



The Road to the Texas Revolution

UNIT ADDENDUM

4th Grade Social Studies
Unit 2
Suggested Duration: 17 days

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UNIT SYNOPSIS



An 1854 drawing of the Alamo, taken from Wikipedia.

In Texas history, perhaps no story is more legendary than that of the Battle of the Alamo. “Remember the Alamo!” has become a patriotic rallying cry, evoking the heroism of a few men who died fighting for a free Texas. But how much of this story is true, and how much is lore or myth? In this unit, students will delve into the history of the Alamo, from the origins of the conflict to its impact on the diverse peoples of Texas. Students will understand that it was primarily white settlers from the United States who sought independence for Texas and will investigate the significance of American slavery in fueling the conflict.

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills standards for social studies call for elementary students to understand “the political, economic, and social changes that occurred in the United States during the 19th century” and “the importance of the Texas Revolution, the Republic of Texas, and the annexation of Texas to the United States.” In this unit, you will first introduce your students to Texas following Mexican independence in order to explore why U.S. settlers arrived in Texas and how their arrival sparked tensions with the Mexican government. As you continue to guide students through this unit, they will learn about how these tensions sparked the outbreak of war between the Texians and the Mexican government. Students will trace the path that led to the Battle of the Alamo and will understand why the Alamo became a rallying cry for the rest of the conflict.

This unit is designed to consider, critique, and challenge the traditional mythology around the Alamo, namely that Texas independence was led by a group of brave revolutionaries fighting against oppression. Though General Santa Anna was an oppressive and dictatorial leader, this version of events is woefully incomplete. The Mexican region of Texas had long been populated by Mestizos and Indigenous peoples who did not identify with the United States or have any interest in building a new republic. The Republic of Texas—and, eventually, the state of Texas—represented the interests and beliefs of a group of white slaveholding American settlers. While Santa Anna’s oppressive leadership is part of the story, it is important to further contextualize this narrative by recognizing that Mexico had recently outlawed slavery, which threatened the U.S. settlers in Texas. It is also important to emphasize to students that slavery played a key role in the annexation of Texas as well. Many pro-slavery advocates wanted to annex Texas as a state in order to increase the representation of slave states in the U.S. Congress. While some of the books in this unit detail these more complex—and more complete—motivations for Texan independence and statehood, they are generally missing from published literature. Many of the children’s books in this unit continue to perpetuate the Alamo mythology rather than a complete history. As a result, it is your responsibility to question and critique these narratives with your students to ensure they are constantly thinking about the more complicated motivations that drove Texan independence. This kind of critical historical lens is a way of thinking that will set students up for success not only in this unit but also throughout their future studies of history.

Throughout this unit, you will use whole-class Shared Content Reading™ books to introduce and reinforce these key ideas about Texan independence and the Alamo. The Texas Bullock Museum has an interactive timeline of Texas that can be referenced throughout the Texas history course. This is an optional extension resource for content building. [History of Texas Timeline](#)

CONTENT STANDARDS

Content Standards

History:

4.3: The student understands the importance of the Texas Revolution, the Republic of Texas, and the annexation of Texas to the United States.

(A) analyze the causes, major events, and effects of the Texas Revolution, including the Battle of the Alamo, the Texas Declaration of Independence, the Runaway Scrape, and the Battle of San Jacinto

(B) summarize the significant contributions of individuals such as William B. Travis, James Bowie, David Crockett, Juan N. Seguín, Plácido Benavides, José Francisco Ruiz, Antonio López de Santa Anna, Susanna Dickinson, and Enrique Esparza;

(C) identify leaders important to the founding of Texas as a republic and state, including José Antonio Navarro, Sam Houston, Mirabeau Lamar, and Anson Jones;

(D) describe the successes, problems, and organizations of the Republic of Texas such as the establishment of a constitution, economic struggles, relations with American Indians, and the Texas Rangers; and

(E) explain the events that led to the annexation of Texas to the United States and the impact of the U.S.-Mexican War.

Geography:

4.7: The student understands the location and patterns of settlement and the geographic factors that influence where people live.

(A) explain the geographic factors such as landforms and climate that influence patterns of settlement and the distribution of population in Texas, past and present; and

Economics:

4.11: The student understands patterns of work and economic activities in Texas.

(C) identify the effects of exploration, immigration, migration, and limited resources on the economic development and growth of Texas; and

Government:

4.13: student understands important ideas in historical documents of Texas and the United States. The student is expected to:

(A) identify the purposes and explain the importance of the Texas Declaration of Independence and the Texas Constitution;

Citizenship:

4.14: The student understands important customs, symbols, and celebrations of Texas.

(A) explain the meaning of various patriotic symbols and landmarks of Texas, including the six flags that flew over Texas, the Alamo, and the San Jacinto Monument;

Culture:

4.17: The student understands the contributions of people of various racial, ethnic, and religious groups to Texas culture. The student is expected to:

(B) summarize the contributions of artists of various racial, ethnic, and religious groups in the development of Texas culture such as Lydia Mendoza, Chelo Silva, and Julius Lorenzo Cobb Bledsoe.

Social studies skill

4.19: The student applies critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of valid sources, including technology.

(A) differentiate between, locate, and use valid primary and secondary sources such as technology; interviews; biographies; oral, print, and visual material; documents; and artifacts to acquire information about Texas;

(B) analyze information by applying absolute and relative chronology through sequencing, categorizing, identifying cause-and-effect relationships, comparing, contrasting, finding the main idea, summarizing, making generalizations and predictions, and drawing inferences and conclusions;

(D) identify different points of view about an issue, topic, historical event, or current event.

4.21: The student communicates in written, oral, and visual forms.

(A) use social studies terminology correctly.

(B) incorporate main and supporting ideas in verbal and written communication;

VERTICAL STANDARDS

3rd Grade Social Studies	4 th Grade Social Studies	5th Grade Social Studies
Students will engage in a course about ancient world communities and how they were created and functioned.	Students will engage in a course about Texas history and how the communities have changed over the history of Texas.	Students will engage in a course about US history and how the United States was colonized and the change over the course of time.

VOCABULARY GLOSSARY

Key Content Vocabulary

- **Mexican War for Independence:** This was a fight that started in 1810 when Mexico wanted to be free from Spain. It lasted about 11 years until Mexico became an independent country in 1821.
- **Father Miguel Hidalgo:** He was a Catholic priest who helped start the Mexican War for Independence by giving a famous speech called "Grito de Dolores" that encouraged people to fight for freedom.
- **Stephen F. Austin:** Known as the "Father of Texas," he helped bring American settlers to Texas and played an important role in the early days of Texas.
- **Moses Austin:** He was Stephen F. Austin's father and was the first to get permission to bring settlers to Texas from the United States.
- **The First 300:** This refers to the first group of 300 American families that Stephen F. Austin brought to settle in Texas in the early 1820s.
- **San Felipe de Austin:** This was the capital of Stephen F. Austin's colony and a key town for early Texas settlers.
- **San Antonio de Bexar:** a Spanish mission and fort in the early 1700s. San Antonio de Bexar was very important in Texas history, especially during the Texas Revolution, when key battles like the Siege of Bexar and the Battle of the Alamo took place there.
- **Anglo-American settlers:** These were American people of English, Irish, or other European backgrounds who moved to Texas in the early 1800s.
- **Texians:** This term refers to the American settlers who lived in Texas during the time of the Texas Revolution, especially those who were fighting for independence.
- **Tejanos:** These were people of Mexican heritage who lived in Texas before and during the Texas Revolution.
- **Coahuila y Tejas:** This was the name of a state in Mexico that included Texas and the neighboring state of Coahuila.
- **Santa Anna:** He was the president of Mexico and a general during the Texas Revolution. He led the Mexican army against the Texians.
- **Anastasio Bustamante:** He was a Mexican general and politician who served as president of Mexico and had conflicts with Texas settlers.
- **Battle of Gonzales:** This was the first battle of the Texas Revolution in 1835, where Texians fought against Mexican soldiers to keep a cannon.
- **Siege of Bexar:** This was a battle in 1835 where Texians surrounded the Mexican army in San Antonio for weeks until they surrendered.
- **Battle of Conception:** This was a battle during the Siege of Bexar where Texians had a surprise attack against Mexican soldiers.
- **Battle of Bexar:** This refers to the final fights in the Siege of Bexar, where the Texians defeated the Mexican army in San Antonio.

- **James Bowie:** He was a famous Texian leader known for his bravery and fighting skills during the Texas Revolution.
- **David Crockett:** A well-known American frontiersman and politician who fought at the Alamo and became a hero.
- **William Travis:** He was a Texian officer who co-commanded the defenders of the Alamo and is remembered for his bravery.
- **The Battle of the Alamo:** This was a famous battle in 1836 where Texians fought bravely against a much larger Mexican army at a former mission in San Antonio.
- **Almeron and Susannah Dickson:** They were a married couple who lived in Texas and played important roles during the Texas Revolution.
- **James Fannin:** He was a Texian commander who led troops during the revolution.
- **James Bonham:** A Texian soldier and messenger who fought at the Alamo and is remembered for his courage.
- **Jose Esparza:** He was a soldier who fought at the Alamo and is known for his bravery during the battle.
- **Jose Losoya:** He was a Tejano soldier who fought for the Texian cause and was involved in several battles during the Texas Revolution.
- **Juan Almonte:** He was a Mexican officer who served under Santa Anna during the Texas Revolution.
- **Juan Seguin:** He was a Tejano leader and a captain in the Texian army who fought at the Alamo and later helped secure Texas independence.
- **Martin Perfecto de Cos:** He was Santa Anna's brother-in-law and a Mexican general who fought against the Texians in several battles, including the Siege of Bexar.