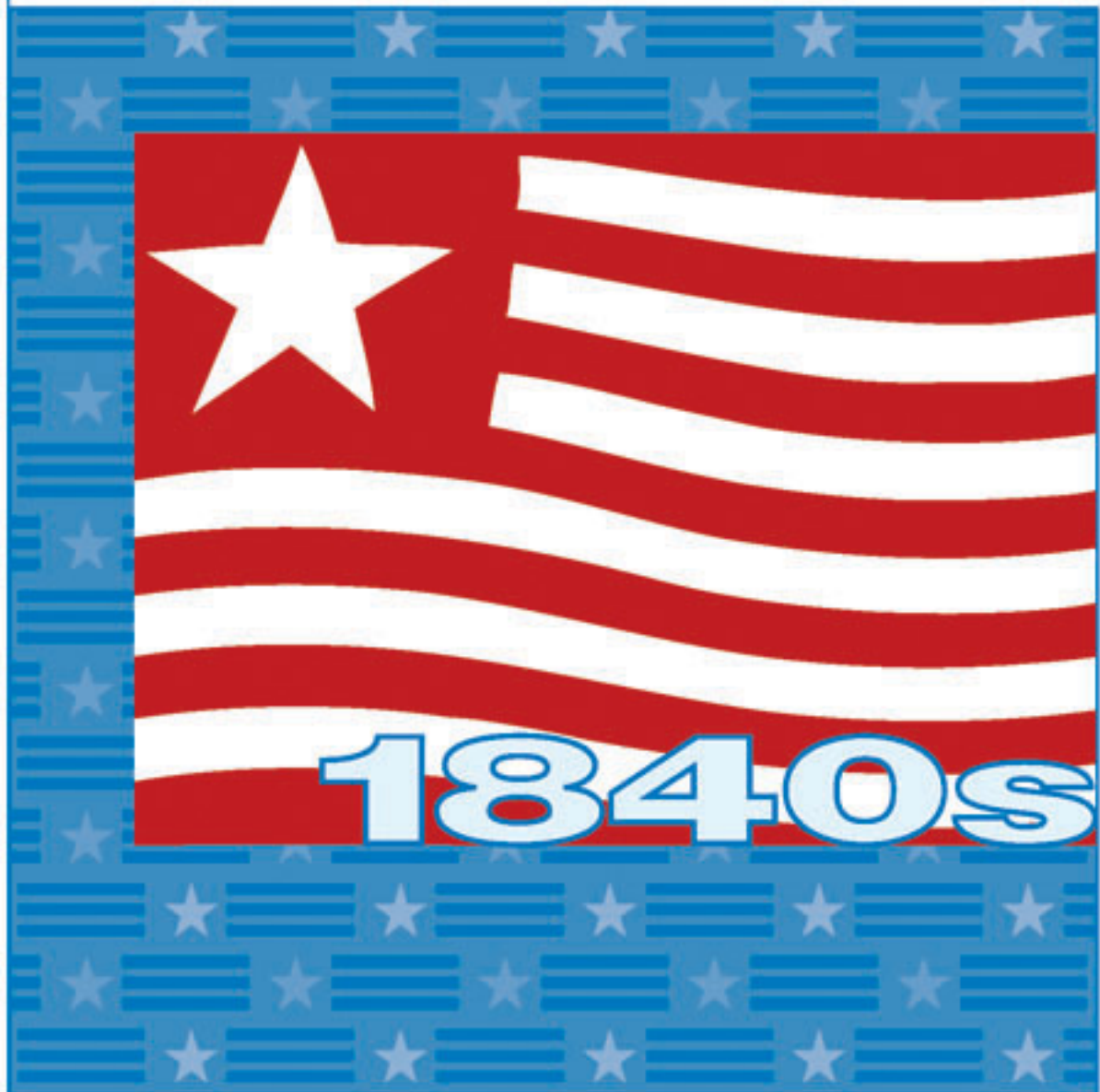


TEXAS AND THE MEXICAN WAR



A Re-creation of the Conflict between Pro and Anti-War
Factions, Debating whether the U.S. Should Annex Texas



TEXAS AND THE MEXICAN WAR

**A re-creation of the conflict between pro-war and anti-war factions,
debating whether or not the United States should annex Texas**

STEVE DENNY, the author of TEXAS AND THE MEXICAN WAR, graduated from Gonzaga University and did graduate work at the University of Portland. For Interact he has also written four other re-creations on Congressional sessions for this series as well as two simulations—WORLD and STATEHOOD—and an Individual Learning Project—LOCALITY. Currently Steve teaches history in Evergreen High School, Vancouver, Washington.

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How did the Manifest Destiny historical myth influence the debates in Congress?

This historical re-creation of the thrust of Manifest Destiny, the Texas issue, and the coming of the Mexican War has been designed to invite student participation in the decision and problem-solving process faced by Congressional figures during the 1840s. The Pro-war and the Anti-war factions meet head to head on the issues of western expansion and Manifest Destiny. Between these two powerful forces stands an Undecided faction: Important persons of the day who seek compromise rather than war, peace rather than conflict. As members of one of these three groups, students relive the spirit of Manifest Destiny while re-creating the democratic process that led a nation ultimately to war with Mexico and the acquisition of the entire continent from ocean to ocean. Specifically your students will experience the following:

Knowledge

1. Learning that the western expansion movement was a blend of the democratic process and the spirit of the times (Manifest Destiny)
2. Recognizing that the process of declaring war against Mexico was not unanimous; powerful arguments existed on both sides
3. Understanding that the decision to acquire the Western lands was motivated by a unique philosophical belief: Americans were acting out their destiny
4. Learning that a nation's growth is a long, slow process characterized by continual conflict and challenge

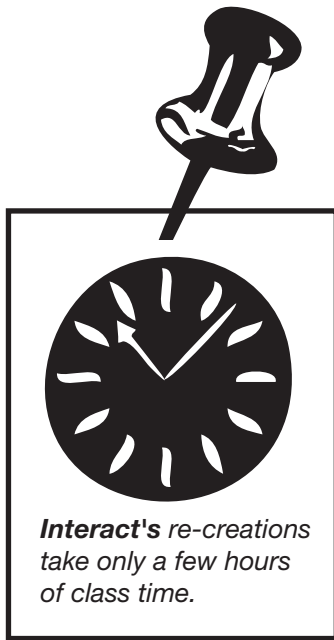
Attitudes

1. Solving problems when two powerful points of view are in conflict is very difficult
2. Realizing that when conflict, opinion, and compromise merge into decision, a feeling of powerful unity emerges
3. Understanding that while coping with a problem, persons need to use alternative ways to make the democratic process work

Skills

1. Working effectively with others in planning, executing, and evaluating group activities
2. Making individual and small group decisions
3. Organizing and presenting information clearly and accurately
4. Using various types of information and contrary points of view as sources for a specific purpose

OVERVIEW



Four class periods—or days—are needed for this re-creation of the Mexican War and the annexation of Texas.

Day 1

In the first hour students are given background information concerning events of this period in history. Students are divided into three Congressional factions: Pro-war, Anti-war, and Undecided. With the aid of general and specific information provided, these factions meet and assign specific arguments to present during the second hour. An overnight assignment is provided.


Days 2-3

During the second and third hour the classroom is divided with the three Congressional factions seated to the left, right, and center of the chairperson. (You will likely be the chairperson.) The Pro-war and Anti-war faction members speak alternately for and against Issue 1. After each side's argument is presented, the Undecided speakers ask questions of the Pro-war and Anti-war factions. This sequence is followed for the remaining issues. After the Congressional debate has concluded, a vote is taken. An overnight assignment is provided.

Day 4

The class is again divided in the final hour for debriefing/testing. Emphasis is placed on a contemporary case study paralleling issues raised during the Mexican War debate.

SETUP DIRECTIONS



Note: You will not need to duplicate the bulleted items the first time you use this re-creation, for *Interact* has provided different colored handouts for students playing roles. If you choose to give the *PRE-TEST* and *POST-TEST*, you will have to duplicate them. All other necessary items are in the *Student Guide*.



You will likely wish to divide the students so that each of the three groups has an equal number of capable students—particularly in their ability to speak.

1. **Decision about time** This re-creation is tightly formulated to function within three class periods, but you may wish to expand the second hour an extra class period if the intensity of the Congressional debate requires additional time for all points of view to be heard and understood. You may also wish to add a motivation background day prior to beginning the re-creation.
2. **Handouts** See note at left the first time you use this re-creation. For subsequent classes, duplicate the number in parentheses, using the masters in this Teacher Guide.
 - PRO-WAR LEADER (one: one page)
 - PRO-WAR ARGUMENT: Issue 1 (one: one page)
 - PRO-WAR ARGUMENT: Issue 2 (one: one page)
 - PRO-WAR ARGUMENT: Issue 3 (one: one page)
 - PRO-WAR ARGUMENT: Issue 4 (one: one page)
 - PRO-WAR ARGUMENT: Issue 5 (one: one page)
 - ANTI-WAR LEADER (one: one page)
 - ANTI-WAR ARGUMENT: Issue 1 (one: one page)
 - ANTI-WAR ARGUMENT: Issue 2 (one: one page)
 - ANTI-WAR ARGUMENT: Issue 3 (one: one page)
 - ANTI-WAR ARGUMENT: Issue 4 (one: one page)
 - ANTI-WAR ARGUMENT: Issue 5 (one: one page)
 - UNDECIDED LEADER (one: one page)
 - UNDECIDED QUESTIONS (one: two-and-a-half pages, cut apart for five questioners)

Optional:

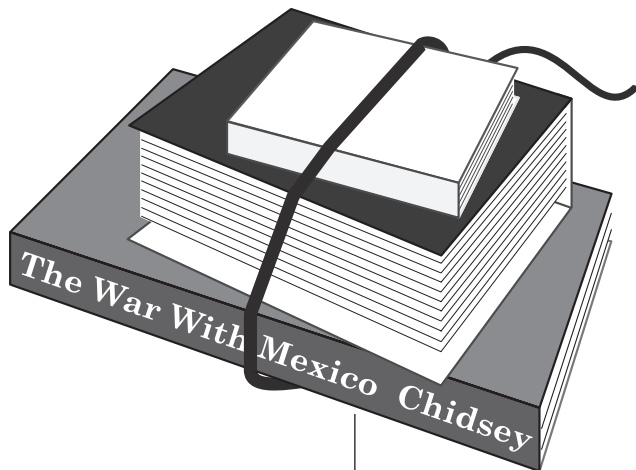
 - * PRE-TEST (class set: one page)
 - * POST-TEST (class set: one page)
3. **Grouping** Decide if you wish to assign students to groups or allow students to group themselves. Divide the class into one-third Pro-war, one-third Anti-war, and one-third Undecided.
4. **Chairperson** As teacher you may wish to assume the role of chairperson of the debate to keep the debate organized and the ideas flowing. You may wish, however, to give a capable, experienced student this role.

BIBLIOGRAPHY



Consider speaking to your friendly librarian. Ask him/her to set up a special TEXAS AND THE MEXICAN WAR RESERVE bookshelf so that your students can check out books early in order to “flesh out” their positions.

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DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 1



Also assign your students to read the chapter(s) in their textbook covering this controversial issue in the 1840s ...

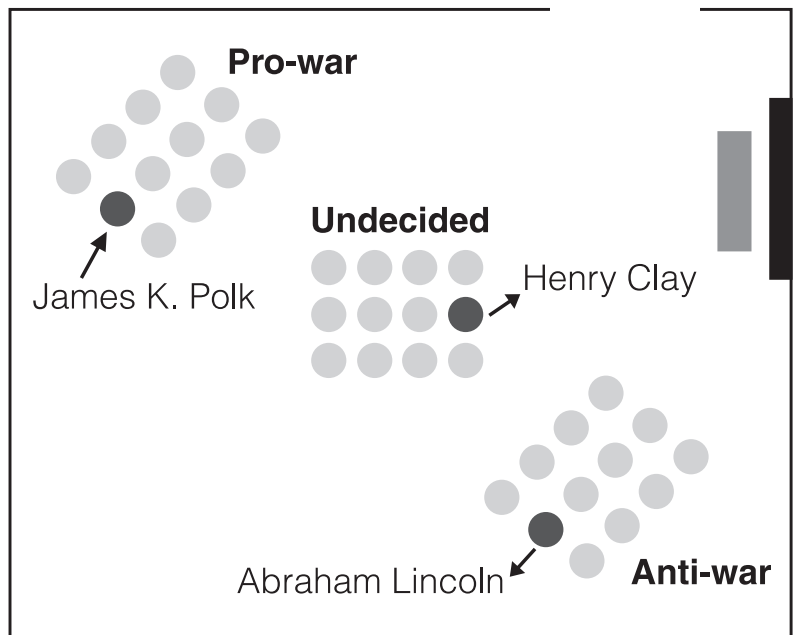
Before Day 1

Be sure you have thoroughly examined the Teacher Guide, the Student Guide, and the various handouts.

Day 1

1. Pass out the Student Guides. Read aloud to your students the section marked Purpose. It is vital for you to establish interest in this period of history and the re-creation students are about to enter. You can do this in one of several ways: a) a lecture, reinforced by the reading of the Background Essay in the Student Guide; b) an audio-visual presentation of an available filmstrip, movie, or videotape; c) completion of the PRE-TEST given in this Teacher Guide on page 24; or d) any combination of the above. (If you use the PRE-TEST, here are the answers: 1. +, 2. 0, 3. 0, 4. +, 5. +, 6. 0, 7. 0, 8. +, 9. +, 10. 0, 11. +, 12. +, 13. +, 14. 0, 15. 0.)
2. Have the students read the Background Essay in the Student Guide. This will give each student the same basic background information to begin the re-creation. As an overnight assignment, have students answer the questions provided in the Student Guide concerning the information presented in the Background Essay. Refer them to the Procedure section on page 5 of the Student Guide, under Day 1, Assignment.
3. Divide the class into three factions. Pro-war, Anti-war, and Undecided. Divide students yourself or allow them to divide themselves.

You will want to give all factions special places in the classroom where they regularly meet.



DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 2



Encourage your students to practice giving their speeches and asking their questions—aloud! Above all, insure that they do not simply read their material from the handouts you have given them.

4. Give each group of students the handouts for their faction. Each faction's handouts contains arguments, specific details, quotes, and questions. Be certain that each faction receives only the materials written for its point of view. Students may refer to the Arguments Outline: Pro-war/Anti-war in their Student Guides for an overview of the opposing sides. Encourage this.
5. Allow students to meet in their faction groups to assign specific arguments or questions to present during the second hour. (Each student will present an argument, a specific detail, or a question.) Have each group elect a faction leader to keep all the members on task. Each faction leader will role-play a powerful person of his/her faction. Have other students role-play other members of their factions. Students have the names of famous persons from all three factions and such persons specific arguments in their own words in the handouts. Role-playing such persons—if they were in Congress—or quoting them even if they weren't in Congress can add a genuine historical atmosphere and spirit of authenticity to the congressional debate.

Days 2-3

1. You should likely assume the role of chairperson of the debate. This will put you in the role of controlling the flow of arguments on all sides. You can fulfill the same role that the faction leader does in the three factions.
2. Arrange students by factions facing the chairperson. Place the Pro-war faction on one side, the Anti-war faction on one side, and the Undecided faction in the center.
3. On the first issue have the Pro-war speaker(s) speak first, the Anti-war speaker(s) second, the Undecided question(s) third. It is important to keep things moving. Tell speakers to use about one minute for the argument, about one minute for the quotation. In the latter case he/she becomes the historical identity if the person is in the Congress or quotes the person if he is not a member of Congress.

Example: The first Pro-war speaker stands and speaks to the first issue, summarizing the argument provided in the faction's handout. This summary should be about one minute. Next, this same student (or a second Pro-war speaker) reads aloud Andy Jackson's own words and reaction to the ideas in Issue 1. This should take about another minute. The Pro-war speaker then may make a brief closing remark and invite an Anti-war response. The

DAILY TEACHING DIRECTIONS - 3



total time the first speaker(s) speaks should be kept to about two minutes. Then the first Anti-war speaker, Joshua Giddings, stands. This speaker(s) speaks for about two minutes, using the arguments and quote found in the faction's handout. Lastly, the Undecided questioner, John C. Calhoun, questions both Jackson and Giddings on Issue 1. This question/answer process should take about two minutes for each faction. Move on to the next issue, following the suggested sequence.

4. At the end of each debate, allow the opposing faction leaders time to make statements summarizing their factions' key points.
5. As chairperson, say that you are going to call the role of the voting delegates to vote for or against annexation and war. Remind students that they are not committed to vote with their faction. They may vote for or against depending on their free choice based on the arguments presented. As chairperson, you may also be a voting member of Congress.
6. After the vote, give students an overnight assignment such as the Debriefing activity on page 8 in their Student Guides. If you use this activity, divide the class into five or six groups in advance of the overnight reading. They will then read the detailed case study about Cuba and search for arguments (pro, con) or write questions to ask the two factions the next day. *Note:* If you plan to give the POST-TEST, refer students to the Testing section on page 8 in their Student Guides.

Final day

1. **Optional:** Pass out POST-TEST. Key to True-False: 1. 0, 2. 0, 3. +, 4. +, 5. 0, 6. +, 7. 0, 8. 0, 9. +, 10. +.)
2. **Optional:** If you plan to do the Debriefing activity, have students turn to the Debriefing section in their Student Guides. The situation and instructions are clearly provided. Have students follow the directions found in the Student Guide. Depending upon the amount of time you wish to make available for this activity, choose one of these options:
 - a. a legislative debate in which you follow the format of the re-creation
 - b. a listing of the arguments and questions on the chalkboard followed by a general class discussion
 - c. a listing of the arguments and questions on a class handout followed by a general class discussion

PRO-WAR LEADER

Introduction

As **James K. Polk**, the leader of the Pro-war faction, you are committed to absorbing Texas into the union and fulfilling the American dream of continental expansion. You believe Mexico is a weak country standing in the way of America's Manifest Destiny. Texas is essential to the U.S. both geographically and economically. In the past Mexico has provided more than ample justification for war. Since all democratic and peaceful means to acquire Texas have been unsuccessful, war with Mexico is inevitable.



Thank your group's members for choosing you to be their leader.

And now, having been chosen leader, lead!

Look everyone right in the eye and speak slowly as you present 2a through 2g.

To check for understanding, ask questions about 2a through 2g so that your members demonstrate that they understand specific responsibilities.

Instructions

1. Your faction has met and has selected you as the person most qualified to lead your faction.
2. Carefully explain the following responsibilities to your faction members. Lead your group so that all members live up to their responsibilities.
 - a. You must convince the Undecided faction of Congress that annexation of Texas and war with Mexico are unavoidable and necessary.
 - b. Present the best arguments you can to advance our point of view.
 - c. While preparing to speak, consider the argument, concerns, and the reinforcing quote.
 - d. You will have approximately two minutes to speak. Use your first minute to present your argument and concerns, your second minute to reinforce the concerns by reading the quote provided.
 - e. **Note well:** When you read the quote, you are not role-playing the individual whom you are quoting—unless he was a member of Congress at that time. If he was not in Congress, explain that you are quoting this person to reinforce your argument. In either case, whether you are the person being quoted or are only quoting him, point out the person's name/background before presenting the quote.
 - f. You will be questioned by a member of the Undecided faction. Answer this individual as clearly and forcefully as you can, for members of this faction represent the swing vote. We must win them over to our position in order to win this crucial debate.
 - g. **Note well:** This issue we will be debating was one that disturbed thinking Americans during the 1840s. Therefore, as you present your arguments or answer questions, don't speak blandly. Instead speak passionately!

PRO-WAR ARGUMENT: Issue 1

Instructions

1. Study the concerns below carefully enough so that you can paraphrase them into your own words.
2. On note cards (3" x 5" or 4" x 6") or one-half page note sheets copy each of the concerns *in your own words*. Feel free to add some other historical details to strengthen your argument.
3. You will have one minute to present these concerns from your own note cards or note sheet.
4. In your second minute you are to read all or part of the quote below. (If two of you are working together, the second person should present this quote.)
5. Speak enthusiastically.
6. If you wish to do so, dress like a person living in the American colonies in the 1770s.

Pro-war argument to Issue 1: Texas is essential to the U.S.

Concerns

1. The welfare and happiness of our union require that we add Texas to our union as the people cry out for westward expansion. The voice and will of the people must be heard.
2. From a military point of view, the possession of Texas is vital to protect our Southern border. Without it, we are vulnerable to attack from sea and land.
3. England has her eyes on Texas and could do the following: move against the U.S. from Canada and the Northwest; incite the Negroes into insurrection in the South; seize New Orleans and control of the Mississippi River; and wage war in the entire Southwest.

Quote Andrew Jackson, 1767–1845, president, senator, judge, major general in the militia, and governor of the Florida territory. “Texas borders upon us ... and is our southern boundary. If annexed to the U.S., our western boundary would be the Rio Grande, which is of itself a fortification on account of its extensive, barren, and uninhabitable plains. With such a barrier on our west we are invincible. The whole European world (especially England) could not ... make an impression in our union. Our population on the Pacific would rapidly increase and soon be strong From the Rio Grande, overland, a large army could not march or be supplied The annexation of Texas promises to enlarge the circle of free institutions, and is essential to the U.S. particularly as lessening the probabilities of future collision with foreign powers (England), and giving us greater efficiency in spreading the blessings of peace.”

PRO-WAR ARGUMENT: Issue 2

Instructions

1. Study the concerns below carefully enough so that you can paraphrase them into your own words.
2. On note cards (3" x 5" or 4" x 6") or one-half page note sheets copy each of the concerns *in your own words*. Feel free to add some other historical details to strengthen your argument.
3. You will have one minute to present these concerns from your own note cards or note sheet.
4. In your second minute you are to read all or part of the quote below. (If two of you are working together, the second person should present this quote.)
5. Speak enthusiastically.
6. If you wish to do so, dress like a person living in the American colonies in the 1770s.

Pro-war argument to Issue 2: Texas has a legal right to join the Union

Concerns

1. Mexico is too feeble a power to govern Texas, or even California, since these areas are nearly 1,000 miles from her capital.
2. The Monroe Doctrine of 1823 states clearly that “should any foreign government (Mexico) attempt to possess it (Texas) as a colony, or otherwise to incorporate it with itself ... that no foreign power shall without our consent be permitted to plant or establish any new colony or dominion in any part of the North American Continent.”
3. Texas wants to become part of the federal union and has the guaranteed right under the Constitution to become a state. Thousands of our citizens already in Texas have the right to be protected. The Constitution of the U.S. clearly recognizes the right of any citizen to overthrow an unjust government.

Quote John Tyler, 1790–1862, president, lawyer, congressman, senator, governor, vice president. “The Republic of Texas has made known her desire to come into our Union, to form a part of our Confederacy and enjoy with us the blessings of liberty secured and guaranteed by our Constitution. Texas was once a part of our country ... is now independent, and possesses an undoubted right to dispose of a part of or the whole of her territory and to merge her sovereignty as a separate and independent state in ours. I regard the question of annexation as belonging exclusively to the U.S. and Texas. They are independent powers, competent to contract, and foreign nations have no right to interfere with them or to take exceptions to their reunion. Foreign powers do not seem to appreciate the true character of our government. Our Union is a confederation of independent states, whose policy is peace with each other and all the world Foreign powers should therefore look to the U.S. not as the conquest of a nation seeking to extend her dominions by arms and violence, but as the peaceful acquisition of a territory once her own, by adding another member to our confederation, legally, with the consent of that member”

PRO-WAR ARGUMENT: Issue 3

Instructions

1. Study the concerns below carefully enough so that you can paraphrase them into your own words.
2. On note cards (3" x 5" or 4" x 6") or one-half page note sheets copy each of the concerns *in your own words*. Feel free to add some other historical details to strengthen your argument.
3. You will have one minute to present these concerns from your own note cards or note sheet.
4. In your second minute you are to read all or part of the quote below. (If two of you are working together, the second person should present this quote.)
5. Speak enthusiastically.
6. If you wish to do so, dress like a person living in the American colonies in the 1770s.

Pro-war argument to Issue 3: Our Manifest Destiny is to absorb Texas

Concerns

1. The fact that America will acquire Texas and all the lands on the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific is beyond our control. It has been manifestly destined by a higher order.
2. American institutions and systems of government are so superior that they must inevitably extend across the continent. No power on earth can stop such a move. The superior Anglo-Saxon race will prevail over the inferior Mexican race.
3. Texas is not just a geographical place, it is a piece of our destiny seeking union into the family of other states. It is our patriotic right and duty as Americans to open up our arms and accept her into our fold.

Quote John L. O’Sullivan, 1813–1895, editor of *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, first person to use the phrase our Manifest Destiny. “It is time now for opposition to the annexation of Texas to cease It is time for the common duty of patriotism to the country to succeed; it is time for common sense to acquiesce with decent grace in the inevitable and the irrevocable. Texas is now ours ... her convention has ratified the acceptance ... her star and stripe may already be said to have taken their place in the glorious blazon of our common nationality; and the sweep of our eagle’s wings already includes within its circuit the wide extent of her fair and fertile land She is no longer to us a mere country on a map. She comes within the dear and sacred designation of our country She already begins to thrill within the national heart. Texas is ... the fulfillment of our Manifest Destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.”

PRO-WAR ARGUMENT: Issue 4

Instructions

1. Study the concerns below carefully enough so that you can paraphrase them into your own words.
2. On note cards (3" x 5" or 4" x 6") or one-half page note sheets copy each of the concerns *in your own words*. Feel free to add some other historical details to strengthen your argument.
3. You will have one minute to present these concerns from your own note cards or note sheet.
4. In your second minute you are to read all or part of the quote below. (If two of you are working together, the second person should present this quote.)
5. Speak enthusiastically.
6. If you wish to do so, dress like a person living in the American colonies in the 1770s.

Pro-war argument to Issue 4:

America needs Texas for geographic/economic reasons

Concerns

1. Texas will be of great economic value to the U.S. Four-fifths of all the live oak in the world grows in Texas. It has the perfect climate to grow tropical fruits. Cotton, sugar, and molasses can be produced. Its gold and silver mines have been estimated to be among the greatest in the world.
2. By annexing Texas, the U.S. would acquire an area as large as France, an area of rich soil and excellent climate. Texas gives the U.S. access to the Gulf of Mexico, to the Mississippi River (by means of the Red River), and economic links to the entire continent.
3. Texas is attached geographically to the continent; it is not separated by any natural formation. To cut ourselves off from so vital a link would be absurd.

Quote Robert J. Walker, 1801-1869, lawyer and public official, senator, secretary of the treasury, governor of the Kansas Territory. "The importance of Texas cannot be overrated. It is a country of the greatest capabilities. The possession of Texas would insure us trade with the west. The waters of the great rivers of the East (the Allegheny of New York and the Monongahela of Virginia), along with the Ohio River embrace the streams of Texas as the mouths of the Arkansas and Red rivers, where their waters flow in union to the Gulf of Mexico. If the Creator had separated Texas from the Union by mountain barriers, the Alps or the Andes, these might be plausible objections; but he has planed down the whole valley, including Texas, and united every atom of the soil and every drop of the waters of the mighty whole. He has linked their rivers with the great Mississippi, and marked and united the whole for the dominion of one government and the residence of one people; and it is impious in a man to attempt to dissolve this great and glorious Union."

PRO-WAR ARGUMENT: Issue 5

Instructions

1. Study the concerns below carefully enough so that you can paraphrase them into your own words.
2. On note cards (3" x 5" or 4" x 6") or one-half page note sheets copy each of the concerns *in your own words*. Feel free to add some other historical details to strengthen your argument.
3. You will have one minute to present these concerns from your own note cards or note sheet.
4. In your second minute you are to read all or part of the quote below. (If two of you are working together, the second person should present this quote.)
5. Speak enthusiastically.
6. If you wish to do so, dress like a person living in the American colonies in the 1770s.

Pro-war argument to Issue 5:

There is ample justification for war and annexation

Concerns

1. The U.S. has had for many years ample justification and provocation for war against Mexico. Mexico has
 - illegally imprisoned American citizens;
 - seized American vessels illegally;
 - confiscated American cargoes to meet her own needs;
 - performed numerous lawless acts upon persons and property of U.S. citizens;
 - failed to repay debts owed to the U.S. government;
 - attacked American soldiers on American soil by crossing the Rio Grande River; and
 - wantonly insulted our national flag.
2. The U.S. has endured years of aggravated and unredressed wrongs from Mexico in violation of solemn treaty stipulations and of every principle of justice recognized by civilized nations. Thus Mexico, by her own acts, has thrust the war upon us.
3. Mexico lured hundreds of Americans to Texas with the promise of representative government and the establishment of a republic. Then Mexico swept these promises away, forcing Texans to rebel and form their own independent republic. Texans thus became fully absolved from allegiance to Mexico the moment Mexico abolished the free representative government and substituted a despotic central government.

Quote James K. Polk, 1795-1849, president, lawyer, congressman, governor. "The Constitution, public treaties, and the laws oblige the president to regard Texas as an independent state, and its territory as no part of the territory of Mexico. Texas has been an independent state, with an organized government, defying the power of Mexico to overthrow or reconquer her, for more than 10 years before Mexico commenced the present war against the U.S. Texas had given such evidence to the world of her ability to maintain her separate existence as an independent nation that she had been formally recognized as such not only by the U.S. but by several of the principal powers of Europe. These powers had received her ministers and diplomatic agents to the government of Texas. If Mexico continues stubbornly to refuse to recognize Texas as independent and part of the U.S., then Mexico is the only nation in the world to do so. Every honorable effort has been used to avoid war All our attempts to preserve peace have been met by insult and resistance on the part of Mexico. The government of Mexico refused to see our diplomat Mr. Slidell, attacked and killed our soldiers on our own land, thus closing the door to further peaceful negotiations and opening the door to an inevitable war."

ANTI-WAR LEADER

Introduction

As **Abraham Lincoln**, the leader of the Anti-war faction, you are committed to preventing the annexation of Texas into the union and thus eliminating the possibility of war with Mexico. You see an arrogant America flexing its muscles against Mexico. When you look at Texas, you do not believe its annexation to the U.S. is essential—as the Pro-war faction would have everyone believe. You regard the annexation issue as a Southern attempt to expand slavery into the territories and upset the balance of power in the Congress. Nothing of any good could result from either annexation or war. Annexation itself is an illegal act, and the U.S. would gain no real economic or geographic benefits from acquiring Texas—at least none that justifies a war. The whole issue reaches beyond Manifest Destiny and challenges God himself to judge the illegality and political immorality of the act.



Thank your group's members for choosing you to be their leader.

And now, having been chosen leader, lead!

Look everyone right in the eye and speak slowly as you present 2a through 2g.

To check for understanding, ask questions about 2a through 2g so that your members demonstrate that they understand specific responsibilities.

Instructions

1. Your faction has met and has selected you as the person most qualified to lead your faction.
2. Carefully explain the following responsibilities to your faction members. Lead your group so that all members live up to their responsibilities.
 - a. You must convince the Undecided faction of Congress that annexation of Texas and war with Mexico are avoidable and unnecessary.
 - b. Present the best arguments you can to advance our point of view.
 - c. While preparing to speak, consider the argument, concerns, and the reinforcing quote you have been given.
 - d. You will have approximately two minutes to speak. Use your first minute to present your argument and concerns, your second minute to reinforce the concerns by reading the quote provided.
 - e. **Note well:** When you read the quote, you are not role-playing the individual whom you are quoting—unless he was a member of Congress at that time. If he was not in Congress, explain that you are quoting this person to reinforce your argument. In either case, whether you are the person being quoted or are only quoting him, point out the person's name/background before presenting the quote.
 - f. You will be questioned by a member of the Undecided faction. Answer this individual as clearly and forcefully as you can, for members of this faction represent the swing vote. We must win them over to our position in order to win this crucial debate.
 - g. **Note well:** This issue we will be debating was one that disturbed thinking Americans during the 1840s. Therefore, as you present your arguments or answer questions, don't speak blandly. Instead speak passionately!

ANTI-WAR ARGUMENT: Issue 1

Instructions

1. Study the concerns below carefully enough so that you can paraphrase them into your own words.
2. On note cards (3" x 5" or 4" x 6") or one-half page note sheets copy each of the concerns *in your own words*. Feel free to add some other historical details to strengthen your argument.
3. You will have one minute to present these concerns from your own note cards or note sheet.
4. In your second minute you are to read all or part of the quote below. (If two of you are working together, the second person should present this quote.)
5. Speak enthusiastically.
6. If you wish to do so, dress like a person living in the American colonies in the 1770s.

Anti-war argument to Issue 1: Texas is essential to the U.S.

Concerns

1. The addition of Texas to the union would weaken our federal government. The balance of power would shift to the South, and Texas could control the policy and destiny of our nation. Texas would become just another slave state, powerfully allied with the Southern states while its congressional representatives took liberties against the North.
2. Texas is essential to Mexico for protection of her northern border. Mexico has just as much right to be secure as do other nations. Mexico has always been willing to recognize Texas as independent as long as Texas does not annex herself to any other nation.
3. Despite England's interest in Texas, a more serious threat exists. European nations wish to limit the growth of American expansion and power. The addition of Texas to our nation could provoke European nations against us.

Quote Joshua Giddings, 1795-1864, public official, U.S congressman from Ohio, and minister to Canada. "A cry of war between America and Mexico has been raised North America presents her ambitious plans to conquer all the American continent. Annexing Texas and fighting a war with Mexico will give America a welcome pretense for possessing all of Mexico. Soon the smaller states will follow, and the Isthmus of Panama will fall into the hands of North America. Europe shall not tolerate this, nor suffer America to increase, or the independence of Europe might sooner or later be wedged in by the two colossuses of Russia and North America, and suffer from this oppression. Thus, the European powers will resolve to prevent and check the growth, in power and influence, of the U.S."

ANTI-WAR ARGUMENT: Issue 2

Instructions

1. Study the concerns below carefully enough so that you can paraphrase them into your own words.
2. On note cards (3" x 5" or 4" x 6") or one-half page note sheets copy each of the concerns *in your own words*. Feel free to add some other historical details to strengthen your argument.
3. You will have one minute to present these concerns from your own note cards or note sheet.
4. In your second minute you are to read all or part of the quote below. (If two of you are working together, the second person should present this quote.)
5. Speak enthusiastically.
6. If you wish to do so, dress like a person living in the American colonies in the 1770s.

Anti-war argument to Issue 2: Texas has no legal right to join the Union

(Your faction leader—Abraham Lincoln—should present this argument.)

Concerns

1. President Polk took possession of Texas first, then attempted to negotiate. Such actions clearly take advantage of Mexico's weak, young government by holding over it the mighty power of the U.S. government. It is not only illegal; it is also immoral.
2. How can we legally justify taking land that does not legally belong to us? We are attempting to wage war against our neighbor to compel its leaders to sell their country to us. This is dishonorable and disgraceful.
3. Polk claims that American blood was spilled on American soil and that this legally justifies war. Yet the president cannot show the exact spot where blood was spilled any more than he can prove that Texas is legally American soil. The president ordered American troops on to land not clearly American soil.

Quote Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1865, Illinois lawyer, Congressman from Illinois, president during the Civil War. "American armies will clinch their hold on Mexico. All of this will cost our nation thousands of dollars and thousands of American lives. And when we beat Mexico, what should we force Mexico to pay us? Since she has no money, how much of her land should we take? Or shall we take over all of Mexico? Show me the exact spot of soil where first the blood of our citizens was shed. The president illegally ordered American troops on to land not established as American soil. The president attempted to prove by telling some truth what he could not prove by telling the whole truth. The war and annexation of Texas was unnecessarily and unconstitutionally commenced by the president. I more than suspect that the president is deeply conscious of being in the wrong, that he feels the blood of war, like the blood of Abel, is crying to heaven against him. His mind (is like some tormented creature that finds) no position on which it can settle down and be at peace. Never did I expect to see the day when the Executive of this country should announce that our honor was such a loathsome, beastly thing, that it could not be satisfied with any achievements in arms, however brilliant and glorious, but must be fed on earth—gross, vile dirt—and require even a prostrate foe to be robbed of mountain rocks and desert plains."

ANTI-WAR ARGUMENT: Issue 3

Instructions

1. Study the concerns below carefully enough so that you can paraphrase them into your own words.
2. On note cards (3" x 5" or 4" x 6") or one-half page note sheets copy each of the concerns *in your own words*. Feel free to add some other historical details to strengthen your argument.
3. You will have one minute to present these concerns from your own note cards or note sheet.
4. In your second minute you are to read all or part of the quote below. (If two of you are working together, the second person should present this quote.)
5. Speak enthusiastically.
6. If you wish to do so, dress like a person living in the American colonies in the 1770s.

Anti-war argument to Issue 3: It is not our destiny to absorb Texas

Concerns

1. Providence has already provided Americans the full enjoyment of religious, civil, and political liberty. Destiny does not dictate, nor the Creator require, that the U.S. use illegal or immoral means to force this perfect order on others.
2. Even though our Anglo-Saxon race and system of government appears superior, they by no means confer upon the U.S. a superiority of rights. What right do we have to place ourselves above others we judge to be inferior? Were we not once a nation of inferiors revolting against a superior, England?
3. By what right do we talk of exercising some standard of patriotism and nationalism that would plunge the U.S. into an unnecessary acquisition of land and an unnecessary war? Such action would be no more justified than a man trying to appropriate his neighbor's farm. It may be geographically sound for the man, but it certainly is not for his neighbor.

Quote Albert Gallatin, 1761-1849, financier, diplomat, member of House of Representatives, minister to France and England. "The people of the U.S. have been placed by Providence in a position never before enjoyed by any other nation. They are possessed of a most extensive territory ... Americans are in quiet possession of all those natural rights for which the peoples of other countries have for a long time contended and still do contend. For these powers ... the U.S. is responsible to posterity, to the world at large and to the Almighty ... who has poured on us such unparalleled blessings. Before this Texas question, the U.S. had always acted in strict conformity with the dictates of justice and had displayed the utmost moderation. They never had voluntarily injured any other nation. Every acquisition of territory was honestly made. The preservation of peace was always a primary object. A call to arms was always in self-defense. But now the U.S. seeks to injure its history of political morality by a scandalous conflict between two adjacent Republics. Our mission has been in the past to improve our institutions and social state to the benefit of mankind. Instead of this we appeal to our worst passions, the thirst to acquire land by brutal force, the false glory to pervert the noblest feelings of our nature. We are abandoning the lofty position of our fathers and substituting for it political immorality and heathen patriotism."

ANTI-WAR ARGUMENT: Issue 4

Instructions

1. Study the concerns below carefully enough so that you can paraphrase them into your own words.
2. On note cards (3" x 5" or 4" x 6") or one-half page note sheets copy each of the concerns *in your own words*. Feel free to add some other historical details to strengthen your argument.
3. You will have one minute to present these concerns from your own note cards or note sheet.
4. In your second minute you are to read all or part of the quote below. (If two of you are working together, the second person should present this quote.)
5. Speak enthusiastically.
6. If you wish to do so, dress like a person living in the American colonies in the 1770s.

Anti-war argument to Issue 4:

America does not need Texas for geographic/economic reasons

Concerns

1. America already possesses a most extensive territory with fertile soil, a variety of climate and production, and a capacity of sustaining a population greater than any other territory of the same size on the face of the globe. Our abundant resources are as yet untapped. What is motivating us to acquire Texas—destiny or greed?
2. The fact that we do not acquire Texas as a state does not mean that we cannot negotiate with the people of Texas the right to carry on an economy within her borders. (The trade situation would be comparable to our current relationship with other nations in the world.) Whether or not we own Texas, whether or not we go to war over her, she remains a potential economic resource on our continent.
3. Are we to assume that because my neighbor's farm is fed by the same stream as mine that I have the right to seize his property so my geographic link with his water supply can be made complete? I have no more right to his property geographically than the U.S. has to Texas.

Quote Thomas Corwin, 1794-1865, lawyer, member of House of Representatives, governor of Ohio, senator, secretary of treasury, minister to Mexico. "There is not one of us who would not spurn a man capable of appropriating for himself his neighbor's farm on the basis of economic gain and acquisition of rich and fertile land. The same holds true for Mexico and Texas. There is a total absence of any argument to justify war. It goes against our very grain and reaches to the soul of despotism and injustice. We would dare not allow ourselves to suffer such an injustice. How can we expect others to feel differently? If I were a Mexican, I would tell you, 'Have you not room in your own country to bury your dead men? If you come to mine, we will greet you with bloody hands and welcome you to hospitable graves.' "

ANTI-WAR ARGUMENT: Issue 5

Instructions

1. Study the concerns below carefully enough so that you can paraphrase them into your own words.
2. On note cards (3" x 5" or 4" x 6") or one-half page note sheets copy each of the concerns *in your own words*. Feel free to add some other historical details to strengthen your argument.
3. You will have one minute to present these concerns from your own note cards or note sheet.
4. In your second minute you are to read all or part of the quote below. (If two of you are working together, the second person should present this quote.)
5. Speak enthusiastically.
6. If you wish to do so, dress like a person living in the American colonies in the 1770s.

Anti-war argument to Issue 5:

There is no justification for war and annexation

Concerns

1. There is never ample justification for war. For each of Mexico's provocations, there is a peaceful alternative. Make the sword the last resort, not the first. Here are other alternatives:
 - **Negotiation** Have both sides stay cool and adjust differences.
 - **Arbitration** If differences cannot be adjusted, send them to an impartial umpire.
 - **Mediation** When all talks have broken down, a friendly third party (nation) could step in and mediate.
 - **Non-intercourse** Have both nations withdraw from all contact and negotiations with each other for a period of time until the scene returns to justice and self-respect.
 - **Congress of Nations** Let such a body judge both sides and make a decision binding on both.
2. Mexico's failure to meet treaty obligations is common in any new nation adjusting to its growth and new situation. The U.S. had similar growing pains. Mexico must be given a chance, not a costly war. Other nations were tolerant of the U.S. when we emerged from our revolution against England.
3. That Mexico seems to have done us an injustice seems certain. But it may not be permanent. Let us use peaceful means to negotiate a solution. No nation should declare war or seize property it judges to be its own rightfully any more than a man should be allowed to be the judge of his own case. War is too expensive in money and lives. In nine cases out of ten it costs more to rob an orchard than it would to buy the apples.

Quote George C. Beckwith, 1800-1870, clergyman to Congress and leader of the American Peace Society. "Nations should incorporate in every treaty a clause, binding themselves to adjust any difficulties that might arise between them, in no case by the sword, but always by reference to umpires mutually chosen, and agree either to abide by their decision, or to claim, if dissatisfied, only a new hearing, or a different reference. A man or a nation who feels harm has been done to him or the nation should never be permitted to act as witness, jury, and judge in his own case. The very court system in our country demands judgment by our peers, and the case of Texas and Mexico demands the same, for the verdict of war is far more costly. Can you find a cheaper, juster, surer way, than reference to umpires in whom you both have confidence, and before whom you are allowed a full and fair hearing?"

UNDECIDED LEADER

Introduction

You, **Henry Clay**, lead the Undecided faction, members of the Congress who have not yet made up their minds about the issue of annexing Texas and fighting a war with Mexico. All of you spend much time listening to arguments from the Pro-war and Anti-war factions. To guide you in making up your mind as to which side you favor, your faction will ask questions during this re-creation debate. Since many members of the two opposing factions are friends whom you hold in high regard, committing yourselves to either point of view is difficult. All of you have been holding a middle ground between the two viewpoints as the debate has become more heated. Now it is becoming increasingly apparent that all of you must take a stand for or against war and annexation. In fact, your faction will likely be the swing vote in Congress.



Thank your group's members for choosing you to be their leader.

And now, having been chosen leader, lead!

Look everyone right in the eye and speak slowly as you present 2a through 2g.

To check for understanding, ask questions about 2a through 2g so that your members demonstrate that they understand specific responsibilities.

Instructions

1. Your faction has met and has selected you as the person most qualified to lead your faction.
2. Carefully explain the following responsibilities to your faction members. Lead your group so that all members live up to their responsibilities.
 - a. Your goal is to explore the Pro-war and Anti-war arguments and weigh their validity. To help you find the truth, you will ask questions of both factions.
 - b. Questions have been provided, but we can add questions of our own if our teacher expands the amount of time available for the re-creation.
 - c. Don't give a speech as you ask your question. Simply spend 30-45 seconds asking a question of one faction; a faction member will then answer you in about one minute.
 - d. Next ask a question of the other faction. This faction will then have a member give a brief answer.
 - e. How many questions your faction's members can ask will depend upon the time available.
 - f. If you are assigned the questions under these names—Calhoun, Clay, and Sumner—role-play these identities. They were in Congress at the time.
 - g. If you are assigned the questions under the other two names—Lowell and Kirkland—mention their names as the source of the questions. Point out that you respect these distinguished men who are questioning American involvement in Texas and Mexico.

UNDECIDED QUESTIONS - 1

Cut apart on broken lines.

Issue 1: Is Texas essential to the United States?

John C. Calhoun, 1782-1850, political philosopher, lawyer, congressman, senator, secretary of war, vice president, secretary of state

Questions for Pro-war faction

1. You say the voice of the people drives us to war and annexation. Yet Polk barely won the election in 1844, hardly a mandate by the people. Would it not be better for us to wait for a real emergency, one in which we had sufficient interest before we interfered in the affairs of Texas and Mexico?
2. Isn't this war and annexation issue just an attempt to extend slavery into the territories and upset the balance of power among free and slave states in the Congress? And wouldn't upsetting this balance of power cause more harm than good?

Questions for Anti-war faction

1. How can we ignore the will of the people? Texas' importance to the union seems obvious. Can we ignore the rights of thousands of Americans already living there?
2. Can we really ignore the military importance of Texas? Do we dare leave the Mississippi River and New Orleans vulnerable to attack and leave our southwestern border open to the threat of European aggression?

Issue 2: Is it legal for Texas to join the Union?

Henry Clay, 1777-1852, congressman, senator, secretary of state, presidential candidate

Questions for Pro-war faction

1. The Monroe Doctrine does not seem to be an ample justification for seizing Texas or going to war. The affairs of nations are not controlled by mere declarations. And is the Monroe Doctrine really binding in this case? Is the doctrine itself legal? For example, is a law or doctrine passed in one country binding on another? And if Mexico had its own doctrine, which doctrine would be more legal to enforce?
2. The entire issue of war appears unconstitutional. The Constitution states that Congress "shall have power to declare war." Hasn't the president usurped his authority by ordering General Taylor to the Texas border without congressional permission? Didn't he really cause war to break out?

Questions for Anti-war faction

1. The U.S. has been a country where political freedom and individual rights have always been guaranteed under the law. Would you have us close the door to Texas, and thus deny the Americans living there what our nation has stood for, for so many years?
2. Isn't it true that the original 13 colonies were clearly not American lands, yet we believe we seized these lands legally? Shouldn't Texas have the same opportunity we allowed ourselves when the principles of freedom and democracy were founded in this country?

UNDECIDED QUESTIONS - 2

Cut apart on broken lines.

Issue 3: Is the idea of destiny relevant?

James Russell Lowell, 1819-1891, poet, literary critic, and diplomat, minister to Spain and England, author of numerous political essays

Questions for Pro-war faction

1. Isn't annexing Texas and going to war stretching the ideal of destiny to its limits? Isn't using providence or destiny as a justification for attacking our sister republic and acquiring her land like leaving the door open for other nations to do the same in the guise of their Manifest Destiny?
2. By declaring ourselves a superior Anglo-Saxon race, don't we violate every grain of truth and equality we hold so dear in our Constitution and its laws?

Questions for Anti-war faction

1. Was it not our destiny to break away from England, the Mother Country, thousands of miles away from her colonies? Shouldn't American citizens in Texas be accorded the same rights as American patriots in the revolution?
2. If we had ignored our destiny in 1776, would our present state of freedom and greatness be as it exists today? Or would we still be subject to unreasonable demands from an overbearing Mother Country?

Issue 4: Do we need Texas for geographic/economic reasons?

Charles Sumner, 1811-1874, U.S. senator and author of numerous political editorials concerning events of the day

Questions for Pro-war faction

1. Would it not be wiser to wage war with Mexico by economic means rather than bloodshed? We could resist Mexico by using practical measures: building up a strong revenue against her and having our friends in Texas and other nations economically boycott her.
2. Are we so certain that by adding Texas to our continent we will reap nothing but rewards? Will this not create more problems than good?

Questions for Anti-war faction

1. Can we afford to ignore the great economic potential of Texas when her natural resources are boundless? Is it sound economically for us to let Texas slip through our hands?
2. Should we not look at Texas with the same fever and excitement we looked upon the Louisiana Purchase? The value of the Louisiana Purchase has become more important as each year passes. Do we dare give up the vast land area of Texas? Think for a moment of our situation had we failed to purchase the Louisiana Territory. Are not the two situations similar?

UNDECIDED QUESTIONS - 3

Cut apart on broken lines.

Issue 5:

Is there ample justification for war and annexation?

William Kirkland, 1800-1861, world traveler, writer, author of the “safety valve theory” of the frontier (i.e., the west as a refuge for the underprivileged of the east)

Questions for Pro-war faction

1. Is there really ample justification for war? Or wouldn't this war really be a war against freedom and humanity, a war against the free states and the slave states, a war against what our Constitution stands for? Be honest. Isn't this really an imperialistic move to gain territory without any regard for laws or humanity?
2. Have we really used every means available to us to prevent war? Would we judge this attitude we are manifesting toward Mexico to be equally justified should one of our neighbors use it on us?

Questions for Anti-war faction

1. How many years do we spend negotiating before the voice of the public drives us into action? When is a good time to stop diplomacy and to invite action? Didn't the Mexican government show its contempt for us when it sent our state department representative John Slidell back to Washington? What alternative do we have other than war?
2. How many years must we allow Mexico to keep aggravating us? The fact that we should have built safeguards into our treaties and negotiations with Mexico seems hindsight. The problem exists now. Will any good come if we wait months or even years? And what effect will such foot-dragging have on the countless Americans already in Texas?

PRE-TEST

Directions: Either on your own paper or in the spaces at left, mark a + for **true** statements, a 0 for **false** statements.

- | | |
|--|--|
| _____ 1. Mexico claimed Texas and California as part of her territory in the 1840s. | _____10. No American president or politician really wanted war with Mexico. |
| _____ 2. American settlers had no desire to seek out the western lands in the 1840s. | _____11. The United States offered to buy Texas from Mexico but was turned down. |
| _____ 3. The American government clearly recognized Mexico's right to Texas and California. | _____12. The treaty ending the Mexican War gave Texas and California to the United States. |
| _____ 4. The Mexican government did not want American settlers in Texas. | _____13. As a result of the Mexican War, the United States gained more than one-half million square miles of land. |
| _____ 5. Many Americans felt it was their Manifest Destiny to acquire the entire continent. | _____14. The United States entered into a second bitter war with Mexico over California. |
| _____ 6. Mexico was willing to give up Texas to the United States in the hopes of keeping California. | _____15. The United States was never able to fulfill its dream of continental expansion. |
| _____ 7. The United States and Mexico reached a compromise over the question of the annexation of Texas. | |
| _____ 8. The United States defeated Mexico in the Mexican War. | |
| _____ 9. President Polk was responsible for fulfilling the dream of western expansion. | |

POST-TEST

Directions: Either on your own paper or in the spaces provided, write your answers to Part 1. Complete Parts 2 and 3 on your own paper.

Part 1: True-False

Write + for **true**, 0 for **false**.

- _____ 1. The spirit of manifest destiny died out early in the 1840s, leaving the United States with a costly and unpopular war for continental expansion.
- _____ 2. Almost all the important men of the 1840s opposed the war with Mexico.
- _____ 3. Mexicans harbored strong anti-American feelings.
- _____ 4. The pro arguments for war with Mexico were strong and echoed the feelings of many Americans.
- _____ 5. President Polk did everything in his power to avoid annexing Texas and a resulting war with Mexico.
- _____ 6. Mexico offered strong resistance in the war but was unable to defeat the American army.
- _____ 7. The United States government agreed to the joint occupation of Texas and California by Americans and Mexicans.
- _____ 8. The con arguments against war with Mexico were weak and unpopular.
- _____ 9. In the treaty ending the Mexican War, the United States government paid Mexico \$15 million for Texas.
- _____ 10. As a result of the Mexican War, America fulfilled its dream of continental expansion.

Part 2: Short answers

1. You heard powerful arguments *for* war against Mexico. List the five strongest arguments you can think of justifying the pro argument for war.
2. You also heard powerful arguments *against* war with Mexico. List the five strongest arguments you can think of justifying the con argument against war.

Part 3: Essay questions

Depending upon your teacher's directions, write short or long answers to one or more of the following questions.

1. Which argument seemed the stronger to you, the argument for or against war? Explain.
2. Was America really justified in declaring war against Mexico, or was America simply using any means possible in fulfilling her dream of continental expansion?
3. Was Mexico guilty of any offense that justified America declaring war on that nation?

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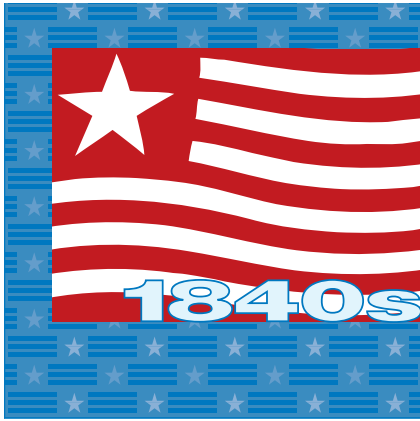
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TEXAS AND THE MEXICAN WAR

A re-creation of the conflict between pro-war and anti-war factions, debating whether or not the United States should annex Texas

Student Guide

PURPOSE

During the next few classroom hours you will actively take part in a re-creation of history. The setting is Washington, D.C., in the 1840s, where as a congressperson you will debate whether the United States should go to war with Mexico. As a member of one of three Congressional groups, Pro-war, Anti-war, or Undecided, you will become involved in the stream of events that would lead the U.S. into open conflict with Mexico over the question of the annexation of Texas. This re-creation gives you the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process and experience first-hand the heartbeat of Manifest Destiny as it drove the body of a nation toward western expansion.

BACKGROUND ESSAY

Impulses toward expansion The American surge toward frontiers in the West was accelerating during the 1840s. Pioneers moved into Texas, across the fertile California valleys, and into Oregon's rich Willamette Valley. The lure of the West, the cry for continental expansion, and an almost religious belief that America must act out its destiny helped America gain more than a half million square miles of territory by 1848. But expansionistic Americans were to fulfill their dream only by entering into a war with Mexico, a war that many declared unnecessary. Powerful arguments were expressed throughout America as both sides spoke out on the Texas and Mexico question.

The 1840s saw four main impulses toward expansion.

1. East of the Mississippi River most of the rich, fertile land had already been settled. Americans sought the wide open spaces of the West. They were pulled by an engulfing force to acquire the western lands.
2. The Panic of 1837 during President Martin Van Buren's administration produced severe hardships on many Americans living east of the Mississippi River. Hundreds of banks and businesses failed, and unemployment soared. Riots broke out in several cities, and the five-year depression was felt even in the South where numerous plantations collapsed as mortgages were foreclosed. These events caused Americans to look to the West to escape the mounting tensions of the East.
3. For years, England had been trading successfully with the Far East. The time was now ripe for Americans to harvest some of the eastern market. Consequently, ports were established on the Pacific Coast.
4. Americans were beginning to fear that England was becoming increasingly interested in Texas, California, and Oregon. Therefore, citizens asked, "Isn't it time for Americans to step in and establish once and for all our right to control the fertile center of the North American continent from sea to shining sea?"

Manifest Destiny Further motivating the American spirit was a romantic ideal, a somewhat mystical concept called Manifest Destiny. This ideal flowed as an undercurrent in the hearts and minds of countless Americans. They somehow believed that the Creator (or Providence) was guiding the American destiny to accomplish the following: 1) possess the entire continent of



**Question
for you to
consider:**

What was it like for Texans to live with the uncertainty of not knowing what direction the United States was going to go?

North America; 2) expand the democratic ideals of freedom and democracy along with the superior American culture and way of life; and 3) spread the influence and domain of the superior Anglo-Saxon race. Historian Ray Allen Billington in his book *Westward Expansion* summarizes this overriding expression of American attitude:

The righteous but ill-informed people of that day sincerely believed their democratic institutions were of such manifest perfection that no boundaries could contain them. Surely a benevolent Creator did not intend such blessings for the few; expansion was a divinely ordered means of extending enlightenment to despot-ridden masses in nearby countries. This was not imperialism, but enforced salvation.

This was, therefore, the guiding feeling of most Americans in the 1840s. The spirit of Manifest Destiny filled the air.

Oregon dispute Both England and the U.S. had long established claims to the Oregon country. The two nations had agreed by treaty to occupy the region jointly until ownership could be determined. By 1840 “Oregon Fever” had engulfed America. The Oregon Trail, a 2,000-mile trek from Independence, Missouri, to the Willamette Valley, was opened. Between 1841 and 1843 thousands of pioneers journeyed to Oregon, answering the call to their destiny. By 1845, 5,000 Americans had settled in Oregon and formed a provisional government. The American citizens began demanding total American jurisdiction over the area.

California coveted Another essential part of Manifest Destiny was the golden jewel, California. For some time Americans had been aware of the abundant resources of California and of Mexico’s weak hold on the territory. The Oregon Country and California made up the western border of the continent. Expansionists soon realized that acquiring California from Mexico was vital to a total occupation of the North American continent.

Texas eyed Another area ripe for American expansion was Texas. Since the 1820s many American settlers had been pouring into Texas. Ultimately more Americans settled in Texas than in all the other territories combined. Yet despite the lure of Texas, Congress refused to recommend the annexation of Texas. President John Tyler had fought long and hard to annex Texas, fearing England’s increasing interest in the area and the Southern desire to expand American cotton and slave areas. Southern slave holders also wanted Texas annexed as soon as possible because of their fears that Texas would abolish slavery on its own unless the American government moved swiftly to annex Texas as a slave state.

In 1844 President Tyler submitted a treaty of annexation to the Senate, but it was defeated 16-35 for two reasons: 1) Congress sought to prevent the almost certain threat of war with Mexico should the U.S. annex Texas; 2) Many senators feared that the entire annexation issue was really a pro-slavery plot. Thus, President Tyler failed in this attempt to annex Texas, but the issue was still alive.

Election of 1844 This election clearly drew the annexation issue into the open. The Liberty Party chose James Birney as its candidate and denounced the further extension of slavery into any new territory. The Whig Party chose Henry Clay, who remained silent on the Texas issue. The Democratic Party candidate, a “dark horse” named James K. Polk, stated his party’s feelings loudly and clearly. The Democratic Party platform called for “the reoccupation of Oregon and the re-annexation of Texas at the earliest practicable period.” The election gave Polk 170 electoral votes to Clay’s 105, but Polk’s popular vote margin was a meager 40,000—hardly a mandate from the people. Nevertheless, the Democrats felt Polk’s victory justified American expansion to the Pacific.

Oregon partitioned The pressures and threat of war with Mexico over Texas were growing each day. Polk quickly compromised with England over the Oregon question so the U.S. government could divert its full attention to the Texas question. The Oregon Treaty of 1846 placed the U.S.-Canadian border along the 49th parallel and gave Canada Vancouver Island and full right of navigation on the Columbia River.

Annexation of Texas After the presidential election of 1844 and only a few days before the president was to leave office, President Tyler attempted once more to annex Texas. Tyler proposed a joint resolution of Congress, which requires only a majority vote. (He thus planned to bypass the two-thirds vote needed whenever the Senate approves a treaty.) After a long, cumbersome debate the resolution passed in the House by a vote of 120 to 98 and passed in the Senate 27 to 25. Tyler signed the resolution into law on March 1, 1845, just three days before he left office. Thus, by December 1845, Texas had become a state, allowing slavery to exist under the terms of the Missouri Compromise.

Mexico and Polk The annexation of Texas was a bold move by the U.S. government. A war with Mexico became inevitable; in fact, Polk oiled the gears of his presidency to bring this about. Americans began to

take sides for or against a war with Mexico. Polk moved on his decided course with a united purpose. He said his purpose was “to extend the dominions of peace over additional territories and increasing millions.” The president expressed two areas of disagreement with the Mexican government: 1) The government of Mexico owed American citizens thousands of dollars for property destroyed during Mexico’s revolution; and 2) Mexico insisted that the Nueces River was the southern boundary of Texas, not the Rio Grande as claimed by the U.S. After expressing his grievances to the Mexican government, Polk proceeded to take specific actions.

These actions would eventually strangle relations between the U.S. and Mexico and lead to open hostility. First, in the summer of 1845, Polk ordered American troops under General Zachary Taylor to the Nueces line. Second, the president sent a U.S. naval squadron to California with orders to seize the California ports just as soon as open war began. Polk further ordered key people in California to encourage annexation sentiment among the settlers. Third, in an attempt to purchase disputed territories, Polk sent John Slidell to Mexico with these instructions: 1) offer to buy New Mexico and California; and 2) get Mexico to agree upon the Rio Grande boundary.

The Mexican reaction was a barrage of anti-American feelings. The Mexican government refused to hear or even receive Slidell and broke relations with the U.S. government. Polk’s response to Mexico’s reaction came in January 1846: he ordered General Taylor, without the consent of Congress, to advance to the Rio Grande. Later in May the president prepared a statement asking Congress to declare war against Mexico. His declaration was based on two reasons: 1) Mexico had failed to meet her financial obligations to the U.S.; 2) Mexico had insulted the U.S. government by refusing to meet with Slidell. Just days before Polk was to present his message to Congress, news reached the White House that General Taylor’s troops had been attacked north of the Rio Grande. Polk then added a third justification for war with Mexico: Mexico “had invaded our territory and shed American blood on American soil.” President Polk obviously felt that only by waging war with Mexico would the American dream of continental expansion be fulfilled.

The response of Congress was a Declaration of War on May 13, 1846. Polk had nudged our “destiny.” It remained only for the American soldiers to move events to a conclusion that Polk and many others believed had been destined all along.

Mexican War The American army proved its worth in early victories over the Mexican army at Monterey (September 1846) and Buena Vista (February 1847). Control of California followed swiftly as Mexican influence was easily removed. General Winfield Scott battled his way to Mexico City, defeating the army of Mexican General Santa Anna. By early 1848, Nicholas P. Trist from the American State Department entered Mexico City with General Scott to negotiate peace terms with the Mexican government.

Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo On February 2, 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed by the U.S. and Mexican governments. It had two major provisions: 1) Mexico ceded New Mexico and California to the U.S. for 15 million dollars with the agreement that the U.S. would assume any claim by American citizens against Mexico. (This amounted to approximately three and a half million dollars.) 2) The southern boundary of Texas would be established at the Rio Grande.

Pro-war and annexation arguments Very powerful men of the 1840s gathered together many individuals’ pro-war and annexation sentiments. Presidents Jackson, Tyler, and Polk recognized the political, geographic, and economic importance of acquiring Texas. They accepted war with Mexico as a necessary, inevitable step toward fulfilling the dream of continental expansion. These pro-war and annexation forces saw Texas as an essential link in western expansion. From a military point of view, Texas vitally protected the southern border of America. From a geographic and economic point of view, the continent could not be complete without Texas’ rich soil and vast natural resources. War and annexation was, after all, more than justified. Hadn’t Mexico opened the door of injustice by its illegal treatment of Americans? The Mexican government had failed continually and willingly to honor the agreements with the American government; it had ignored the rights of American citizens. Expansionist feelings went beyond this. The annexationists and pro-war faction saw God guiding American settlement from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Pro-annexation and war individuals embraced this image with an almost spiritual vigor and assuredness. No power on earth could prevent this destiny.

Anti-war and annexation arguments On the side opposing annexation and war stood equally powerful statesmen and citizens, persons such as Abraham Lincoln, Albert Gallatin, and Senator Thomas Corwin. They introduced into the debate logical and precise arguments why Texas was not essential to the nation.



If you had been a young person living in Texas in the 1840s, which position do you expect you and your family members would most likely have accepted?

These anti-war and annexation forces saw Texas as a non-essential hazard threatening the delicate balance of power functioning so smoothly in the American Congress. They stressed that when the institution of slavery was tearing at the heart of America, our nation certainly didn't need another slave state. They also pointed out that Texas would retain its geographic and economic vitality regardless of whether or not it joined the federal union. And America itself was abundant enough without adding Texas to its border, an addition that would do nothing but cause unwanted bloodshed, cost countless millions, and provoke a power struggle among the Northern and Southern states. War itself was simply not justified. By opening the door to such a war, the U.S. would invite European criticism and action against our nation. The U.S. would deserve such criticism because our nation would be guilty of thrusting upon Mexico the same unjust treatment we could not endure from any neighbor.

The Undecided Between the two groups were individuals who sought a middle ground. Unsure of just what course or method of action our nation should follow, they continually questioned both sides. These sincere moderates sought an overall picture before deciding on a specific course to follow.

Results The Mexican War and the surge of Manifest Destiny drew fire from all sides. Politicians, citizens, and pioneers in American territories could not escape the issues. And as the debate raged, the American pulse grew stronger while the nation's size increased by more than a half million square miles. After the Gadsden Purchase in 1853, the dream of continental expansion was realized. Only then did the spirit of Manifest Destiny begin subsiding. Ultimately this overwhelming spirit of destiny brought the present states of Arizona, Nevada, Utah, California, and parts of New Mexico, Wyoming, and Colorado into the union. For better or worse, the spirit had guided American political thought throughout the 1840s. This spirit, many felt, was nothing new. It was only a continuance of the American fever present during the American Revolution in the 1770s and 1780s. This idea of Manifest Destiny would fade during the 1860s as our nation was swept into the Civil War, but it would surface in the 1890s when Americans began turning their eyes outside their nation's shores.

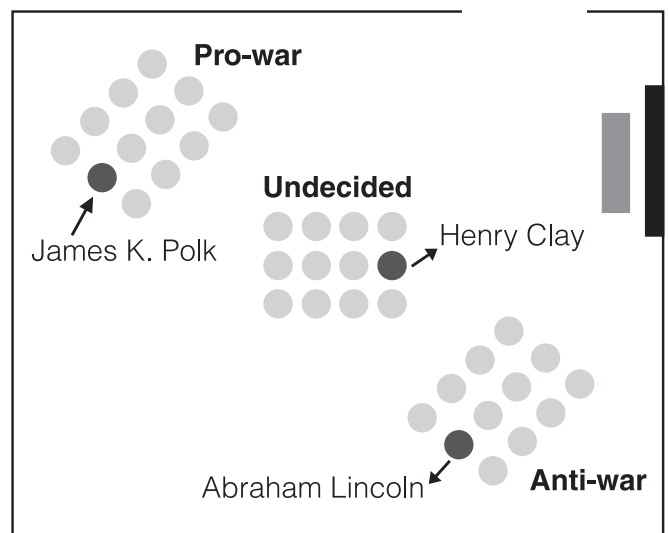
◦ PROCEDURE ◦

This re-creation of events that led to the annexation of Texas and the Mexican War has been designed to fit within a specific framework of time. Your teacher will give you instructions for each day's assignment and will explain exactly what will be expected of you as an individual and as a member of one of three factions—Pro-war, Anti-war, and Undecided.

Day 1

1. **Introduction** Your teacher may give you a lecture, or some kind of an audio-visual presentation, or an optional PRE-TEST.
2. **Background** You will read the Background Essay in your Student Guide.
3. **Division of class** Your class will be divided into three factions: Pro-war, Anti-war, and Undecided.
4. **Handouts** Each faction will receive a separate handout, containing key arguments or questions representing the faction's point of view. The first two factions will have arguments; the Undecided faction will have questions.
5. **Meeting** Each of the three factions will meet. Members choose a chairperson, who then assigns specific arguments to be presented by faction members during Days 2-3. Your faction leader will keep all persons working. He/she may choose to represent the specific role of a powerful Pro-war, Anti-war, or Undecided person in history.

Examples: Pro-war = James K. Polk;
Anti-war = Abraham Lincoln;
Undecided = Henry Clay.
6. **Assignment** You will be given a two-part overnight assignment.
 - a. Work on the argument or arguments you will present as a member of one of the three factions. Your faction leader should be certain that each member





- has a specific argument or question to present during Days 2-3.
- b. Write the answers to these questions below. For help use the background information given you in the Background Essay and in your history textbook.
- Explain Manifest Destiny. What effect did this attitude have on the American surge for expansion?
 - What were some of the reasons Americans looked to the West? What were the impulses towards expansion?
 - List some of the reasons why three American presidents wanted to annex Texas?
 - What were the two important elements of the treaty that ended the Mexican War?
 - Why did some persons feel a formal war with Mexico was needed? Why did other persons object?
7. **Notes** Prepare note sheets to use during the congressional debates beginning on Day 2. You will need to take notes on the various factions' arguments. Take notes on each of the five issues on one side of an 8-1/2"x11" sheet of paper which you have divided in half with a vertical line. Place the heading Pro-war on one side of the line, Anti-war on the other. Over the two columns created by the vertical line write the question/issue being debated.

You will write all your specific details in the spaces under the arguments.



Texas and the Mexican War:1840s 1: Is Texas essential to the United States?	
Pro-war Arguments	Anti-war Arguments
1. Westward expansion must take place.	1. The annexation of Texas, by upsetting the balance of power in the Congress, would weaken the U.S.
2. Texas is vital to protect our Southern border.	2. Texas is vital to protect Mexico's northern border.
3. England has her eyes on Texas and may move against us.	3. By adding Texas to the U.S., we risk provoking European disfavor.

Please take considerable notes, writing down what is said and your reactions to what is said during this mini-unit. You will then gain a great deal from this historical re-creation.

Research shows us that when persons write as they are learning, they retain considerable knowledge—and for a long time period.

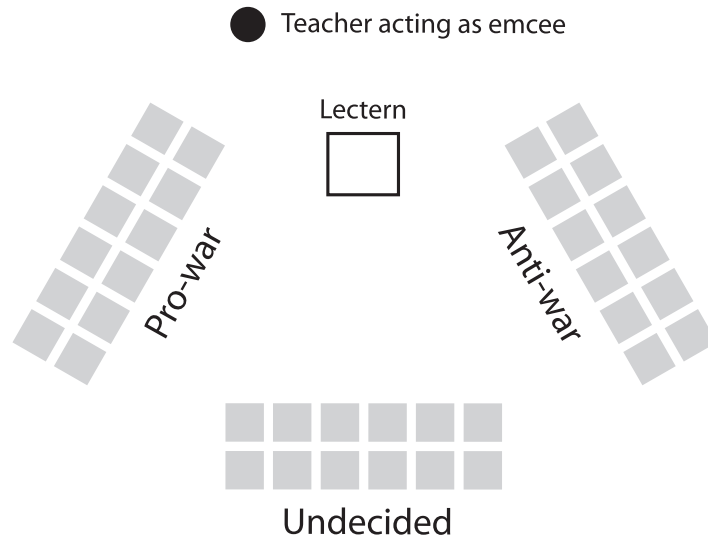
Days 2-3

1. **Chairperson** Your teacher may assume the role of chairperson of Congress.
2. **Setup** You will seat yourselves as follows:
 - Pro-war = on one side of room facing chairperson
 - Anti-war = on opposite side of room facing chairperson
 - Undecided = in the center of the room



Adopt the scholar's attitude during your debate. How?

Try to imagine how this historical age influenced persons.



3. **Debate** Faction members speak alternately covering each of the five issues/questions outlined on page 7. Pro-war faction members present their arguments on Issue 1 first; then Anti-war faction members answer with their arguments; finally, the Undecided question both sides. As the debate takes place, students record arguments on their note sheets. When all points of view have been expressed on one issue, Congress moves on to the next issue. This sequence will continue until all five issues have been covered.
4. **Vote** When all five issues have been debated, the proceedings will end and the chairperson will call for a vote. The vote will determine if annexation of Texas and the war with Mexico should or should not take place. The Undecided faction members will be the swing vote, voting either for or against. The chairperson may be a voting member of the Congress.
5. **Assignment** As an overnight assignment, your teacher may ask you to complete the following statement in a short essay: "As a voting member in the debate over annexation and war with Mexico, I voted ___ because ..."

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Day 4

1. **Testing** Your teacher may give you a POST-TEST. If so, refer to the Testing section on page 8 in this Student Guide.
2. **Debriefing** Your teacher will divide you into groups for the debriefing activity. See the Debriefing section on page 8 in this Student Guide.

◦ ARGUMENTS OUTLINE: PRO-WAR/ANTI-WAR ◦

Problem The decade is the 1840s. Pro-war and anti-war sentiments have reached a fever pitch. Numerous politicians and citizens have taken up sides and expressed arguments for or against annexing Texas and going to war with Mexico. Two major groups have come to the foreground. The group favoring annexation and war has been labeled the Pro-war faction; the group opposing annexation and war has been labeled the Anti-war faction. Positioned in the middle ground between these two strong points of view are the Undecided faction members; they are unsure as to the proper course of action. Ultimately the undecided point of view could decide the outcome of this important debate.

Instructions Below is an outline of the Pro-war and Anti-war arguments about five issues. Each side's arguments are presented in *general* statements. Specific historical details supporting the general statements can be found in the handouts your teacher will give persons belonging to each faction. Be prepared to write down these details in the manner explained to you under Day 1. Doing so will help you decide how to vote when you must vote for or against annexation and war.

BASIC PRO-WAR ARGUMENTS

BASIC ANTI-WAR ARGUMENTS

◦ Issue 1: Is Texas essential to the United States? ◦

1. Westward expansion must take place.
2. Texas is vital to protect our Southern border.
3. England has her eyes on Texas and may move against us.

1. The annexation of Texas, by upsetting the balance of power in the Congress, would weaken the U.S.
2. Texas is vital to protect Mexico's northern border.
3. By adding Texas to the U.S., we risk provoking European disfavor.

◦ Issue 2: Is it legal for Texas to join the Union? ◦

1. Mexico is too weak to govern Texas.
2. The Monroe Doctrine gives the U.S. the right to annex Texas.
3. Our Constitution guarantees American citizens in Texas the right to join the Union.

1. Seizing Texas is clearly an illegal use of U.S. power over a weaker country.
2. Texas does not legally belong to the U.S.
3. There simply is no adequate justification for taking Texas or waging war against Mexico.

◦ Issue 3: Is the idea of *destiny* relevant? ◦

1. American destiny dictates that Texas must join the Union.
2. It is no surprise that Texas seeks to join such a perfect system of government.
3. Texas longs to become one with the family of states already in the Union.

1. Providence has already blessed America. Seeking more blessings is sacrilegious.
2. Our superior feelings do not give us the right to place ourselves above others.
3. Accepting new land not clearly ours on the pretense of fulfilling our destiny is immoral.

◦ Issue 4: Does America need Texas for geographic/economic reasons? ◦

1. Texas is a land rich in minerals with excellent economic potential.
2. With its excellent river system and location Texas is an economic highway.
3. Texas is linked geographically to the American continent.

1. America is large and rich enough. Our economic potential is already limitless.
2. We need not own or control something to use it. Rivers are highways for all to use.
3. The geographic link of Texas to the continent does not give the U.S. legal right to the land.

◦ Issue 5: Is there ample justification for war and annexation? ◦

1. Mexico's illegal acts against Americans provide ample justification for annexation and war.
2. Mexico, despite constant U.S. attempts to compromise, asks for war.
3. Mexico must pay the price for her grave injustices.

1. War is never justified. There are always alternatives.
2. Mexico is not as perfect as we judge ourselves to be. Give her time.
3. We must not be judge, witness, and jury in our own case against Mexico.

TESTING

Your teacher may choose to give you a three-part POST-TEST: Part 1—10 true/false questions which deal with the issues of annexation and the Mexican War; Part 2—specific arguments for or against annexation and war as presented by the factions during the debate; and Part 3—three short essays in which you state your opinions in regards to the arguments presented pro and con during the debate.

DEBRIEFING

By now you have experienced a re-creation representing three points of view in the 1840s. Imagining that you are a senator in the United States Congress, respond to the situation below by taking sides in a modern re-creation that could divide citizens of your nation.

Situation The disintegration of communism in Russia and elsewhere in Europe in the 1990s has left Cuba by itself as the only communist-dominated country in the western hemisphere. Consider the following facts; then, discuss with your cooperative learning group how you would answer the questions following the facts. When the whole class convenes as the Senate, be prepared to give your point of view. After this debate, the Senate will vote for or against the annexation of Cuba.


Facts

1. Cuba was once the focus of possible annexation in 1848. (See the Ostend Manifesto in your textbook.)
2. Cuba, following the American victory over the Spanish army in Cuba in 1898, was occupied by the American army for three years, then made a “protectorate” until 1934 when Congress abolished the “protector” status of the U.S. (See the Platt Amendment to the Army Act of 1901; re: history text.)
3. Fidel Castro, with American military arms aid, overthrew the dictator Juan Batista in 1959. Castro, throwing off his masquerade as a democratic reformer, then established a communist, military dictatorship of his own.
4. In 1961, John Kennedy became president of the U.S., inheriting a Cuban invasion plot of a force of anti-Castro Cubans trained by CIA of the U.S. Kennedy authorized them to invade Cuba at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961. The invasion failed miserably and Castro called on Russia for help.
5. In October, 1962, the U.S. discovered Russia had armed Cuba with nuclear warheads implanted in weapons aimed at the U.S. Kennedy ordered a naval blockade of Cuba until the weapons were removed. As a blockade is an act of war, the U.S. and Russia came very close to starting World War III, but Russia backed down and agreed to remove the weapons.
6. Russia continued to support the Cuban economy, however, until 1991 when the Soviet Union renounced communism and broke apart into several separate republics. Aid to Cuba became severely restricted.

Instructions After your teacher has divided you into five or six groups, discuss with other members of your group the following questions. Try to reach agreement on what should be done, if anything. Appoint a spokesperson to present your group's view to the class.

Pivotal questions

1. Assuming Castro is still in power, should the U.S. again help Cuban rebels form an overthrow plan and assist them in carrying it out?
2. Now assuming Castro is out of power either due to overthrow or death, should the U.S. insist that Cuba become a democracy?
3. Or given the same assumption, should the U.S. annex Cuba and make it an American territory since it lies only 90 miles off the Florida coast if a majority of Cubans vote for it?
4. Or given the same assumption, should the U.S. annex Cuba in the interest of U.S. security and/or in the interest of Cuban human rights, regardless of whether the Cubans vote for or against annexation?



This culminating activity will be enjoyable and a real learning activity if you have studied the 1840s arguments carefully during the re-creation.

Good luck!