

**TEACHER'S COPY**

**Mexico's Time Line from Independence to War**

| Year | Event(s)   |
|------|--|
| 1821 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mexico wins independence from Spain.</li><li>• Mexico permits Stephen F. Austin to colonize Texas.</li></ul>   |
| 1824 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mexico becomes a republic.</li></ul>   |
| 1835 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mexico passes a new constitution, centralizes power, Mexican states protest.</li></ul>   |
| 1836 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Texas declares independence from Mexico on March 2.</li><li>• Texas loses battles at the Alamo and Goliad.</li><li>• Santa Anna is captured by Sam Houston at the Battle of San Jacinto.</li></ul> |
| 1838 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Civil war in Mexico prevents invasion of Texas.</li></ul>  |
| 1845 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In February, U.S. Congress votes to annex Texas.</li></ul>   |

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### Mexico's Time Line from Independence to War

(continued)

| Year | Event(s)   |
|------|--|
| 1846 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• First shots of the war are fired on April 23.</li><li>• War declaration from the U.S., "American blood has been shed on American soil," on May 9.</li><li>• Declaration of the Bear Flag Republic in California on June 14.</li><li>• December 8: Battle of San Pascual</li><li>• On December 6, with reinforcement, Kearny recaptures Los Angeles, war ends in California.</li></ul>  |
| 1847 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In February, Battle of Buena Vista. Taylor defeats Santa Anna despite being outnumbered.</li><li>• Scott arrives in Veracruz with 12,000 troops in March.</li><li>• U.S. artillery bombards Mexican Troops outside Mexico City on September 12.</li><li>• U.S. attacks on Chapultepec, last Mexican defensive position.</li><li>• Six youths — to be known as the "Niños heroes" — die defending Chapultepec, on September 12.</li><li>• On September 14, Scott enters Mexico City, victorious, raises American flag at the national palace.</li></ul> |
| 1848 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo signed on February 2, 1848, officially ending the war.</li></ul>   |

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### Reasons for War Worksheet

Using encyclopedias, classroom texts, library and other resources, research some of the possible reasons for the war (there are more than one). Explain which faction would benefit from the beginning of the Mexican-American War.

#### REASON #1

What caused the Mexican-American War?

One of the widely accepted reasons for the Mexican-American War related to an imperialistic movement in the United States to connect the union from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans, regardless of who owned the land in between.

What political faction would have supported this cause of the war and why?

The political faction pushing for this movement could be known simply as the expansionist movement. This movement wanted to expand the union from ocean to ocean, making the nation more defensible against foreign nations by having the nation's eastern and western borders protected by oceans.

#### REASON #2

What caused the Mexican-American War?

The Manifest Destiny theory is also accepted as reason for the war. Manifest Destiny, a view many Americans held at the time, implied that it was the rightful destiny or duty of the U.S. to limitlessly expand its borders.

What political faction would have supported this cause of the war and why?

Manifest Destiny support came from many nationalists who backed the expansionist movement to gain as much territory for the United States as possible.

#### REASON #3

What caused the Mexican-American War?

Some blame the Mexican-American War on a border dispute. Following the War for Texas Independence (1836), Texans claimed the Rio Grande River as the southeastern border of Texas, while Mexico claimed its northeastern boundary was the Nueces river.

What political faction would have supported this cause of the war and why?

President Polk would have supported this justification for the war. He essentially used this to justify the war to the American people since he desperately needed the support of the public. The arguments over the border led to the signing of the Treaty of Velasco in 1836, which ended the War for Texas Independence. Santa Anna had signed the treaty with promise to return to Mexico and arrange for Texas leaders to meet with the Mexican government to discuss the possibilities of Texas independence. Upon Santa Anna's return, he stated he had agreed to that but that the government was under no obligation to abide by his agreement. In essence, he had made hollow promises to be released from captivity. Mexico never agreed to the treaty, making it void and not acknowledging the independence of Texas. When the first shots of the war rang out, it was on Mexican, not American, soil.

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### Reasons for War Worksheet

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#### REASON #4

What caused the Mexican-American War?

Annexation of Texas. When the United States annexed Texas, U.S. leaders knew it would provoke war with Mexico. Mexico had anticipated this might occur and forewarned the United States. Regardless, the annexation of Texas continued.

What political faction would have supported this cause of the war and why?

President Polk and his cabinet knew the end result of the annexation, however, they assumed that war was inevitable. The President had earlier sent a representative to Mexico to offer to buy Texas, New Mexico and California for about \$30 million. Mexico rejected the offer, thus war ensued.

#### REASON #5

What caused the Mexican-American War?

Another theory was that the southern states conspired to begin the war, because gaining this territory would ensure the continuation of slavery.

What political faction would have supported this cause of the war and why?

In reality, the south as a whole did not support the war effort. Very little military representation came from the southern states. Many Northerners supported this theory in an attempt to taint the image of the south and to shift blame to them in case they were to lose the war. Another reason for the lack of support was the passing of the Wilmot Proviso by the House of Representatives. The proviso would make it illegal for any newly acquired territory to become a slave territory. Another group of Northerners, known as the Whigs, also opposed the war. The leader of the Whigs was Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln and his group submitted an amendment that would later be known as the "Spot Amendment," in response to President Polk's war message. This amendment ridiculed the President's contention that "American blood was spilled on American soil." The amendment, which was never adopted, dictated that Polk was to show where the American blood was actually spilled.

#### REASON #6

What caused the Mexican-American War?

Religion also was claimed as a cause of the war. Since the United States was populated by a majority of Protestants and Mexico by a majority of Catholics, it was assumed that religion played a role in the war.

What political faction would have supported this cause of the war and why?

No particular faction would use this as a basis for war. Though it was not a direct cause it certainly played at least a secondary role in the war. A clear example of this is the Battalion of San Patricios, a group of primarily Irish-Catholic American soldiers who deserted the American army to fight for Mexico.