DISCOVER AMERICA

Teacher Guide



Defenders of the Alamo: Courage, Sacrifice, and Heritage



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Key Themes

- Courage and Sacrifice
- Leadership and Heroes
- Community and Unity
- Geography and Strategy
- Cultural Exchange and Influence

Core Values

- Community
- Liberty
- Life



Learning Objectives

Students will be able to

- Identify the key events leading up to and during the Battle of the Alamo.
- Recognize the significance of the Alamo in the broader context of the Texas Revolution and American history.
- Discuss the roles and contributions of important figures in the battle and the Texas Revolution.
- Explain causes of the Texas Revolution, including political, economic, and social factors.
- Analyze the impact of the Battle of the Alamo on the Texas Revolution and its outcome.
- Discuss and reflect on the concepts of bravery, sacrifice, and perseverance demonstrated by the defenders of the Alamo.
- Evaluate different perspectives and motivations of the Texians and the Mexican government during the conflict.
- Connect the historical events of the Alamo to their own experiences of facing challenges and demonstrating courage.

Key Terms

- 0 1 **artillery:** large, heavy weapons used in land battles, like cannons, which are too big to carry by hand and are often mounted on wheels for easier movement.
- 0 2 **declare:** to say something in an official or public way.
- 0 3 **province:** an area of land that is part of a country, similar to a state.
- 0 4 **revolution:** a very great change in something that causes many other things to change.
- 0.5 **revolutionary:** someone who takes part in a revolution against the government.
- 0 6 **siege:** a military act of surrounding a city or base, attacking it, and cutting off supplies.
- 0 7 **surrender:** to give up control of something to someone else.

Introduction

TELL Students

Have you ever faced a situation where it felt like everything was stacked against you? Picture this: your sports team is up against opponents who are older, stronger, and faster. Or imagine you're handed a school project that seems incredibly tough and complex. Maybe your music teacher assigns you a new piece that's more challenging than any you've attempted before.

ASK Students

How would you handle these situations? Would you step onto the field, grab your pencil, or sit down with your instrument ready to face the challenge head-on?

TELL Students

Choosing to confront these challenges takes a great deal of courage and determination. However, embracing such difficulties is more than just about getting through them. When you play in a tough game, you grow as an athlete; when you tackle a demanding project, you develop as a student; and when you master a complicated piece of music, you advance as a musician. Each of these scenarios teaches us an important lesson about perseverance. Facing challenges head-on not only tests our resolve but also enhances our skills and builds our character. This is why it's crucial to not shy away from difficult situations. By choosing to engage rather than retreat, you learn to adapt, overcome, and eventually succeed, which is a valuable life skill that will serve you well beyond these immediate challenges. Just like the defenders of the Alamo back in 1836, who knew they were outnumbered and outmatched by the advancing army of General Santa Anna. Despite the daunting odds, they chose to stand their ground, fight for what they believed in, and defend their fort. Their incredible bravery and refusal to surrender in the face of overwhelming odds have been remembered throughout history as a powerful example of courage and resilience. Just as you can draw strength from overcoming your personal challenges, remembering the Alamo can inspire us to face our difficulties with bravery and perseverance, no matter how insurmountable they may seem.

ASK Students

What do you know about the Alamo?

Introduction

TELL Students

The word "Alamo" comes from the Spanish word for "cottonwood tree." The Alamo was a military fort and the site of a great battle, but it was originally a mission for the Catholic Church. Imagine a fort standing tall in the hot Texas sun, surrounded by brave men fighting for their beliefs and their future. The Alamo is a story of courage, determination, and sacrifice. Picture yourself in 1836, where every decision and every act of bravery played a part in shaping the history of our nation.

[Reference Alamo Image]

ASK Students

How did the bravery and sacrifices of the defenders at the Alamo in 1836 influence the outcomes and spirit of the Texas Revolution?

TELL Students **P**

Many Texan revolutionaries bravely fought at the Alamo. They raised their flag as a symbol of their fight for independence from Mexico. A **revolutionary** is someone who takes part in a revolution against the government. A **revolution** is when a people overthrow their government and replace it with a new one. There were about 200 men who stood their ground against a much larger Mexican army. These soldiers showed incredible courage in the face of overwhelming odds.

ASK Students

Why do you think it was important for the soldiers to be courageous?

TELL Students *P*

Yes! Soldiers must be courageous because battles are hard and dangerous. Many soldiers are in charge of artillery. **Artillery** is large, heavy weapons used in land battles, like cannons, which are too big to carry by hand and are often mounted on wheels for easier movement. Both the defenders and the Mexican army used cannons during the siege, and the roar of cannon fire was a common sound during those days. A **siege** is a military act of surrounding a city or base, attacking it, and cutting off supplies.

ASK Students

What is a siege?

Introduction

TELL Students

That is right! A siege is what happened at the Alamo. Let's watch another episode of Star Spangled Adventures to learn more about the brave men who fought at the Alamo.



TELL Students 🙉

Deep in the heart of Texas in 1836, about 200 brave Texans, including Tejanos and volunteers, fought hard to protect the Alamo from thousands of soldiers led by the Mexican president, General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. [Reference Santa Anna Image] Before we talk about the Battle of the Alamo, let's understand what the Alamo was and how Texas became part of the United States. [Show Texas on U.S. Map.] The Alamo was originally a mission built by Spanish settlers around 1718, called Mission San Antonio de Valero. Missionaries and Native American converts lived and worked there for nearly 70 years. Later, it became a military fort and was renamed "El Alamo" after the Spanish word for cottonwood trees that grew around it and to honor the soldiers' hometown, Alamo de Parras.

ASK Students

What was the original purpose of the building known as the Alamo before it became a military fort?

TELL Students 🔑

After an 11-year revolution, Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821. Coahuila and Texas, formerly Spanish provinces, joined as one Mexican state. A **province** is an area of land that is part of a country, similar to a state. To encourage people to move to Texas and make it a busier place, the Mexican government came up with a plan to attract settlers from the United States and other countries. They offered big pieces of land at very low prices and said that the new settlers wouldn't have to pay taxes for a while. This made many families and adventurers excited to start a new life in Texas. People who moved there were called "Texians" at first. They came from many different places, like Ireland, Germany, and England, adding to the mix of people already there. Over time, as they all lived and worked together fighting for their land, they began to call themselves "Texans," showing they were united and proud of their new home. This mix of people and the land they settled on helped shape what Texas is today.

ASK Students

What did the Mexican government do to encourage people to settle in Texas?

TELL Students

Please read the following passage to learn more. [Please print and disseminate fifth grade student text.]

As more and more settlers moved to Texas, the area started to change a lot. Most of these new settlers came from the United States, and they had different ways of living and different ideas from the Mexican people who were already there. As the number of settlers increased, they started to fill up the land, and this made some of the original residents and the Mexican government worried and unhappy. In 1830, to control this rapid change, the Mexican government created a new law to stop more Americans from moving to Texas. But many Americans kept coming anyway, even though it was not allowed. This made the situation more tense, as more people were living in Texas without permission.

ASK Students

Why did the Mexican government create a new rule in 1830, and what was its effect on the settlers coming to Texas?

TELL Students

Then, in 1833, a new leader named Santa Anna became the president of Mexico. Many people hoped he would be fair and give them more freedom, but he did the opposite. Santa Anna made himself very powerful and did not listen to what the settlers wanted. He believed in strong control and put more power in the hands of the government. This upset the settlers, known as Texians, because they felt they had no say in the decisions that affected their lives. They wanted to be part of the discussions and decisions about Texas's rules and future. Because of these issues, the Texians became more and more frustrated. They felt they were not being treated fairly. They did not just want small changes anymore. They started thinking about becoming independent and making Texas a place where they could create their own rules. This was the beginning of serious disagreements that would later lead to big fights for independence.

ASK Students

How did Santa Anna's leadership style affect the Texians, and what did it lead them to consider for Texas's future?

TELL Students

The Texas Revolution began in 1835 after Texians and their allies fought to control San Antonio de Béxar, an important town where the Alamo is located. Today, this town is known as San Antonio. The fight for San Antonio de Béxar was a crucial early victory for the Texians, who were determined to break away from Mexican rule. This conflict was not just about a single battle; it was part of a larger struggle for independence fueled by multiple causes. One major cause of the Texas Revolution was the growing tension between the Texian settlers and the Mexican government. Many settlers, who had come from the United States, felt that their needs and rights were not being addressed. They were frustrated with the Mexican government's attempts to enforce strict control over Texas, including the prohibition of further American immigration and the imposition of heavy taxes.

ASK Students

What were some of the reasons behind the growing tension between the Texian settlers and the Mexican government that led to the Texas Revolution?

TELL Students

Additionally, the leadership style of General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, who became the president of Mexico in 1833, played a significant role in sparking the revolution. Santa Anna's move towards centralizing power and reducing the autonomy of the Mexican states, including Texas, angered many. His authoritarian rule and disregard for local governance made the Texians feel that their voices were being ignored and their freedoms suppressed. Economic factors also contributed to the unrest. Many Texian settlers had moved to Texas for economic opportunities, enticed by land grants and the promise of a fresh start. However, as the Mexican government attempted to exert more control, these opportunities seemed threatened. The settlers wanted to protect their land, investments, and livelihoods from what they perceived as unfair policies.

ASK Students

How did General Santa Anna's leadership style and economic factors contribute to the unrest among Texian settlers and spark the Texas Revolution?

TELL Students

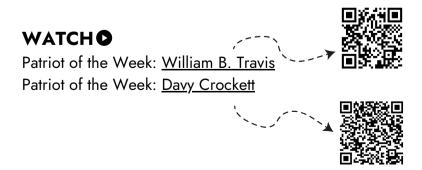
As the Texians and their allies fought to control San Antonio de Béxar, they were not only fighting for a strategic location but also for their right to self-governance and their vision of a free and prosperous Texas. The capture of San Antonio de Béxar marked a significant moment in the Texas Revolution, symbolizing the determination and resilience of the Texian forces. It set the stage for subsequent battles, including the famous Battle of the Alamo, where the defenders' bravery and ultimate sacrifice further galvanized the Texian cause. The Texas Revolution was a complex conflict driven by a desire for independence, economic security, and the protection of civil liberties. The early victories, like the battle for San Antonio de Béxar, highlighted the Texians' commitment to these ideals and their willingness to fight for a future free from oppressive rule.

ASK Students

What caused the Texas Revolution?

TELL Students @

The Alamo was crucial because it helped warn other Texian settlements of attacks. Even though the Alamo wasn't very strong, it was important. Eventually, rumors spread that Santa Anna was coming with around 6,000 soldiers. After the battle in San Antonio, many volunteers went home, but some leaders, including General Sam Houston and Governor Henry Smith, thought the Alamo was important and needed to be defended. [Reference Houston and Smith Images] Alamo Commander Lt. Colonel James Clinton Neill worked hard to make the fort stronger, and soon more reinforcements arrived. Among them were James Bowie, Lt. Col. William B. Travis, and Davy Crockett. [Reference Bowie, Travis, Crockett Images] They all agreed that the Alamo was the "key to Texas." Let's watch two exciting Patriot of the Week videos to learn more!



ASK Students

After the battle in San Antonio, why did some men stay to defend the Alamo while others left?

TELL Students **P**

In February 1836, when Neill had to leave the Alamo for a short time, Travis and Bowie took charge of the fort. Soon after, Santa Anna and his large army arrived and told the fewer than 200 Texians and their allies to surrender. To **surrender** is to give up control of something to someone else. Travis fired a cannonball back at them to show they would not give up. Knowing they needed more help, Travis sent a message saying that the enemy was close and they needed more soldiers and supplies. In this letter, he also said they would defend the fort until the end.

ASK Students

What did Travis do to show that the defenders of the Alamo would not give up when Santa Anna and his army arrived?

TELL Students

After Santa Anna's army attacked the fort for a whole day, Travis wrote another letter on February 24, 1836, to ask for help. In this letter, he explained that they were surrounded by Santa Anna's army and had been under attack for 24 hours. He also explained that they had not lost any men yet but the enemy wanted them to surrender or to destroy them. He explained that they needed swift help but that they would not give up, even if help did not arrive.

ASK Students

What did Travis say in his letter on February 24, 1836, about the situation at the Alamo and what he needed?

TELL Students

A few more soldiers arrived, but it wasn't enough. On March 6, 1836, at about 5:00am, more than 1,000 of Santa Anna's soldiers attacked the Alamo. In less than 90 minutes, the defenders were defeated, and at least 189 of them were killed. (Women and children who weren't fighting were allowed to leave safely.) Even though they lost the battle, the phrase "Remember the Alamo!" became a powerful call for others to continue fighting.

ASK Students

What happened at the Alamo on March 6, 1836, and what was the impact of the phrase "Remember the Alamo!"?

TELL Students **P**

Please read the following passage to learn more.

While the Alamo was under siege, Texians declared their independence from Mexico on March 2, 1836. To **declare** means to say something in an official or public way. The bravery of those who defended the Alamo is an inspiring part of American history, showing us the fight for Texas independence. In 1836, a small group of brave people stood their ground at the Alamo against a much larger army. Their courage during this tough battle made many people across America admire and remember them. Even though they did not win, their spirit helped others keep fighting for freedom. This led to a big victory at the Battle of San Jacinto, which helped Texas become independent from Mexico.

ASK Students

How did the bravery of the Alamo defenders impact the fight for Texas independence?

TELL Students

This story helps us see how important it is to be brave and stand up for what we believe in, even when it's hard. It teaches us that, just like the Alamo defenders, we can all show courage in our own lives. Whether it's helping a friend, trying something new, or standing up for what's right, acts of courage can inspire others and make a big difference. By learning about the Alamo, you can think about how you too can be brave every day. Let's watch an episode of Learn More with Liberty to learn more!

WATCH •

Learn More with Liberty: Songs and Stories



Objective

To engage fifth grade students in an in-depth research project about the Texas Revolution and the Battle of the Alamo, enhancing their understanding through interactive, collaborative, and hands-on activities.

Materials

- Research materials: Books, articles, online resources, and videos about the Texas Revolution and the Alamo.
- Presentation tools: Poster boards, markers, construction paper, digital presentation software (like PowerPoint or Google Slides), and art supplies.
- Costumes/Props (optional): Items representing historical figures for role-play activities.
- Interview Sheets: Templates for conducting mock interviews with historical figures.
- Timeline Templates: Large sheets of paper or digital templates for creating timelines.
- Rubric: Assessment criteria for evaluating the research and presentations.

Introduction

- Begin with a brief review of the Texas Revolution and the Battle of the Alamo, highlighting key events and figures.
- Explain the objectives of the activity and what students will be expected to do.

Divide into Groups

- Divide the class into small groups, each assigned a different aspect of the Texas Revolution and the Alamo to research. Possible topics include:
 - Key battles and events of the Texas Revolution
 - o Important figures (e.g., William B. Travis, Davy Crockett, James Bowie, Santa Anna)
 - Causes and effects of the Texas Revolution
 - o Daily life of soldiers and civilians during the Texas Revolution
 - o The significance of the Alamo in American history





Research Phase

- Provide time for each group to gather information from a variety of sources. Encourage students to use books, articles, videos, and credible online resources.
- Each group should take detailed notes and organize their findings. They can use graphic organizers or research templates to structure their information.

Interactive Elements

- Role-Play Interviews: Each group selects a few members to role-play as historical figures related to their topic. Other students in the group will prepare and conduct mock interviews, asking questions about their experiences and perspectives during the Texas Revolution and the Battle of the Alamo. Record these interviews to share with the class.
- Create a Timeline: Groups create a timeline of significant events related to their topic, illustrating the sequence of events and their impact on the Texas Revolution and the Alamo. These can be created on large sheets of paper or digitally.

Develop Presentations

- Each group prepares a presentation to share their findings with the class. Presentations can include posters, digital slideshows, skits, or video recordings of their role-play interviews.
- Encourage creativity in how they present their information, such as using visuals, props, and interactive elements to engage their audience.

Presentation Day

- Groups take turns presenting their research to the class. Encourage students to ask questions and discuss
 the presentations.
- Display the timelines and any other visual aids around the classroom for further exploration and discussion.

Reflection and Discussion

- After all presentations, facilitate a class discussion on what was learned about the Texas Revolution and the Battle of the Alamo. Discuss the different perspectives and how the events shaped American history.
- Reflect on the importance of teamwork and research skills in understanding historical events.





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Exploring the Texas Revolution and the Alamo

Use the provided rubric to assess each group's research, presentation, and participation. Criteria can include the accuracy of information, creativity, presentation skills, and teamwork.

Assessment Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Satisfactory (2)	Improvement (1)
Research Accuracy	Information is accurate and comprehensive.	Information is mostly accurate and detailed.	Information is somewhat accurate with some detail.	Information is inaccurate or lacks detail.
Creativity	Presentation is highly engaging and creative.	Presentation is engaging and somewhat creative.	Presentation is basic with minimal creativity.	Presentation is unengaging and lacks creativity.
Presentation Skills	Presentation is clear, well-organized, and confidently delivered.	Presentation is clear and mostly organized.	Presentation is somewhat clear but lacks organization.	Presentation is unclear and disorganized.
Teamwork	Group worked well together and all members contributed equally.	Group worked well together with most members contributing.	Group had some issues working together and uneven contributions.	Group had significant issues working together and unequal contributions.

This interactive research activity encourages fifth graders to dive deep into the history of the Texas Revolution and the Battle of the Alamo, fostering a deeper understanding through collaborative research, creative presentations, and role-playing.



E:	DATE		
Instructions:			
Answer the following questio	ns based on your knowledge of the Texas I	Revolution.	
Multiple Choice (Circle the co	rrect answer)		
1. What year did the Texas Re	evolution begin?		
A) 1821			
B) 1830			
C) 1835			
D) 1845			
2. Who was the president of	Mexico during the Texas Revolution?		
A) Miguel Hidalgo			
B) Vicente Guerrero			
C) Antonio Lopez de Santa	Anna		
D) Porfirio Diaz			
3. What was the original purp	oose of the Alamo before it became a milit	tary fort?	
A) A school			
B) A mission			
C) A government building			
D) A trading post			
	s a key figure at the Battle of the Alamo?		
A) Sam Houston			
B) Stephen F. Austin			
C) William B. Travis			
D) James K. Polk			
True on Folos (\\/t- True F			
True or False (Write True or F	aise)		



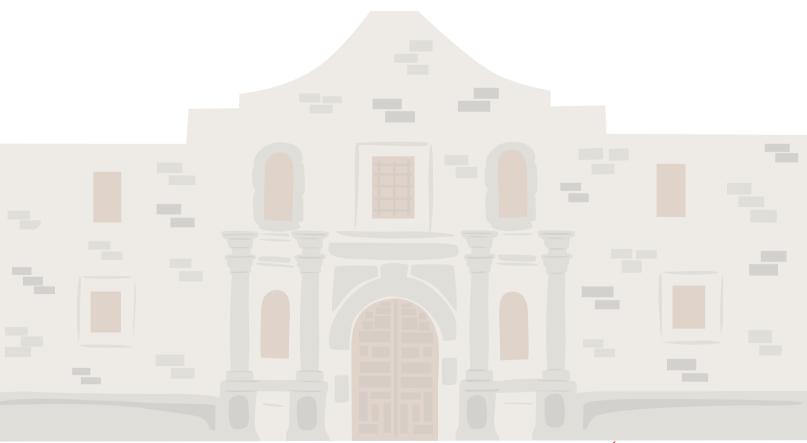
6. The Texian army was primarily made up of professional soldiers from the United States.
7. "Remember the Alamo!" became a rallying cry for Texian forces after the Battle of the Alamo.
8. Texas declared its independence from Mexico on March 2, 18369. Santa Anna was captured after the Battle of San Jacinto
Short Answer 10. What was the significance of the Battle of the Alamo in the Texas Revolution?
11. Explain one reason why the Texians wanted to break away from Mexican rule.



2. Describe th	e outcome of	the Battle of	San Jacinto.			
						_
3. Name one l	leader from tl	ne Texas Revo	olution and de	scribe their ro	le.	
4. How did the	e Texas Revol	ution contrib	ute to the ever	itual statehoo	d of Texas?	
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15. What role did Juan Seguín play in the Texas Revolution, and how did he contribute to the Texian efforts?



Texas Revolution Quiz Answer Key

Multiple Choice

- 1. C) 1835
- 2. C) Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna
- 3. B) A mission
- 4. C) William B. Travis

True or False

- 5. True
- 6. False
- 7. True
- 8. True
- 9. True

Short Answer

- 10. The Battle of the Alamo was significant because it became a symbol of heroic resistance and a rallying cry for the Texian army, inspiring them to fight for their independence.
- 11. One reason the Texians wanted to break away from Mexican rule was because they felt their rights and needs were not being addressed by the Mexican government, which imposed strict controls and heavy taxes.
- 12. The outcome of the Battle of San Jacinto was a decisive victory for the Texian army, which captured Santa Anna and forced him to sign a treaty recognizing Texas independence.
- 13. Sam Houston was a key leader in the Texas Revolution; he served as the commander of the Texian army and led them to victory at the Battle of San Jacinto.
- 14. The Texas Revolution led to the establishment of the Republic of Texas, which eventually joined the United States as a state in 1845.

Bonus Question

15. Juan Seguín was a Tejano leader who played a crucial role in the Texas Revolution by rallying Tejano support for the Texian cause and participating in several key battles, including the Battle of San Jacinto.



Student Text

Please read the following paragraphs to learn more.

As more and more settlers moved to Texas, the area started to change a lot. Most of these new settlers came from the United States, and they had different ways of living and different ideas from the Mexican people who were already there. As the number of settlers increased, they started to fill up the land, and this made some of the original residents and the Mexican government worried and unhappy. In 1830, to control this rapid change, the Mexican government created a new law to stop more Americans from moving to Texas. But many Americans kept coming anyway, even though it was not allowed. This made the situation more tense, as more people were living in Texas without permission.

While the Alamo was under siege, Texians declared their independence from Mexico on March 2, 1836. To declare means to say something in an official or public way. The bravery of those who defended the Alamo is an inspiring part of American history, showing us the fight for Texas independence. In 1836, a small group of brave people stood their ground at the Alamo against a much larger army. Their courage during this tough battle made many people across America admire and remember them. Even though they did not win, their spirit helped others keep fighting for freedom. This led to a big victory at the Battle of San Jacinto, which helped Texas become independent from Mexico.



Resources

- https://www.thealamo.org/remember/battle-and-revolution/defenders#sortByName
- https://www.history.com/topics/latin-america/alamo
- https://www.thealamo.org/remember/battle-and-revolution/revolution-timeline
- https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/remembering-the-alamo-101880149/
- https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/texian
- https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/alamo-battle-of-the
- https://www.thealamo.org/remember/battle-and-revolution/travis-letter

Alamo



Credit: Canva Pro.

William B. Travis



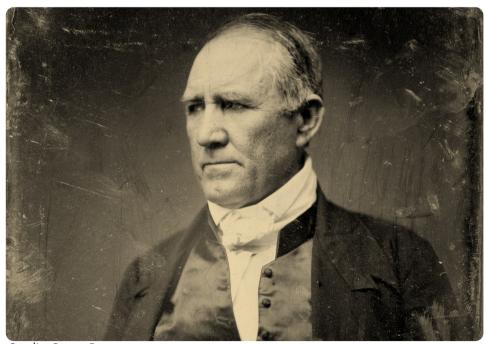
Credit: Texas State Historical Association

Santa Anna



Credit: Wikipedia.

Sam Houston



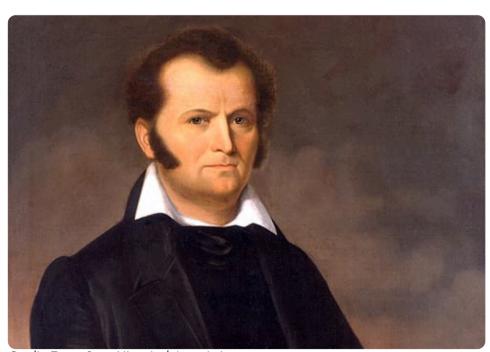
Credit: Canva Pro.

Henry Smith



Credit: Wikipedia.

James Bowie



Credit: Texas State Historical Association

Davy Crockett



Credit: Wikipedia

Notes
