Common Core Social Studies Learning Plan Template

**Lesson Title: Was the United States Justified in Going to War Against Mexico?**

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**Appropriate for Grade Level(s):** 7-8

**History Standard(s)/Applicable CCSS(s) (RI, W, S&L, L):**

Reading: Writing: Listening/Speaking: History: Geography: Civics

1 1 & 2 1 H1.6/H2.16 G6.3 C16.4

**Type of Lesson:** Document Based Questions / Research on Mexican-American War

**Total Time Needed:** 4/ 45 minute class periods

**Background Information:**

* Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821
* Texas won independence from Mexico in 1836
* Mexican officials were upset with the annexation of Texas to the United States because it lost a huge area of their country. They were also unhappy due to Texas being both pro-slavery and being mostly Protestant, not Catholic.
* 1821:Mexico’s independence -> 1836:Texas independence -> 1845: Texas annexation by United States ->1846-1848:Mexican-American War-> 1848: Mexican Cession
* Vocabulary: annexation justified pro- anti- Manifest Destiny expansion perspective

**Lesson Outline:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Time Frame**  **(e.g. 15 minutes)** | **What is the teacher doing?** | **What are students doing?** |
| Day1 |  |  |
| 15 min. | Asking: Imagine if U.S. has been taken over by a neighboring country? | Students write down thoughts/feelings. |
|  | Lead discussion | Discuss what students wrote. |
| 4 min. | Discovery Ed. Film clip: “The Mexican Cession and the Mexican-American War” (3:42 min.). You will need to create an account to access this video  http//:app.discoveryeducation.com/search?Ntt=Mexican+American+war | Discuss with table mates, from the clip, reason(s) for the War. Share findings. |
| Rest of Class | Table Activity: text book pages and note taker (ISP) | Students will read p.406-411 and develop a note taker that can be shared with the class. |
| Day 2-  5 min. | Share-out information gathered from yesterday |  |
| !5-20min. | Pass out computers; go to websites:  [**www.historyguy.com/Mexican-American\_War.html**](http://www.historyguy.com/Mexican-American_War.html)  [**www.pbs.org/kera/usmexicanwar.index\_flash.html**](http://www.pbs.org/kera/usmexicanwar.index_flash.html) | Paired groups go to either website adding to their note taker from yesterday. As students finish, computers back. |
| 20-25 min. | Pass out reading as students finish with computers. Explain to students that the reading is from a different perspective of the War. | Student pairs read to each other, annotating by writing questions, underlining points of view, and writing notes and comments in margins. |
| 5.min | Pass out exit tickets: Ask: “What is a question or two you have about the reading? | Write a question about the reading |
| Day 3-  5 min. | As students enter, take a different flower-colored pen to organize groups.  Pick several questions written from yesterday. Discuss | Students answer and discuss questions |
| 20 min. | Pass out the 4 documents and have student make a foldable graphic organizer and cut 4 flaps on one half (see directions). Across outer  flap(s):Mexican American War and label each flap (document number and source). Open flaps; Documents side and summary. Bottom section: List evidence from document. | Each student at a table, depending on their color pen, will be in charge of reading one of the documents. Before going on to the next document, several questions must be answered, and notes taken in foldable. |
| 30 min. | iTouches passed out for research. Using flower pen, students will be assigned a position on the war. Teacher will spot-check progress; discuss findings with each student group. Students can add information to their foldable for either perspective, but evidence must be given. | Students will be assigned position by flower color: Mexican Perspective; U.S. Pro-expansion; U.S. Anti-Expansion  Foldable and Primary documents used today, can also be used. |
| Day 4  10 min. | Students group by the color of yesterday’s flower. Red flowers will join another group due to one less group. | Student groups will construct a chart, from information gathered on their position. |
| 2-3 min each  (about 10 min.) | Ground rules for presentations (“Our group represents….”; “Our groups reason (for/against) the war are….”) | Student groups present their chart and state their rational and evidence. |
| 45 min | Conclusion: Develop a poster representing your position. You many have been swayed by another group and have changed your mind. A quick write: Was the war with Mexico justified? Support your opinion with evidence from the text. | Produce a propaganda poster and write your opinion on the justification of the war. |

**Student Readings (list):**

**Websites:**

[**www.historyguy.com/Mexican-American\_War.html**](http://www.historyguy.com/Mexican-American_War.html)

[**www.pbs.org/kera/usmexicanwar.index\_flash.html**](http://www.pbs.org/kera/usmexicanwar.index_flash.html)

1: **Text**

Creating America: Chapter 13; Section 3: The War with Mexico: p.406-411

#3 **Were They Traitors or Martyrs?**  By 1846, tensions between the United States and Mexico had reached a critical point. Mexico was furious with the American annexation of Texas. Also, the United States had its eye on Mexico's western possessions, the largest being California. Armies on both sides were sent to the border along the Rio Grande. It didn't take long for a series of scuffles to flare into an all-out war. The Americans took the offensive, invading first from the north and later from the east. On September of 1847, the Americans would capture Mexico City forcing Mexico to surrender.

At this time, many Irish were immigrating to America due to harsh conditions and famine in Ireland. Thousands of them joined the U.S. Army, hoping for both pay and U.S. citizenship. Most of them were Catholic. The U.S. Army, including most of the society of the day, were very intolerant towards both Irish and Catholics. The Irish on a whole, were seen as lazy, ignorant, and were commonly called “Potato heads” as the Irish were commonly called were singled out for harsh treatment, while Catholics were considered fools who were easily distracted by pageantry and led by a faraway leader.

General Zachary Taylor with his troops arrived on the banks of the Rio Grande, knowing that many soldiers were foreign born and Catholic. Propaganda was used by Mexico to attract American troops before the fighting actually began. Mexican generals had learned of the difficulties the Irish and other immigrant soldiers were experiencing and encouraged defections. An example of the hostility toward the troops was the punishment called “bucking and gagging.” Placed on his back, the soldier was on the ground, his arms and legs were tied to stakes, and his mouth gagged. This was so common of a punishment, the troops composed a song called “Bucking and Gagging”. Using fliers urging the immigrants to join their side, Mexico offered land and money for anyone who would desert.

The prospect of fighting for Mexico instead of the United States had a certain attraction for some of the men. Taylor was astonished at how many of his men deserted to the Mexican army even before the shooting began. Some of the men, like Sergeant John Riley, who is said to be one of the first to desert, were welcomed with a lieutenant commission. Enough American soldiers followed him to make up a battalion known as the St. Patrick’s Battalion, or in Spanish, San Patricio Battalion.

In Mexico, the defectors were treated as heroes and given the opportunity for promotion denied to them in the American army. Many of them felt a greater connection to Mexico: like Ireland, it was a poor, Catholic nation. These men were quickly integrated into the Mexican army. As time went on, other deserters joined the American ranks. Though the unit was made up of primarily Irish Catholics, with a number of German Catholics, plus a handful of other foreigners who had been living in Mexico before war broke out, made a banner for themselves which was bright green with an Irish harp, under which was "Erin go Bragh" and the Mexican coat of arms with the words "Libertad por la Republica Mexicana." On the flip side of the banner was an image of St. Patrick and the words "San Patricio."

The Battalion first saw action as a unit at the “Siege of Monterrey” where they were assigned as an artillery unit since many in the unit had artillery experience and again at the Battle of Buena Vista. It was at Churubusco, where after bitter hand-to-hand battle that was the down–fall of the 260 “Patricio’s.” Riley and many others were taken prisoner, while the rest were either killed or escaped.

A few days later, 29 of the prisoners were court-martialed, convicted and sentenced to hang. After review of each man’s case: two were pardoned; seven others had commuted sentences which instead of death would be branded with a “D” and confined to hard labor; 16 wearing their Mexican uniforms and white hoods, were hung. The remaining four were hung the next day.

News of the sentences upset the Mexicans who saw these men not as traitors, but as foreign soldiers, others referred to them as the “the Irish martyrs”. Today, in Mexico, there are celebrations every year remembering the Los San Patricio Battalion. At the convent in Churubusco, just outside Mexico City, is a museum in the memory of their final battle

**Description of Lesson Assessment:** Group presentations; Posters; Individual writing

**How will students reflect on the process and their learning? Through their individual posters and writing.**

**Note taker: ISP chart (information, source page)**

**Sources:**

[**http://lodwyer.wikispaces.com/file/view/DBQ+Mexican+War+Student+Challenge+Packet.PDF**](http://lodwyer.wikispaces.com/file/view/DBQ+Mexican+War+Student+Challenge+Packet.PDF)

**Stevens, Peter F. . The Rogue’s March: John Riley and the St. Patrick’s Battalion. Virginia. 1999.**

**“One Man’s Hero: Story of the faith, devotion and the fight for freedom”: mgm. ISBN:0-7928-4374-6**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Reading Notetaker** | | |
| **Information** | **Source** | **Page(s)** |
|  |  |  |

3- D Foldable: compare/contrast and give evidence

Fold the piece of paper in half lengthwise (hot dog). Then, you fold into 4 sections. The front flap ONLY cut into the 4 sections. Underneath each section, place information about a single topic.

Then, student can simply flip up the flap to see what was written about a specific topic.

Fold then cut ONLY top flap

Fold

**Document 1**

*John O'Sullivan, "Annexation," United States Magazine and Democratic Review,Vol.XVII; No.1 (July-August 1845)*

It is now time for the opposition to the Annexation of Texas to cease….Texas is now ours….Let their reception into "the family" be frank, kindly, and cheerful….

Other nations have undertaken…hostile interferences against us,…hampering our power, limiting our greatness and checking the fulfillment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.

California, probably next fall away from…. such a country as Mexico ….Imbecile and distracted, Mexico never can exert any real governmental authority over such country.. The Anglo-Saxon foot is already on its borders….the irresistible army of Anglo-Saxon emigration has begun to pour down upon it, armed with the plough and the rifle, marking its trail with schools and colleges, courts and representative halls, mills, and meeting houses….

Away, then, with all idle French talk of *balances of power* on the American Continent. There is no growth in Spanish America!

[**http://web.grinnell.edu/courses/HIS/f01/HIS202-01/Documents/OSullivan.html**](http://web.grinnell.edu/courses/HIS/f01/HIS202-01/Documents/OSullivan.html)

1. How does O’Sullivan feel about Texas? Who does he feel will be next?
2. What is meant by the “Anglo-Saxon foot…”?
3. How does he feel about the Mexico’s ability to govern?
4. Can this document be used to support or dispute the war? Explain your reason.

**Document 2**

*James K. Polk, President of the United States at Washington, D.C., to the Congress of the United States. A special message calling for a declaration of war against Mexico.*

Washington, May 11, 1846.

To the Senate and House of Representatives

I had formed you earlier….I had ordered an efficient military force to take a position "between the Nueces and Del Norte." This had become necessary to meet a threatened invasion of Texas by the Mexican forces….The invasion was threatened solely because Texas had determined, in accordance with a solemn resolution of the Congress of the United States, to annex herself to our Union, and under these circumstances it was plainly our duty to extend our protection over her citizens and soil.

The Congress of Texas, by its act of December 19, 1836, had declared the Rio del Norte to be the boundary of that Republic….The country between that river and the Del Norte….is now included within one of our Congressional districts….It became, therefore, of urgent necessity to provide for the defense of that portion of our country….

24th of April….A party of dragoons of 63 men and officers were….dispatched from the American camp up the Rio del Norte, on its left bank, to ascertain whether the Mexican troops had crossed or were preparing to cross the river….after a short affair, in which some 16 (Americans) were killed and wounded, appear to have been surrounded and compelled to surrender….

We have tried every effort at reconciliation. The cup of forbearance had been exhausted even before the recent information from the frontier of the Del Norte. But, now….Mexico has passed the boundary of the United States, has invaded our territory and shed American blood upon the American soil.

War Vote: May13, 1846 Senate: 40 yes/2 No House: 174 yes/14 No

<http://www.dmwv.org/mexwar/documents/polk.htm>

1. What river did Polk regard as the border?
2. Do you think Mexico thought it was invading the United State?
3. How did Congress react to Polk’s message?
4. How might this document justify the War?

**Document 3**

**A Mexican Viewpoint on the War with the United States**

**Jesús Velasco-Márquez: Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México**

The most dramatic event in the history of relations between Mexico and the United States took place a century and a half ago. U.S. historians refer to this event as "The Mexican War," while in Mexico we prefer to use the term "The U.S. Invasion."….

From the Mexican perspective, there were two facets to the problem of Texas: one was related to its separation from Mexico and the other to its annexation to the United States. From Mexico's point of view, the annexation of Texas to the United States was inadmissible for both legal and security reasons. Thus, when the Mexican government learned of the treaty signed between Texas and the *United* States in April 1844, it….consider such an act "a declaration of war.”

The troops commanded by General Zachary Taylor arrived at the Río Grande, across from the city of Matamoros, thus occupying the territory in dispute and increasing the possibilities of a confrontation….in the eyes of the Mariano Paredes’ government (Mexican government), the mobilization of the U.S. army was an outright attack on Mexico….an order which led to the battles of [Palo Alto](http://www.pbs.org/kera/usmexicanwar/war/palo_alto.html) and Resaca de la Palma….

…an article from the daily *El Tempo*…”The American government acted like a bandit who came upon a traveler.”

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[**http://www.pbs.org/kera/usmexicanwar/prelude/md\_a\_mexican\_viewpoint.html**](http://www.pbs.org/kera/usmexicanwar/prelude/md_a_mexican_viewpoint.html)

1. What point of view does the author take?
2. How did the Mexican government feel about the United States annexing Texas?
3. Why did the Mexican troops attach the Americans?

**Document 4**

***Charles Sumner, "Objections to the Mexican-American War," adopted by the Mass. State Legislature, 1847. Note: Sumner was a young state legislator from Massachusetts who later served 24 years in the US Senate.***

Mexico, on achieving her independence of the Spanish Crown ... decreed the abolition of human slavery within her dominions, embracing the province of Texas....

At this period, citizens of the United States had already begun to (move) into Texas.... The idea was ... that this extensive province ought to become a part of the United States....

A current of emigration soon followed from the United States. Slaveholders crossed the Sabine (river between Louisiana and Texas) with their slaves, in defiance of the Mexican ordinance of freedom. Restless spirits, discontented at home ...joined them.... The work of rebellion sped. Our newspapers excited the lust of territorial robbery in the public mind.... Certainly (Mexico)... might justly charge our citizens with disgraceful robbery, while, in seeking extension of slavery, (our own citizens denied) the great truths of American freedom....

**Note:** According to an early Texas census, there were 103,000 whites and 38,000 slaves in the state in 1847.

[**http://books.google.com/books?id=QB2U6Sr0MAAC&pg=PP7&source=gbs\_selected\_pages&cad=0\_1#v=onepage&q&f=false**](http://books.google.com/books?id=QB2U6Sr0MAAC&pg=PP7&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=0_1#v=onepage&q&f=false)

1. Did Mexico, after independence from Spain, make slavery illegal or legal?
2. “Disgraceful robber’, was from whom?

3. Being from Massachusetts, does he have support? Explain your answer.

