

The Question of Annexation - Grade 4

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Objectives:

Students will explain the events that led to the annexation of Texas to the United States. TEKS §113.6. Social Studies, Grade 4. (b)(3)(C)

Students will identify James Pinckney Henderson as a leader important to the founding of Texas as a republic and state, who modeled active participation in the democratic process by discussing his career in the Republic of Texas, and reading and analyzing his 1844 letter describing his mission to the United States. TEKS §113.6. Social Studies, Grade 4. (b)(3)(E), (b)(18)(A), (b)(18)(C)

The student will identify the purposes and explain the important ideas in historic documents of Texas by reading and analyzing three letters, written in 1844, which contain opinions concerning the prospect of annexation. §113.6. Social Studies, Grade 4. (b)(16)(A)

The student will apply critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources, including electronic technology, to differentiate between, locate, and use primary and secondary sources to acquire information about the United States and Texas. §113.6. Social Studies, Grade 4. (b) (22)(A)

The student will analyze information by comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, drawing inferences and conclusions using secondary sources, such as their textbook and the Handbook of Texas, and primary sources, such as the three letters from 1844 and 1845, to examine the issue of Annexation. §113.6. Social Studies, Grade 4. (b)(22)(C)

The student will identify different points of view about an issue or topic by examining, comparing, and contrasting the facts and opinions expressed in the three annexation letters. TEKS §113.6. Social Studies, Grade 4. (b)(22)(D)

The student will identify the elements of frame of reference that influenced the participants in an event. TEKS §113.6. Social Studies, Grade 4. (b)(22)(E)

The student will communicate in written form by creating written material, using social studies terminology correctly, incorporating main and supporting ideas based on research using standard grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation. §113.6. Social Studies, Grade 4. (b)(23)(A-E)

Teaching Activities:

Have the students create a timeline in their journal which contains the following events. Students will use this timeline to place events described in the documents in context.

- Annexation agreement reached between representatives of the U.S. and Texas [April, 1844].
- Annexation agreement refused by the U.S. Senate [1844].
- James K. Polk elected President of the United States [November 1844].
- President Tyler pushes for the annexation of Texas [November 1844 - February 1845].
- Joint resolution passes in both houses of the U.S. Congress supporting the annexation of Texas [February 28, 1845].
- The Texas Congress voted to support annexation [October 13, 1845].
- President Polk signed the law that made Texas the 28th state of the United States [December 29, 1845].
- Anson Jones stepped down as the last President of the Republic of Texas. [February 19, 1846].
- James P. Henderson becomes the first governor of the state of Texas [February 19, 1846].

Focus Activity:

Review with students the differences between primary and secondary sources.

Define the term "annexation."

Use information in your textbook or the biography in the Handbook of Texas, to introduce James Pinckney Henderson to the students. William W. Watts, to whom Henderson writes this letter, was a debt collector and business associate of Henderson's.

Show students facsimile of Henderson's letter of March 10th, 1844.

Pass out Annexation Analysis Sheet # 1 to students, and pull up highlighted facsimile of Henderson's letter of March 10th. Read excerpt from letter aloud, and then ask students to answer the questions on the Document Analysis Sheet.

Show students facsimile of the April 5, 1844 letter from James B. Tartt.

Pass out Annexation Analysis Sheet # 2 to students, and pull up highlighted facsimile of the April 5, 1844 letter from James B. Tartt to Elijah Price, a San Augustine plantation owner [see Biographical sketch-William Price Papers]. Read excerpt from letter aloud, and then ask students to answer the questions on the Document Analysis Sheet. Compare the information expressed to the information in Henderson's letter.

Show students facsimile of the March 28, 1845 letter from J.A. Smith to W.W. Watts.

Pass out Annexation Analysis Sheet # 3 to students, and pull up highlighted facsimile of the March 28, 1845 letter from J.A. Smith to W.W. Watts [see Biographical sketch-Watts family papers]. Read excerpt from letter aloud, and then ask students to answer the questions on the Document Analysis Sheet. In discussion, ask students to compare the information and opinions expressed in this letter to the information in Henderson's and Tartt's letters.

Closing Activity:

Assign the following to your students: Write a paragraph in your journal in which you describe two things that you learned by using these three primary resources that you might not have learned by only using the material in your textbook.

Assessment Activities:

Write the following assignment on a PowerPoint slide [overhead transparency, chalkboard, etc.]

You are a citizen of the Republic of Texas, living in Nacogdoches in 1844. Decide whether you believe that Texas should remain an independent country, or that it should become a part of the United States. Remember, Texas was independent from Mexico for almost 10 years, but many citizens of Texas wanted to be annexed to the United States during the entire period. Others fought fiercely against annexation. These same differences in viewpoint existed in the U.S. government and among U.S. citizens.

Write a letter to a friend or relative discussing the question of annexation. Try to persuade the person to whom you are writing to support your point of view. Use evidence from the textbook chapter on "Annexation," and the three letters that you have studied to support your position. As additional persuasion, explain the possible consequences to Texas if your position is not successful.

Your letter must be written in the appropriate format, and use standard grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation. Your argument must be supported by accurate information, and contain both main and supporting ideas. It should be approximately 250 words long.

Materials:

[James Pinckney Henderson letter, March 10, 1844](#)

[Document Analysis Sheet # 1](#)

[Elijah Price Letter, April 5, 1844](#)

[Document Analysis Sheet # 2](#)

[William W. Watts letter, March 28, 1845](#)

[Document Analysis Sheet # 3](#)

[Henderson, James Pinckney](#) in *The Handbook of Texas*

[William F. Price Collection, Biographical Sketch](#)

[Watts Family Papers, Biographical Sketch](#)

Textbook "Annexation"

William F. Price Collection

Biographical Sketch

Elijah Price was born in Martin County, North Carolina on September 9, 1791. On December 11, 1821 he married Temperance "Tempe" Thomas of Stantonsburg, North Carolina. They remained in North Carolina until 1830, at which time they moved to Lawrence County, Alabama. They also lived in Sumter County, where Price served as a State Representative in the Alabama Legislature. In 1841 the Price family moved to Texas, staying for a while in Polk (then Liberty) County and later settled on a large plantation near San Augustine. Price was a Mason, an Odd Fellow, and a member of Christ Episcopal Church. He died in San Augustine on November 17, 1852, leaving his widow to continue running the plantation until her death about 1859. There were ten children in the Price family, and the plantation was sold after Tempe died.

Watts Family Papers

Biographical Sketch

John Watts, a son of Arthur Watts, was born about 1752 in Virginia. A participant in the American Revolution, he enlisted in the Virginia Dragoons as a Cornet on June 17, 1776. By the end of the war he had achieved the rank of Captain. He served as Lieutenant Colonel in the Light Dragoons, U.S. Army, from January 8, 1799 until June 8, 1800. According to descendant Jessie Watts Roberts, John Watts was a personal friend of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. John Watts was awarded 4,944 acres in Bedford County, Virginia for his military service. John Watts married Elizabeth (Betsy) Roberts and according to John's will, they had two sons and a daughter still living in 1830: Arthur (1809-1866), William W. Watts (d. ca. 1846), and Elizabeth R. Watts Scott.

William W. Watts married Mary Leyburn. They had two children Sarah C. Watts and John Watts. The family lived in Liberty, Virginia; Delaware Springs, Ohio; and Columbus, Mississippi. William W. Watts traveled frequently to arrange for the collection of debts, in and out of court, for which he received a commission.

William W. Watts' son John Leyburn Watts was born about 1824 in Virginia. He married Mary Frances Garner (1837-1896) and they lived the remainder of their lives on a farm in San Augustine. According to census records, they had at least four sons and three daughters. In 1855, John was appointed a Deputy US Marshall by Marshall Ben McCulloch. William W. Watts' daughter Sarah C. was born in Bedford County, Virginia, and attended Leroy Anderson's female school in Williamsburg, Va.

Both collections are located in the Personal & Family Archives in the [East Texas Research Center](#) at Stephen F. Austin State University.

Document Analysis Worksheet #1 - Grade 4

Teaching excerpt: A letter from James Pinckney Henderson to Col. W.W. Watts, a business partner.

Vicksburg, Miss.
March 10th, 1844

My Dear Sir,

I wrote you from Galveston a few weeks since upon the receipt of your letter by Judge Morris. Since then, urged by the President of Texas as well as his political opponents, I have accepted an appointment to the U.S. on a secret mission to negotiate a Treaty of Annexation, which fact I now communicate to you in the strictest confidence, as it is all important that this matter be consummated before the British Ministry in Texas knows that it is on hand. Many Texians suspect that I am going on this business, but they do not know it. Keep it to yourself and operate quickly, as annexation may prevent, in some degree, your plans from being executed in getting claims to collect upon good terms....

...I shall be back in Texas in July or sooner, as I can finish my mission by that time if it can be accomplished. I have the strongest evidence that I can make the Treaty, and it must be done without delay to prevent England from interfering to prevent it by threats protests, etc....

Yours Very Truly,
Henderson

Answer the following questions, using this letter. Underline important sentences to help answer the questions.

What is the date of the letter? _____

Who wrote it? _____ Was he from Texas? _____

What do you know about the author of this letter that makes his opinion seem valuable?

To whom was it written? _____ Was he from Texas? _____

Why do you think that this letter was written? Use quotes from the document as evidence.

List two things that the author tells you in this letter that help you know more about the annexation question in Texas.

1) _____

2) _____

The author of the letter appears to be worried, and asks the addressee to keep a secret. What was it?

Does the author of this letter seem to think that Texas will be annexed to the United States? Explain your answer by using quotes from the letter as evidence.

Why is this letter important in the study of Texas History?

Document Analysis Worksheet #2 - Grade 4

Teaching excerpt: A letter from Jas. B. Tarrt to Elijah Price.

Mobile, AL.
April 5th 1844

E. Price Esquire Dear Sir,

.... I hope you and your adopted country will both prosper. Much is now being said in the United States about annexing Texas to the Union, and so far as President Tyler and his cabinet, and President Houston and his cabinet are concerned, the treaty is already agreed on. Much confidence is expressed by many of the leading journals in the South (both Whig and Democrat) that the treaty will be confirmed by the Senate, but I am firmly convinced that it will not at this time, if it ever does. I wish to caution you against making any purchase of property based on any such calculation, for men are ready to go to Texas for the purpose of speculating in real estate, on the prospect of its being annexed to the U.S. John C. Calhoun is now Secretary of State under Mr. Tyler and is a warm friend for annexation, but ... this question is likely to disturb political parties. On this account it will be laid over by the Senate until after the Presidential election, for both parties are afraid of it. It is now believed that Mr. Clay's election is as certain as any future event to be determined by men; if he should succeed, his influence I have no doubt would be in favor of Texas....

Yours, etc.
Jas B. Tarrt

Answer the following questions, using this letter. Underline important sentences to help answer the questions.

What is the date of the letter? _____

What was the status of Texas annexation at this point? _____

Who wrote it? _____ Was he from Texas? _____

To whom was it written? _____ Was he from Texas? _____

The author included a lot of political information about the United States in this letter. List two things that the author wrote that you think are important:

1) _____

2) _____

The author includes a mixture of facts and opinion in his letter. List one fact and one opinion.

Fact _____

Opinion _____

List two things that the author tells you in this letter that helps you know more about the annexation question in Texas.

1) _____

2) _____

Does the author of this letter seem to think that Texas will be annexed to the United States? _____

In addition to the political information, the author included a warning to the addressee, who appears to have been a relative. What was the warning? _____

Document Analysis Worksheet #3 - Grade 4

Teaching excerpt: A letter from J.A. Smith to Colonel W. W. Watts

Galveston, March 28, 1845

Dear Sir,

...Our laws will not be the worse than none for the collection of debts in case the United States are annexed to Texas! I am inclined to the belief, though, that a strong opposition will be organized in this great government against the measure of annexation. I take for granted every officer in the government is opposed to annexation, from the President down to the porters at the Custom House. General Houston, I am told, is also opposed, but I hope that a majority of the people will have sense enough to accept the proposition....

I am, Sir, Respectfully,
Your Obedient Servant,
J.A. Smith

Colonel W. W. Watts
Columbus, Missouri

Answer the following questions, using this letter. Underline important sentences to help answer the questions.

What is the date of the letter? _____

According to your timeline, what was the status of Texas annexation at this point? _____

Who wrote it? _____ Was he from Texas? _____

To whom was it written? _____ Was he from Texas? _____

Does the author of this letter seem to think that Texas will be annexed to the United States? Explain your answer by using quotes from the letter as evidence. _____

List two things that the author tells you in this letter about the annexation question in Texas.

1) _____

2) _____

Does the information in this letter agree with the information in the previous two letters? _____

Based on the information in your textbook and the information in the other two letters, list two statements in this letter that are not true.

1) _____

2) _____
