Destiny (e.g., the Lewis and Clark expedition, accounts of the removal of Indians, the Cherokees' "Trail of Tears," settlement of the Great Plains) and the territorial acquisitions that spanned numerous decades.

8.8.5. Discuss Mexican settlements and their locations, cultural traditions, attitudes toward slavery, land-grant system, and economies.

8.8.6. Describe the Texas War for Independence and the Mexican-American War, including territorial settlements, the aftermath of the wars, and the effects the wars had on the lives of Americans, including Mexican Americans today.

Author:

Talin Darkjian, 2015

The Lesson

Introductory Narrative to Lesson

These lessons are a study of Westward Expansion, with the Mexican-American War used as a case study for understanding Westward Expansion and Manifest Destiny. This unit follows a brief introduction to Manifest Destiny, where students are introduced to events such as the Lewis and Clark Expedition, the Trail of Tears, and Conquest of Florida.

This specific series of lessons sets students up to answer a Document-Based Question: Was the United States justified in going to war with Mexico? The lessons in this sequence serve as an

introduction to the tensions that were taking place in Texas leading up to the Mexican-American war. The DBQ is not included in this lesson sequence, but can be purchased from The DBQ Project: <http://www.dbqproject.com/us-mini-qs.php>.

Essential Questions:

- What motivates people to immigrate?
- How does immigration lead to tensions and conflict?
- How did slavery create conflict in Texas?
- How did Manifest Destiny lead to conflict between the United States and Mexico?
- What justifies going to war?
- Was the United States justified in going to war with Mexico during the Mexican-American war?

Description of Lesson One:

This lesson will set up the background for the Mexican-American War by exploring the push and pull factors that changed the demographics of settlements in Texas. This lesson serves to build a foundational understanding that Mexico's territory extended past its present day borders. A conjunto is used to engage students at the onset of the lesson. 95% of students at the school this lesson was written for are bilingual in English and Spanish, but translated lyrics will be provided. During this lesson, students will learn that Mexican policies as well as Westward Expansion led to Anglo-American immigrants moving to Texas and altering the demographics there.

Objective:

Historians will be able to summarize the push and pull factors that attracted American immigrants to Texas prior to the Mexican American War

Materials:

- Margaret Swett Henson, "ANGLO-AMERICAN COLONIZATION," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/uma01>), Uploaded on June 9, 2010. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.
- Los Fantasmas De Valle. *Bellos Recuerdos*. Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 1999. *Smithsonian Folkways*. Web. <<http://www.folkways.si.edu/los-fantasmas-del-valle/bellos-recuerdos-beautiful-memories/latin/music/track/smithsonian>>

Do-Now:

Directions: Answer each of these questions in complete sentences. Answer each question, starting at mild and working your way to hot.

Students will be expected to refer to notes from the first week of class in order to answer these questions.

- **Mild:** What does the word immigration mean? What does "push factors" mean? What does "pull factors" mean?
- **Medium:** Provide at least 5 examples of push factors. Provide at least 5 examples of pull factors.

- **Hot:** Explain a situation (including push and pull factors) that would persuade you to immigrate from your current home to a different country.

Access Prior Knowledge:

Conjunto Music:

Bellos Recuerdos (Beautiful Memories) by Los Fantasmas del Valle

As you listen to the song, close your eyes and imagine the following:

1. Who is singing this song?
2. Where does the singer live?
3. Who are they singing to?
4. When do you think this song was written/performed?
5. What time period is the author writing about?

Debrief:

- Present-day Texas was occupied by Native Americans prior to European colonization of the Americas
- Spanish settlements took over
- Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821
- At the time, the borders of Mexico far surpassed their current boundaries
- Show students a map of historic Mexico
- What do you think happened that changed the boundaries of Mexico?

Extend Prior Knowledge:

Reading and Questions:

Students will read and take notes on (excerpts of)

<https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/uma01> to determine the push and pull factors that influenced Anglo-American immigration to Texas from 1821-1836

Students will answer the following questions as they read. Teacher will debrief with the class when students are finished.

1. What country was Texas a part of in 1820?
2. What are the names of the 3 settlements in Texas in 1820? Why weren't there more settlements?
3. What about the cost of land attracted Americans to settling in Texas?
4. What misconception about the Louisiana Purchase was present at the time?
5. How did laws about religion change between the Imperial, National, and State Colonization Laws?
6. What was the Mexican point of view about slavery? Why did they make exceptions for the Americans?

*depending on the reading level of students in the class and time constraints, the teacher may choose to give students the entire article or excerpts from the article. The above questions focus on the first half of the article.

Application:

Write an Immigrant Diary Entry:

Students will write a diary entry from the point of view of an Anglo-American moving to Texas. The entry must include:

- A specific American state the American was living in
- Biographical information about your narrator (age, name, family)
- At least two problems the American had living in that state
- At least two things the American finds appealing about moving to Texas
- At least one fear/concern the American has about moving to Texas

Exit Ticket:

On a post-it note, write down one push factor and one pull factor for immigration to Texas. Turn in this post-it note on your way out of the classroom.

Description of Lesson Two:

The purpose of this lesson is to build on the knowledge from the previous lesson regarding the influx of immigrants to Texas as a precursor to Texan independence and ultimately the Mexican America War. This lesson will lead students to understand the tensions regarding slavery and religion between the native Texans and incoming Anglo-American immigrants.

Objective:

Historians will be able to describe how immigration to Texas changed the demographics of the area and caused tensions between old and new residents

Materials:

- "CENSUS AND CENSUS RECORDS," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ulc01>), Uploaded on June 12, 2010. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.
- Dave Frederickson. *Lone Star Trail*. Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 1961. Web. <<http://www.folkways.si.edu/dave-fredrickson/lone-star-trail/american-folk-historical-song/music/track/smithsonian>>.

Do-Now:

Directions: Answer each of these questions in complete sentences. Answer each question, starting at mild and working your way to hot. Use your notes from yesterday's reading to answer these questions:

- **Mild:** What was the main religion among Mexican Texans? What was the main religion for Anglo-Americans?
- **Medium:** What was the Mexican government's policy regarding slavery? How were laws regarding slavery in Texas different from the Mexican law?
- **Hot:** What is the significance of these differences? What problems might emerge?

Access Prior Knowledge:

Song Activity: Texan Cowboy Song-

Teacher will explain: yesterday, we heard a contemporary song that came from Texas. The song showed us that many residents living in Texas today are proud of their Mexican heritage. We are going to listen to a much older song now, to learn about some historical perspectives that existed about Texas:

Lone Star Trail: Can You Hear It Now:

Students will listen to the song once. Then, students will listen to the song while following along with the lyrics. Finally, students will have time to answer the following questions in their notes:

1. Who would be singing this song?
2. Where would they be singing it?
3. How does this song give you a different image of Texas from the song we heard yesterday?
4. How does the comparison between these songs teach you about the effect of immigration on life in Texas?

Class will review answers to the above questions, then have a discussion about the following:

1. Were the American immigrants to Texas trying to assimilate with the Mexicans already living there?
2. What potential problems might emerge from having such different groups of people living together?

Extend Prior Knowledge:

Reading and Questions:

Teacher explains: Yesterday, we learned about the reasons that Americans chose to immigrate to Texas. Today, you will read more specific figures about the number of immigrants and the racial make-up of those immigrants.

Students will use their laptops to access a copy of a narrative about Census data from the Texas State Historical Association: <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ulc01>

Students will work in pairs to create a chart/graph that synthesizes their findings about immigration to Texas. The graphic should include as much of the following information as possible:

- What is the trend in the population in 1744, 1792, 1806, 1826, 1831, 1836, 1845, 1848?
- How do racial demographics change over these years?
- What happens to slave/ free populations over these years?
- Where did population changes come from?

Application:

Write a News Article

For this assignment, students will combine their notes from Lesson 1 and Lesson 2. Students will be instructed to take on the point of view of a reporter in Texas in 1836 and write a news article that includes the following:

- What factors are causing the present wave of immigration?

- What problems are emerging as a result of this immigration?
- Provide at least 3 pieces of evidence to support your statements
- Include at least one graph/ chart to support your information
- Make a prediction about what will happen if immigration does not stop/slow down

Exit Ticket:

Make a T-Chart. Label one side “Old” and the other side “New”. How did views about slavery and religion differ between old and new resident in Texas?

Extend Prior Knowledge:

Song Activity: “Remember the Alamo”-

Students will read background information about the song as a class and answer the first set of questions independently:

Step 1: Who wrote the song? Who is the intended audience? How was the song disseminated? What event is being described in the song?

Students will listen to the song once and answer the second set of questions with guidance from the teacher:

Step 2: What is the purpose of this song (hint: consider the title)? How does the music reinforce the purpose of the song?

Students will listen to the song once again and answer the second set of questions with a partner:

Step 3: Whose point of view are the lyrics written in? What opinion does the author share about the purpose of the Alamo? What does the song choose to emphasize (hint: consider lines that are repeated)?

Students will watch a video clip detailing the events at the Alamo/ Texas War for Independence and answer the following questions:

Step 4: Who actually won at the Alamo? Does the song sound like it was written from the point of view of the losing side for Alamo? Why do you think the song uses the lyrics and music that it does? How might the eventual outcome of the war play a part in this song?

Application:

Student Generated War Poster:

Create a war poster that could be used during Texas’ War for Independence to recruit soldiers. The poster should include:

- The reason for the Texas Revolution
- The people who are being asked to join
- The people they will be fighting against
- A compelling image

- A catchy slogan

Exit Ticket:

On a post-it note, submit the slogan that you will use to convince Texans to revolt against Texas.

Description of Lesson Three:

This lesson builds on the knowledge that students will have about immigration to Texas and conflicts regarding slavery/religion. This lesson serves to teach students about the beliefs underlying Texas' War for Independence through analyzing the song *Remember the Alamo*.

Objective:

Historians will be able to describe the causes and outcome of the Texas Revolution against Mexico

Materials:

- Johnny Cash. *Remember The Alamo*. YouTube. Web. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i79X9jTAfEM>>.
- Johnny Cash. "Remember The Alamo" Lyrics. Warner-Tamerlane Pub Corp., 1972. AZ Lyrics. Web. 20 July 2015. <<http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/johnnycash/rememberthealamo.html>>.

Do-Now:

Directions: Answer each of these questions in complete sentences. Answer each question, starting at mild and working your way to hot.

- **Mild:** What country was Texas a part of during the time period we have been studying?
- **Medium:** Who began immigrating to Texas in the mid 1700's to mid 1800's? How were these people different than the Mexicans living in Texas?
- **Hot:** If you were had been a Mexican living in Texas, how would these immigrants make you feel?

Access Prior Knowledge:

Think-Pair-Share

We have read about the immigration to Texas at a time when Texas was still a part of Mexico. The immigrants entering Texas were, in large numbers, Protestant and slave-owners. This caused tension with the Mexicans, who were primarily Catholic and did not support slavery.

Given what you have studied the last two days, do you think it would make sense for Texas to become its own country, separate from Mexico? Why or why not?

Students will share their answers with a partner, then reflect using one of the following sentence stems:

- I agree/disagree with _____ because...
- Based on what _____ said, I wonder....
- I think _____ made a really good point because...

Once students have reflected, the teacher will call on participants to share their reflections.

Description of Lesson Four:

This lesson provides students with background information regarding the annexation of Texas in to America and how that ultimately led to the Mexican American War. The lesson focuses on Manifest Destiny as America’s justification for annexing Texas.

Objective:

Historians will be able to explain how America’s belief in Manifest Destiny contributed to the start of the Mexican-American War.

Materials:

- Ghast, John. *American Progress*. 1972. Library of Congress. *Picturing History*. Web. <http://picturinghistory.gc.cuny.edu/item.php?item_id=180>.
- Gardner, Mark and the Muleskinners. *Uncle Sam’s Song to Miss Texas*. 2007. Web. <<http://www.amazon.com/Uncle-Sams-Song-Miss-Texas/dp/B0014NB0YC>>
- Tinnemeyer, Andrea. "Embodying the West: Lyrics from the US-Mexican War." *Journals@KU*. University of Kansas Libraries.

Do-Now:

Directions: Answer each of these questions in complete sentences. Answer each question, starting at mild and working your way to hot.

Provide students with a map of Mexico in 1820 to Mexico in 1850.

- **Mild:** In your own words, describe the major changes in Mexico’s borders.
- **Medium:** How do you think America was able to take Mexico’s land? Make sure to consider what you know about the Texas Revolution.
- **Hot:** How might your life be different right now if the world still looked like the map from 1820?

Access Prior Knowledge:

Painting Analysis: “American Progress”

Teacher will project a copy of “American Progress” and lead the class in a discussion of the following questions:

- What do you see in this painting? What stands out?
- What might the angel represent?
- If you had to name this painting, what would you call it?
- What might the title “American Progress” signify?
- What are some things NOT included in this painting?
- Whose point of view does this painting illustrate?
- The teacher will then explain/ review Manifest Destiny

Extend Prior Knowledge:

Tone of a Song, Song Activity: “Uncle Sam’s Song to Miss Texas”

- Students will listen to the song once without lyrics and share out their first impressions of the song.
- Students will then listen to the song a second time while following along with the lyrics. They will be instructed to circle any words that help them understand how the author feels about Texas/ America/ Annexation.
- Students will then be instructed to break down the song stanza by stanza in order to determine the tone used to describe the annexation of Texas by America:
 1. Make a bubble map for each stanza
 2. Go through each stanza and record in the bubble map any words/phrases that help you determine the tone
 3. In the center of each bubble, students will write down the tone evoked in that stanza
 4. In the center of their page, students will identify 1 word or phrase to summarize the tone of the entire song
- The teacher will lead the class in a discussion:
 1. Based on this song, how did the US feel about Texas?
 2. According to the song, what reasons did America have for annexing Texas?
 3. How do you think Texas felt about the Annexation by America?
 4. How do you think Mexico felt about the Annexation by America?

Application:

Paragraph Response:

Students will write a preliminary response to the question: Was the United States justified in going to War with Mexico?

Teacher Explains: next week, you will read primary sources that give you more information about the actual events involved in America claiming Texas as a state. Before we read those sources, consider what we have learned this week and respond to whether you believe America had the right to take Texas from Mexico.

The paragraph must include:

- A topic sentence (answering the question)
- Introduction of evidence (source, context)
- Evidence
- Assertion about the evidence
- Inference about the evidence
- Conclusion sentence

Exit Ticket:

Students submit their paragraph. If time permits, students may volunteer to share what they wrote.