# **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
- Life
- Liberty



#### **Learning Objectives**

#### Students will be able to

- Identify the Alamo as a significant historical site in Texas.
- Name and recognize important figures from the Battle of the Alamo, such as Davy Crockett, William B. Travis, and Santa Anna.
- Discuss the concepts of bravery and sacrifice by exploring the actions of the Alamo defenders.
- Locate Texas on a map of the United States and identify the Alamo's location within Texas.
- Explain the geographical significance of the Alamo's location during the Texas Revolution.
- Discuss how the outcomes of the battle influenced the course of American history.

# 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.
- 07 **surrender:** to give up control of something to someone else.

# Introduction

#### **TELL** Students

Today, we're going on an incredible journey back in time to a place called the Alamo. 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.

#### **ASK** Students

What is a military fort?

#### TELL Students 🖸 🖍

Imagine a fort standing tall in the hot Texas sun, defended 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]** To make this journey even more exciting, we are going to start with a fun activity! I have a bag full of different items here, and each item represents something important about the Alamo. I am going to pass the bag around, and I want each of you to reach in, pull out an item, and then we will talk about how it connects to the story of the Alamo. Let's see what we have here. [Please have the bag prepared in advance, and keep in mind that the introduction sequence may need to be adjusted based on the order in which items are retrieved.]

#### **ASK** Students

Who would like to go first?

#### TELL Students 🔎

Great! Now, reach into the bag and pull out an item. Ah, you pulled out a tiny flag! This flag represents the Texan revolutionaries who 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.

#### **ASK** Students

Next, who wants to go?

# Introduction

#### **TELL** Students

You picked a toy soldier! This soldier represents the brave defenders of the Alamo. 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

Yes! Soldiers must be courageous because battles are hard and dangerous. Now, who wants to go next? You got a small book! This book can symbolize the many personal stories and letters written by those who were at the Alamo. These letters give us a glimpse into their thoughts, hopes, and fears during the battle. It is like reading a diary from someone who was actually there!

#### **ASK** Students

What do the letters and stories written by the men at the Alamo teach us?

#### TELL Students 🔎

Now, let's see who's next. You pulled out a small cannon! The cannon represents the heavy artillery used in the battle. **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?

#### TELL Students 🙆

That is right! A siege is what happened at the Alamo. Finally, we have one last item, a feather pen. This pen represents the documents that were written during the time, including a famous letter from William B. Travis, one of the Alamo's commanders.

# Introduction

#### **TELL** Students (continued)

In this letter, William B. Travis wrote "to the people of Texas and all Americans in the world" asking for help and pledging to fight to the end. **[Reference William B. Travis Image]** 

#### **ASK** Students

Why do you think William B. Travis wrote a letter asking for help?

#### **TELL** Students

Each of these items tells a part of the story of the Alamo, and together they help us understand the bravery and determination of those who were there. Let's watch another episode of Star Spangled Adventures to learn more about the brave men who fought at the Alamo.

#### WATCH O

Star Spangled Adventures Cartoon Ep. 32: 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

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 rule to stop more American settlers 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

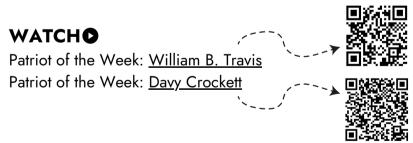
The Texas Revolution began in 1835 after Texians and their allies fought to control San Antonio de Béxar, an important town where the Alamo is located. Today, this town is called San Antonio.

#### **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 🔎

In February 1836, when Neill had to leave the Alamo for a short time, Travis and Bowie took charge of the fort.

#### **TELL** Students (continued)

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, "The enemy is close. We need more soldiers and supplies. We have 150 men and will 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 said that they were surrounded by Santa Anna's army. He explained that they had been under attack for 24 hours but they had not lost any men. He also said they needed help quickly and that the enemy's army was getting bigger every day. In this letter, he also explained that if no help came, they would fight as long as they could and would never give up.

#### **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

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?

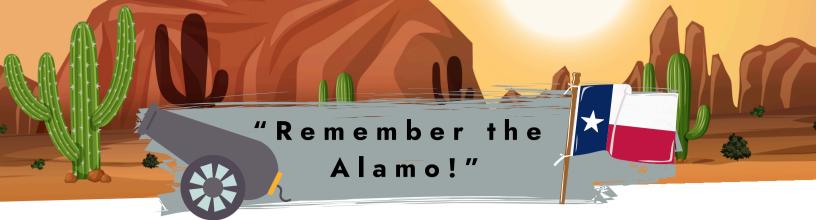
#### **TELL** Students

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 two episodes of Learn More with Liberty to learn more!

#### WATCH O

Learn More With Liberty: The Battle of the Alamo





#### Objective

Second grade students will understand the historical significance of the phrase "Remember the Alamo!" and express what bravery means to them through a collaborative banner-making project.

#### **Materials Needed**

- Large roll of paper or several sheets of poster board
- Markers, crayons, and colored pencils
- Stickers and stencils related to the theme of bravery and the Alamo
- Photos or illustrations of the Alamo for reference
- Glue sticks
- Fabric scraps, ribbons, and buttons for decoration

#### Introduction to the Phrase

- Begin by reviewing the significance of the Battle of the Alamo and how the phrase "Remember the Alamo!" became a symbol of courage and the fight for justice.
- Discuss the meaning of bravery and ask students to share moments when they felt brave.

#### **Banner Design**

- Layout the large roll of paper or poster boards on a flat surface where all students can reach.
- Invite students to sketch a design that includes the Alamo, heroes from the battle, and the phrase "Remember the Alamo!" Use the photos or illustrations for guidance.

#### **Decorate the Banner**

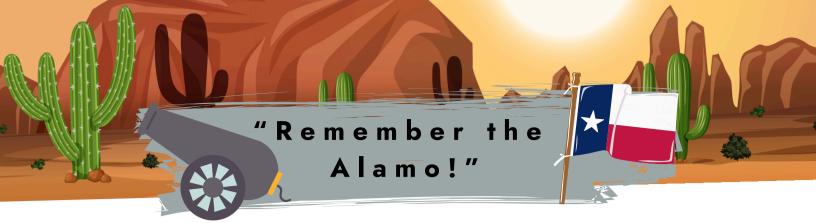
- Students use markers, crayons, and colored pencils to fill in their designs.
- Encourage students to use stickers, stencils, and decorative materials like fabric scraps and ribbons to embellish their sections of the banner, focusing on themes of bravery and remembrance.

#### **Group Collaboration**

• While decorating, facilitate a discussion about how each part of the banner contributes to the overall message. Emphasize teamwork and collective effort, mirroring how the defenders of the Alamo worked together.



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#### **Display and Reflect**

- Once completed, display the banner prominently in the classroom or a common area of the school.
- Have a reflection session where students can discuss what they learned about the Alamo, the importance of remembering history, and how they incorporated the idea of bravery into their artwork.

#### **Optional: Sharing with the Community**

• Organize a small presentation where students can explain their banner to other classes or parents, sharing the story of the Alamo and what they have learned about bravery and teamwork.

This activity not only educates students about a pivotal event in American history but also allows them to reflect on personal values of courage and collective effort, creating a lasting impression of what it means to "Remember the Alamo!"



### **Multiple Choice Quiz**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE

#### Instructions:

Please read each question and answer set carefully. Circle the correct answer.

- 1. What was the Alamo originally?
  - A) A military base
  - B) A mission
  - C) A school
  - D) A shopping center
- 2. What did the Mexican government do to encourage people to settle in Texas?
  - A) Offered free candy
  - B) Gave land and tax breaks
  - C) Provided free travel
  - D) Built new houses
- 3. Why did the Mexican government create a new rule in 1830?
  - A) To increase taxes
  - B) To stop more Americans from moving to Texas
  - C) To invite more settlers
  - D) To start a festival
- 4. How did Santa Anna's leadership style affect the Texians?
  - A) It made them happy
  - B) It led them to consider independence
  - C) It didn't affect them at all
  - D) It made them move away
- 5. What caused the Texas Revolution?
  - A) A disagreement over food
  - B) Texians could not get along
  - C) A sports competition
  - D) None of the above



### **Multiple Choice Quiz**

- 6. After the battle in San Antonio, why did some men stay to defend the Alamo while others left?
  - A) They liked the Alamo
  - B) They went on vacation
  - C) They thought it was important and needed to be defended
  - D) They were too tired to leave

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

- A) He fired a cannonball
- B) He wrote a letter
- C) He danced
- D) He left the Alamo

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

- A) He was having a party
- B) He needed more soldiers and help
- C) He was going on a trip
- D) He wanted peace

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

- A) The defenders won easily
- B) Over 1,000 soldiers attacked and the defenders were defeated
- C) The Alamo was turned into a park
- D) None of the above

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

- A) It discouraged people
- B) It had no impact
- C) It inspired others to continue fighting
- D) It ended the fight



### **Multiple Choice Answer Key**

- 1. What was the Alamo originally? Answer: B) A mission
- 2. What did the Mexican government do to encourage people to settle in Texas? Answer: B) Gave land and tax breaks
- 3. Why did the Mexican government create a new rule in 1830? Answer: B) To stop more Americans from moving to Texas
- 4. How did Santa Anna's leadership style affect the Texians? Answer: B) It led them to consider independence
- 5. What caused the Texas Revolution? Answer: D) None of the above
- 6. After the battle in San Antonio, why did some men stay to defend the Alamo while others left? Answer: C) They thought it was important and needed to be defended
- 7. What did Travis do to show that the defenders of the Alamo would not give up when Santa Anna and his army arrived?

Answer: A) He fired a cannonball

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

Answer: B) He needed more soldiers and help

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

Answer: B) Over 1,000 soldiers attacked and the defenders were defeated

10. How did the bravery of the Alamo defenders impact the fight for Texas independence? Answer: C) It inspired others to continue fighting



## Resources

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

#### Alamo



#### William B. Travis



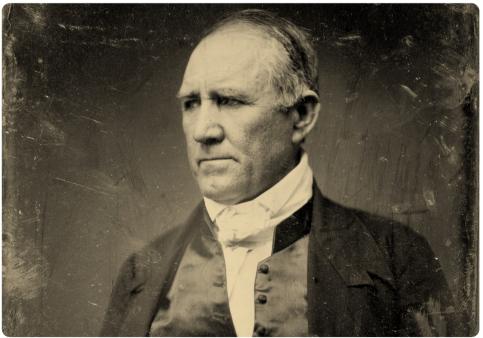
Credit: Texas State Historical Association

Santa Anna



Credit: Wikipedia.





Credit: Canva Pro.

**Henry Smith** 



Credit: Wikipedia.





Credit: Texas State Historical Association

**Davy Crockett** 



Credit: Wikipedia

