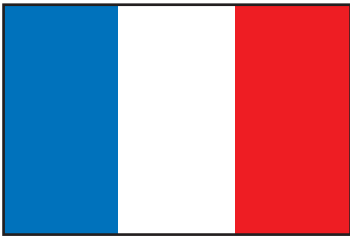


When Texas was Mexico

A Before you read

In 1961, an amusement park opened in Arlington, Texas, and was called “Six Flags Over Texas”. The park was divided into six areas, each representing a different part of Texan history. These six areas and six periods in Texan history correspond to the flags below.

Can you identify these six flags?



1. _____



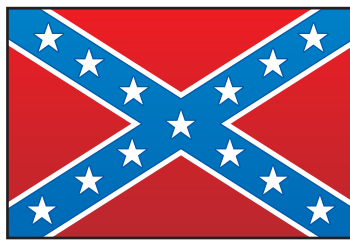
2. _____



3. _____



4. _____



5. _____



6. _____

B Reading

While you are reading, cut out the six flags, complete or correct the captions and glue them in the right place in the text.

1519 - 1821

Of course, the first people in what is now Texas were Native Americans; however, they didn't fly flags like the European conquerors. So, the first flag to fly there was the Spanish flag. Spanish *conquistadores* arrived in today's Mexico in 1519, claimed the land for the Spanish king and named it *Nueva España* – New Spain, which reached from today's Mexico all the way into British Columbia, Canada.



After more than a century and a half of Spanish rule, during which the Spanish took no steps to settle the Texas region, the French became interested in New Spain and set up a small colony in southeastern Texas in 1685.

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However, King Louis XIV of France later lost interest and so, due to a lack of financial support, poor planning, a shortage of supplies and many other problems, the French colony only lasted for three years. However, the Spanish were worried that the French would try to settle in New Spain again, so they established a few small forts in eastern Texas.



Mexico, and therefore also Texas, started on its path to independence from Spain in 1810. A priest, Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, was at the head of the revolutionary forces, which were made up of farmers. After living under Spanish rule for three centuries and fighting for more than a decade, Mexico was finally able to declare its independence in 1821.

At this time, there still weren't many Mexicans living in Texas. The population was mainly Native American; however, the Mexican government wanted to change that because it was already worried that the United States would try to take Texas away. It was decided that settlers should be brought to Texas so that Mexico would have better control over the region.

1821 - 1835

To help with the task of settlement, the Mexican government hired *empresarios* or land agents. One of the most well-known *empresarios* was Stephen Austin, who went on to become known as "The Father of Texas". Austin's father had received a very large amount of land in the Mexican state of Texas from the Mexican government and Stephen Austin sold this land to Americans who wanted to settle there. However, the settlers were required by law to become Mexican citizens, convert to the Roman Catholic religion and use the Spanish language for all legal matters. By 1830, there were 7,000 of them living in Texas. It was attractive to farmers because of the mild climate, favorable working conditions and they could get much larger farms in Texas than in the United States. This meant there would be enough land to pass on to their children and grandchildren. Many of the new settlers had been cotton farmers in the American South and when they moved to Texas, they brought their slaves with them, although slavery was illegal in Mexico. The Mexican government was so eager to have the area settled that they made an exception.



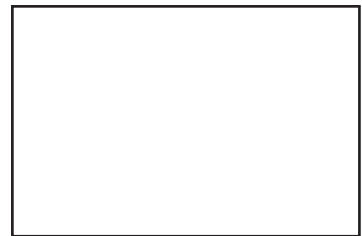
While the Mexican government was pleased with Austin's colony, there were other settlements and settlers that were causing problems. Because there were so few Mexican officials in Texas, it was easy for people to illegally cross the border unnoticed from the U.S. into Mexico. These people chose plots of land, built houses and farmed there without ever paying for the land. This is known as squatting. In some cases, the squatters were there for years before a Mexican official became aware of them. The Americans believed that by living and farming there, the land had become their own and that they had squatter's rights. They were prepared to defend it even with violence.

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The areas closest to the Mexican-U.S. border were the most dangerous. The foreigners here were described by one Mexican official as “wild men with evil ways” who committed crimes in Mexico and were running from the law. They escaped by simply crossing the border into the U.S. The official described the awful situation for Mexicans in one border town. There were ten times as many foreigners as Mexicans, English had become the predominant language, there were no Mexican schools, and the American influence was very strong in every way. The town could hardly be considered Mexican. The official predicted that unless the Mexican government brought in more Mexican settlers, stationed more soldiers, suspended immigration, controlled the borders and deported illegal aliens, the American influence in Texas would be unstoppable and the province would soon be lost. He said the invasion from the U.S. must be halted.

1836 - 1845

The Mexican government should have listened more closely to that official and implemented his suggestions because in 1836 a group of settlers from the United States called for independence from Mexico. The Mexican government sent troops led by Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna to Texas to crush the rebellion of the settlers and *Tejanos* (Texans of Spanish origin). One of the most famous battles was at the Alamo, which was a mission fort outside of the city of San Antonio. 5,000 Mexican troops attacked it and killed 187 Americans and *Tejanos*. However, just one month later a group led by Sam Houston defeated Santa Anna's army and the Republic of Texas was established. Sam Houston was its first president.



The Republic only lasted for nine years. From its founding, most of the citizens were in favor of it becoming an American state because they were frightened that Mexico might try to conquer them again. At the end of 1845, the United States under President James Polk annexed Texas and made it the 28th state. Mexico had to accept this since they had already lost Texas, but they didn't want to accept the northern Mexican border. The United States claimed that the Rio Grande River was the border and Mexico said it was the Nueces River, about 200 miles farther north. It wasn't the land between the two rivers that was so important but the land beyond. Since the Rio Grande flowed all the way to the Rocky Mountains, this border would increase the size of the U.S. An insulting, but peaceful offer of \$25 million was made by the U.S. to Mexico for the rest of its northern territories, but the Mexican government refused.



1846 - Today

As a result of this border disagreement, the two countries went to war between 1846 and 1848 and as a result of its defeat, Mexico lost California, northern New Mexico and Arizona, Utah, Colorado, Wyoming and parts of Nevada – 55% of its territory.

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A treaty was signed, and the United States paid the token amount of \$15 million. All Mexicans in these areas were given U.S. citizenship, whether they wanted it or not. Just a few years later for another \$10 million the U.S. bought the rest of Arizona and New Mexico. These areas were important for the western expansion of the railroad.

The last, short-lived flag to fly over Texas was the flag of the Confederacy during the American Civil War from 1861-1865.

Governor Sam Houston, although a slave owner himself and a strong opponent of abolition, was against joining the other southern states in the war against the northern Union states because he was against the expansion of slavery. However, the Texas state government voted in favor of leaving the United States of America and joining the Confederate States of America. The last battle of the Civil War was fought on the southern tip of Texas on the Rio Grande at Palmito Ranch. And then once again the U.S. flag flew there.



When Texas was Mexico, Mexicans lived there. When Texas became the United States, Mexicans still lived there. There's no doubt that Texas has an historical connection to Mexico. In fact, approximately 40 percent of the state's population is Latino and mostly of Mexican descent. But that doesn't mean that everything is peaceful. In August 2019, a man drove ten hours across Texas with the specific purpose of killing Mexicans in the border town of El Paso. Mexicans and people of Latino descent face racial discrimination and violence daily. It doesn't matter that the land used to be Mexico. It doesn't matter that they were there first or which flag is flying.

C Comprehension

1. Which three present-day countries did New Spain stretch across? _____

2. How influential was the French presence in Texas? _____

3. What did Mexico allow settlers to do that was against the law? _____

4. Find statements in the text that sound like they could be heard today. _____

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5. Which two men had cities in Texas named after them? _____

6. Why did the Republic of Texas only exist for nine years? _____

7. Why is it ironic that Sam Houston wanted Texas to stay in the Union during the Civil War?

D Looking at language

1. Find eight adjectives in the text that come from countries or regions.

a)	e)
b)	f)
c)	g)
d)	h)

2.

a) Make adjectives from these nouns. Underline the different adjective endings.

rebellion:	support:
survival:	opponent:
independence:	insult:
revolution:	importance:
violence:	peace:
history:	influence:
favor:	danger:

b) Add verbs to the word families where possible.

c) Find other adjectives with the same endings and make more word families.

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3. Fill in the blanks with phrases from the text.

- a) If people go into a territory and _____ there, they could declare _____.
- b) I could never repay their kindness, so I gave them a _____ as a symbol of my gratitude.
- c) One of the first steps in breaking free from a ruling power is for a country to _____.
- d) Laws can be complicated, so it's best to get a professional to handle your _____.
- e) If he didn't _____, then why is he _____? It makes him look guilty.

4. Find five more interesting phrases from the text, write sentences and make a quiz for your partner.

E Writing

Choose one of these topics to write about.

1. Jatsive Hernandez, a young woman from Dallas, Texas, is a first-generation Mexican-American. It wasn't until she was in her 20s that she was able to embrace her bi-cultural identity. Before that she felt too white to be Hispanic and too Mexican to be American. Her Hispanic friends told her that she spoke "white"; her white friends would sometimes laugh at her mispronunciation of English words. Jatsive felt that she was living the Spanish saying, "*No soy ni de aquí ni de allá*" (I'm neither from here nor from there).

Write a short essay on bi-cultural identity. Relate it to your own situation (if relevant) or that of someone you know or have heard of.

2. Research the Texan law enforcement agency "Texas Ranger Division" also known as the Texas Rangers or *Los Diablos Tejanos*. Write a report about the foundation of the group and about their activities between 1910 and 1920, a period known as *La Matanza* (the massacre). What role do the Texas Rangers play today?

A Before you read

The flags:

1. France in the 1680s
2. The Republic of Texas, 1836
3. United States of America, 1845
4. Spain, 1519
5. Confederate States of America, 1861
6. Mexico, 1821

The years are included here to explain the different appearance of some of the flags of the past as compared to today.

C Comprehension Questions

1. Mexico, U.S., Canada
2. The French had hardly any influence in Texas. Their one colony didn't survive.
3. keep slaves
4. The paragraphs describing the situation of illegal American settlements in Mexico and especially the statements made by the Mexican official sound as if they could have been said recently.
5. Stephen **Austin** and Sam **Houston**
6. When the Republic of Texas was founded, people wanted the territory to quickly become a U.S. state to keep them safe from a Mexican invasion.
7. Because even though Houston was against the expansion of slavery and against ending slavery, he was a slave owner. When the Union won the war, slavery was abolished completely in the U.S.

D Adjectives

1. African, American, European, French, Latino, Mexican, Spanish, Texan
2.
 - a) rebellious, surviving, independent, revolutionary, violent, historical, favorable, supportive/supporting, opposing, insulting, important, peaceful, influential, dangerous
 - b) rebel, survive, revolt, favor, support, oppose, insult, influence, endanger
3. Fill in the blanks with phrases from the text.
 - a) claim land, squatter's rights, b) token amount, c) declare independence, d) legal matters, e) commit a crime, running from the law
4. phrases: western expansion, lack of support, shortage of supplies, revolutionary forces, favorable working conditions, to station soldiers, illegal aliens, to send troops, to crush a rebellion, to be/vote in favor of, racial discrimination, required by law, to cause problems

E Writing

1. Here's an article about Jatsive Hernandez: <https://www.dallasnews.com/arts-entertainment/pop-culture/2018/04/15/finding-bicultural-identity-when-youre-too-white-to-be-hispanic-too-mexican-to-be-american/> ✨

2. Here are some websites to get started with:

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-7337361/How-Texas-Rangers-murdered-hundreds-Mexicans-border-1915.html> ✨

<https://apnews.com/b8516a3d80ef40da97afd3a9e4f7d706> ✨

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/anti-hispanic-violence-pierced-el-paso-has-been-part-texas-n1041921> ✨