

Texans Declare Independence

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Lesson Overview: Students will evaluate the Texas Declaration of Independence and compose a “Dear John Letter” to the Mexican Government.

The student understands traditional historical points of reference in Texas history. The student is expected to: identify the major eras in Texas history and describe their defining characteristics; apply absolute and relative chronology through the sequencing of significant individuals, events, and time periods; and explain the significance of the following dates: 1519, 1718, 1821, 1836, 1845, and 1861. **TEKS §113.23 History 7. (1)(A)(B)(C)**

The student understands how individuals, events, and issues prior to the Texas Revolution shaped the history of Texas. The student is expected to trace the development of the events that led to the Texas Revolution, including the Law of April 6, 1830, the Turtle Bayou Resolutions, and the arrest of Stephen F. Austin. **TEKS §113.23 History 7. (2)(E)**

The student understands how individuals, events, and issues related to the Texas Revolution shaped the history of Texas. The student is expected to: explain the roles played by significant individuals during the Texas Revolution, including George Childress, Lorenzo de Zavala, James Fannin, Sam Houston, Antonio López de Santa Anna, and William B. Travis; and explain the issues surrounding significant events of the Texas Revolution, including the battle of Gonzales, the siege of the Alamo, the convention of 1836, Fannin's surrender at Goliad, and the battle of San Jacinto. **TEKS §113.23 History 7. (3)(A)(B)**

The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources including electronic technology. The student is expected to: differentiate between, locate, and use primary and secondary sources such as computer software, databases, media and news services, biographies, interviews, and artifacts to acquire information about Texas; organize and interpret information from outlines, reports, databases, and visuals including graphs, charts, timelines, and maps; identify points of view from the historical context surrounding an event and the frame of reference that influenced the participants; and support a point of view on a social studies issue or event. **TEKS §113.23 Social Studies skills 7. (21)(A)(C)(D)(E)**

The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms. The student is expected to: use social studies terminology correctly; use standard grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation; transfer information from one medium to another, including written to visual and statistical to written or visual, using computer software when appropriate; and create written, oral, and visual presentations of social studies information. **TEKS §113.23 Social Studies skills 7. (22)(A)(B)(C)(D)**

The student uses problem-solving and decision-making skills, working independently and with others, in a variety of settings. The student is expected to: use a problem-solving process to identify a problem, gather information, list and consider options, consider advantages and disadvantages, choose and implement a solution, and evaluate the effectiveness of the solution; and use a decision-making process to identify a situation that requires a decision, gather information, identify options, predict consequences, and take action to implement a decision. **TEKS §113.23 Social Studies skills 7. (23)(A)(B)**

Preparation

During the 1st week of school, students will uniquely decorate a clothespin. Students will use the clothes pin in various ways during the school year e.g. arranging a timeline, voting etc. Instead of a decorated clothes pin, teachers may also provide a plain clothes pin or tape for this activity

Engage

Project picture of the Alamo <http://tides.sfasu.edu:2009/u/?/Newton,150>

Ask students what happened at The Alamo.

Ask students to recall some of the important events that led to the siege of the Alamo.

Explore:

The teacher will stretch a clothes line across the room and divide it in the center by attaching two signs, one of which reads, “Stay Loyal to Mexico” and the other, “Declare Independence.” The Teacher will explain to the students that Texans had to make a vital decision; to either stay loyal to the Mexican Government or to declare their Independence. The teacher will ask the students to make this decision as if they had lived in Texas in 1836. Students will vote by placing their clothes pins either to the left of the sign “Stay Loyal to Mexico” or to right of the sign “Declare Independence.”

The teacher will engage the students in a discussion and have the students justify their decisions. The teacher will remind students that the delegates risked their lives by signing the Texas Declaration of Independence. The teacher will project the Texas Declaration of Independence from The Texas Almanac:

<http://www.texasalmanac.com/history/declaration/>

As a class, the teacher and the students will discuss the parts of the Texas Declaration of Independence, including the signers of the declaration.

Activity

The teacher will organize the students into groups. Students in each group will evaluate a copy of The Texas Declaration of Independence. The Declaration contains many grievances by the colonists against the Mexican Government. Each group will decide on 5 grievances that would have concerned them the most and will list these grievances in order from those that cause the most concern to those that cause the least (answers will vary in each group). Students will present their list to the class.

Students will write a letter to the Government of Mexico in the form of a “**Dear John Letter**” (the teacher may have to explain the meaning of a Dear John Letter). Students will paraphrase parts of the Declaration of Independence in order to explain to the Mexican Government why they’re “breaking up” with Mexico. Students will share their letters with the class.

Assessment

Teacher observations and “Dear John Letters” to the Mexican Government.

Extension

1. Students identify the ways in which the Texas Declaration of Independence is similar to the United States Declaration of Independence.
2. Have students research the town of Washington on the Brazos, create a report, and include a drawing of the building in which the meeting for Independence took place.

Materials:

[Pen & ink of the Alamo](#)

Copies of the [Texas Declaration of Independence](#) from the *Texas Almanac*

Clothes pins and a clothesline

Paper, writing utensils