

Close Read: Texas Annexation

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Objective

What were the arguments for and against the annexation of Texas?

Directions: Read the timeline below. Analyze the content of the timeline by answering the three questions below.

Path to Texas Independence

1820	1828	1830	1835	1836	1837
<p>Mexico wins independence from Spain</p> <p>Moses Austin & Stephen F. Austin obtain a land grant from the Mexican gov't - they settle in Texas with 300 American families</p>	<p>Tension erupts between the Mexican government and the American settlers over slavery (American settlers brought African American slaves to Texas - even though slavery was banned in Mexico)</p>	<p>Mexico, fed up with the American settlers continuing to keep slaves, bans American immigration into Mexico / Texas</p> <p>Mexico encourages Mexicans and Europeans to settle in Texas</p>	<p>Texas Revolution begins</p>	<p>Texas declares independence from Mexico</p> <p>Americans defeat the Mexicans at the Alamo and San Jacinto securing their independence, become the Republic of Texas</p>	<p>US Recognizes the Republic of Texas as a free nation (last act of the Jackson Presidency)</p>

- 1) Why did tension develop between the Mexican government and American settlers in Texas in 1828?

- 2) When did Texas become independent from Mexico?

- 3) **Predict:** Texas applied to be annexed (acquired) by the United States in 1837.
 - a) To what extent do you think that the annexation of Texas would impact the abolition movement and slavery/expansion debate in the United States in the 1830's?
 - b) To what extent would the annexation of Texas further the US policy of manifest destiny?

Directions: Read the attached documents 1 - 6. Identify at least *three arguments for* the annexation of Texas and document them in the table to the left. Identify at least *three arguments against* the annexation of Texas and document in the table to the right. Cite evidence from the documents to support the claims you make about the arguments for or against annexation.

Arguments for the Annexation of Texas

Argument	Evidence

Arguments against Annexation of Texas

Argument	Evidence

Document 1: Henry Clay - Letter Published in the *National Intelligencer* April 27th, 1844

“I consider the annexation of Texas, at this time, without the consent of Mexico, as a measure compromising the national character; involving us certainly in a war with Mexico and probably other foreign powers that are allies of Mexico, dangerous to the integrity [trustworthiness] of the Union; not practical in the present financial condition of the country.... It is estimated that Texas has a debt of \$10,000,000 - if we are absorb Texas, we are to absorb that debt, which we can not afford...”

Document 2: Sam Houston - Letter from Sam Houston to Andrew Jackson February 16th, 1844

“So far as I am concerned....I am determined upon immediate annexation of Texas to the United States...Mexico might make a cause of war, and inflict violence upon us. It might be time before proper aid from the United States would be available for our defense against this; such an incident would interrupt our citizens in their peaceful existence.... I have no desire to see war renewed again in Texas, to save Texas from more bloodshed, we must annex ourselves to the United States...”

Document 3: John Calhoun - Letter to W.R. King August 12th, 1844 (Printed publically)

“It is impossible to cast a look at the map of the United States and Texasand then take into consideration the extraordinary increase of population and growth of the former, and the source from which the later must derive its inhabitants, institutions and laws, without coming to the conclusion that it is their destiny to be united, and of course, that annexation is merely a question of time and mode...It is our destiny to occupy that vast region; to intersect it with roads and canals; to fill it with cities, towns, villages, and farms; to extend over it our religion, customs, constitution and laws; and to present it as a peaceful and splendid addition to the domains of commerce and civilization. It is our policy to increase, by rowing and spreading out into unoccupied regions, assimilating all we incorporate; in a word, to increase by accretion, and not through conquest...”

Document 4: Stephen A. Douglass - Speech of Stephen A. Douglass in the House of Representatives, January 6th, 1845

“Without dwelling upon the numerous advantages that would attend the annexation of Texas, in stimulating the industry of the whole country; in opening new markets for the manufacturers of the North and East; in bringing in the waters of the Red River, the Arkansas River, and other streams flowing into the Mississippi... in growing the political power of the United States; in securing safer and more natural boundaries, and avoiding the danger of collisions with foreign power - without dwelling upon these and other considerations, appealing to our interest and pride as a people and a nation it is sufficient argument to me that our honor and faith require the immediate annexation of Texas to the Union.”

Document 5: Central Clay Club of Northampton County - pamphlet in support of Henry Clay October 18th, 1844

“Pennsylvania has to fight against the dishonest annexation of Texas, the extension of representation and slavery to a foreign people brought into our union to weigh down the free state votes of the north in congress, giving a larger voice to slaveholders ...to annex Texas would imbalance congress and violate the compromises we have worked so hard to make...”

Document 6: Charles Hudson - Massachusetts Congressman Speech in the House of Representatives, January 20th, 1845

“...Congress has the power to admit states into the Union, this is true. The gentleman from Illinois (Stephen A. Douglass) has said further here not two weeks ago that under the “necessary and proper” clause, we can annex the nation of Texas. I find this to be preposterous! This is not based on sound reasoning. Does it follow that because a power is granted to Congress, that they have the authority to exercise that power in any manner they please, regardless of the laws of the nation?At the time when the Constitution was formed, we were in possession of the Northwest Territory, which we held as per a treaty we signed with England...we have signed no treaty with Mexico nor with Spain over the ownership of the lands we call Texas... it is unconstitutional if we annex these lands...”

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Analysis Task

Should the United States have annexed Texas in 1845?

Directions: Using information from the documents, you will now write a response to the task below.

Task: Using the information from the documents above, and your knowledge of US History, complete the following writing prompt:

Based on the arguments provided, do you think the United States should annex Texas? Imagine it is 1845 - and you are attending a town meeting next week where the topic for debate will be the annexation of Texas. Do you support the annexation of Texas? Or are you against the annexation of Texas?

Create a poster illustrating your viewpoint.

- *Argue* for or against annexation
 - Show at least two reasons why you do or do not support annexation
 - Your poster must include:
 - One headline
 - Two reasons - explained well
 - One image

In developing your answer be sure to keep these general definitions in mind:

- **show** means “to point out; to set forth clearly a position or idea by stating it and giving data which support it”
- **argue** means to “give reasons or cite evidence in support of an idea, action, or theory, typically with the aim of persuading others to share one's view”