Independence for Texas

1. Why did Spain want people to move to Texas, and how did they get people to come? (363)
2. Who was Stephen F. Austin, and why would he be called the "Father of Texas?" (363: Check the box at the bottom to)
3. In return for cheap land and no taxes, what did the people moving to Texas have to agree to? (**4 Things**) (364)
4. Why did Mexico stop all immigration to Texas? (364)
5. Who was the president and dictator or Mexico? (364-365)
6. What happened at the town of Gonzales? (365)
7. What was the Alamo? (365) Who were some of the "brave leaders" there? (365) What happened to the defenders of the Alamo? (366)
8. Do you think the stand at the Alamo helped the cause of Texas independence even though it was a defeat for the Texans? (365-366)
9. Who was Sam Houston? (367)
10. What happened at the Battle of San Jacinto? (367)
11. When did Texas become independent? (367)
12. Why did Andrew Jackson refuse to annex Texas into the United States? 2 Reasons! (367 & 368)
13. When did Texas actually become a state? (368)

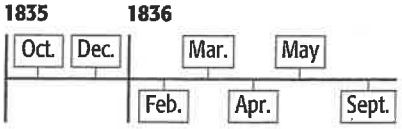
SECTION 2 Independence for Texas

Guide to Reading

Main Idea
Texans won their independence from Mexico and asked to be admitted to the United States.

Key Terms
Tejano, empresario, decree, annex

Reading Strategy
Sequencing Information As you read Section 2, re-create the diagram below and, in the boxes, list key events that occurred in Texas.



Read to Learn
- why problems arose between the Mexican government and the American settlers in Texas.
- how Texas achieved independence and later became a state.

Section Theme
Geography and History Mexico's offers of huge tracts of fertile land brought American settlers to Texas.

Preview of Events

1821
Moses Austin receives land grant in Texas

1833
Santa Anna becomes president of Mexico

March 1836
The Alamo falls to Mexican troops

September 1836
Sam Houston is elected president of Texas

Davy Crockett

AN American Story

Davy Crockett was a backwoodsman from Tennessee. His skill as a hunter and storyteller helped get him elected to three terms in Congress. But when he started his first political campaign, Crockett was doubtful about his chances of winning. "The thought of having to make a speech made my knees feel mighty weak and set my heart to fluttering." Fortunately for Crockett, the other candidates spoke all day and tired out the audience. "When they were all done," Crockett boasted, "I got up and told some laughable story, and quit. . . . I went home, and didn't go back again till after the election was over." In the end, Crockett won the election by a wide margin.

A Clash of Cultures

Davy Crockett of Tennessee won notice for his frontier skills, his sense of humor, and the shrewd common sense he often displayed in politics. When he lost his seat in Congress in 1835, he did not return to Tennessee. Instead he went southwest to Texas.

Crockett thought he could make a new start there. He also wanted to help the Texans win their independence from Mexico. Little did he know his deeds in Texas would bring him greater fame than his adventures on the frontier or his years in Congress.

Conflict over Texas began in 1803, when the United States bought the Louisiana Territory from France. Americans claimed that the land in present-day Texas was part of the purchase. Spain protested. In 1819, in the **Adams-Onís Treaty,** the United States agreed to drop any further claim to the region.

Land Grants

At the time, few people lived in Texas. Most residents—about 3,000—were **Tejanos** (teh•HAH•nohs), or Mexicans who claimed Texas as their home. Native Americans, including Comanches, Apaches, and Kiowas, also lived in the area.

Because the Spanish wanted to promote the growth of Texas, they offered vast tracts of land to people who agreed to bring families to settle on the land. The people who obtained these grants from the government and recruited the settlers were called **empresarios.**

Moses Austin, a businessman who had developed a mining operation in Missouri, applied for and received the first land grant in 1821. Before he could establish his colony, however, Moses contracted pneumonia and died. After Mexico declared independence from Spain, Austin's son, **Stephen F. Austin,** asked the Mexican government to confirm his father's land grant. Once he received confirmation, he began to organize the colony.

Stephen F. Austin recruited 300 American families to settle the fertile land along the Brazos River and the Colorado River of Texas. The first settlers came to be called the **Old Three Hundred.** Many received 960 acres, with additional acres for each child. Others received larger ranches. Austin's success made him a leader among the American settlers in Texas.

From 1823 to 1825, Mexico passed three colonization laws. All these laws offered new settlers large tracts of land at extremely low prices and

People In History

Stephen F. Austin 1793–1836

Stephen F. Austin earned the name "Father of Texas" because of his leadership in populating the Mexican territory of Texas. After attending college he worked as a businessperson. Austin organized the first land grant colony in Texas in 1821. Austin offered large tracts of land to settlers, and his colony grew quickly.

Austin often played the role of spokesperson with the Mexican government, sometimes on behalf of colonists who were not part of his settlement. He served as their advocate, even when he disagreed with their opinions. For example, he negotiated for permission to continue slavery in the province of Texas after it was banned by Mexican law. He also served nearly a year in prison for promoting independence for the Texans.

After Texas won its war for independence, Austin ran for the office of president. He was defeated but was appointed secretary of state. He died just a few months later. The state of Texas honored Stephen F. Austin by naming its capital city—Austin—after its founding father.

What If...

The Defenders Had Not Stayed at the Alamo?

William Travis and almost 200 other defenders were determined to hold the Alamo. Travis wrote several messages to the people of Texas and the United States asking them for assistance. Travis's appeal was unsuccessful. Texas military forces were not yet well organized and were badly scattered. Travis's letter of February 24, 1836, is one of the finest statements of courage in American history.

The defenders—mostly volunteers—were free to leave whenever they chose. But they decided to defend the Alamo for a cause in which they believed.

Santa Anna hoped the fall of the Alamo would convince other Texans that it was useless to resist his armies. Instead, the heroism of those in the Alamo inspired other Texans to carry on the struggle. "Remember the Alamo!" became the battle cry of Houston's army.

To the People of Texas
and All Americans in the World–

Fellow Citizens and Compatriots:

I am besieged by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna. I have sustained a continual Bombardment & cannonade for 24 hours & have not lost a man. The enemy has demanded a surrender at discretion, otherwise the garrison are to be put to the sword if the fort is taken. I have answered the demand with a cannon shot, and our flag still waves proudly from the walls. I shall never surrender or retreat.

Then, I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism, & of everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid with all dispatch. The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily & will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible & die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his honor & that of his country.

Victory or Death
William Barret Travis
Lt. Col. Comdt.

Travis's Appeal for Aid at the Alamo, February 24, 1836

reduced or no taxes for several years. In return the colonists agreed to learn Spanish, become Mexican citizens, convert to Catholicism—the religion of Mexico—and obey Mexican law.

Mexican leaders hoped to attract settlers from all over, including other parts of Mexico. Most Texas settlers, however, came from the United States.

Growing Tension

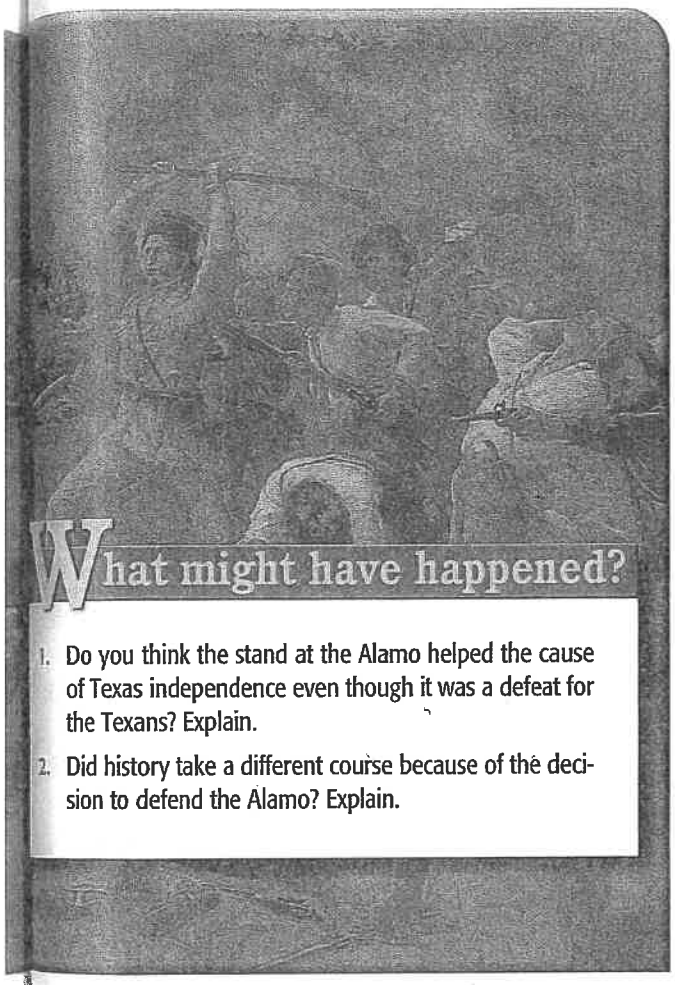
By 1830 Americans in Texas far outnumbered Mexicans. Further, these American colonists had not adopted Mexican ways. In the meantime the United States had twice offered to buy Texas from Mexico.

The Mexican government viewed the growing American influence in Texas with alarm. In 1830 the Mexican government issued a decree, or official order, that stopped all immigration from the United States. At the same time, the decree encouraged the immigration of Mexican and European families with generous land grants. Trade between Texas and the United States was discouraged by placing a tax on goods imported from the United States.

These new policies angered the Texans. The prosperity of many citizens depended on trade with the United States. Many had friends and relatives who wanted to come to Texas. In addition, those colonists who held slaves were uneasy about the Mexican government's plans to end slavery.

Attempt at Reconciliation

Some of the American settlers called for independence. Others hoped to stay within Mexico but on better terms. In 1833 **General Antonio López de Santa Anna** became president of



What might have happened?

1. Do you think the stand at the Alamo helped the cause of Texas independence even though it was a defeat for the Texans? Explain.
2. Did history take a different course because of the decision to defend the Alamo? Explain.

Mexico. Stephen F. Austin traveled to Mexico City with the Texans' demands, which were to remove the ban on American settlers and to make Texas a separate state.

Santa Anna agreed to the first request but refused the second. Austin sent a letter back to Texas, suggesting that plans for independence get underway. The Mexican government intercepted the letter and arrested Austin. While Austin was in jail, Santa Anna named himself dictator and overthrew Mexico's constitution of 1824. Without a constitution to protect their rights, Texans felt betrayed. Santa Anna reorganized the government, placing greater central control over Texas. This loss of local power dismayed many people.

Reading Check **Explaining** What role did empresarios play in colonization?

The Struggle for Independence

During 1835 unrest grew among Texans and occasionally resulted in open conflict. Santa Anna sent an army into Texas to punish the Texans for criticizing him. In October some Mexican troops tried to seize a cannon held by Texans at the town of **Gonzales.** During the battle the Texans decorated the front of the cannon with a white flag that bore the words "Come and Take It." After a brief struggle, Texans drove back the Mexican troops. Texans consider this to be the first fight of the Texan Revolution.

The Texans called on volunteers to join their fight. They offered free land to anyone who would help. Davy Crockett and many others—including a number of African Americans and Tejanos—answered that call.

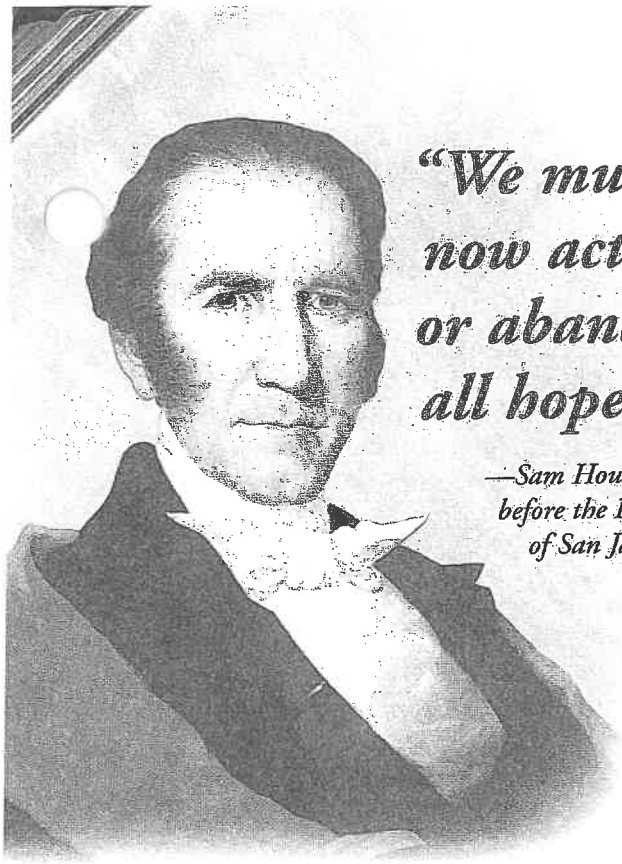
In December 1835, the Texans scored an important victory. They liberated **San Antonio** from the control of a larger Mexican force. The Texas army at San Antonio included more than 100 Tejanos. Many of them served in a scouting company commanded by Captain Juan Seguín. Born in San Antonio, Seguín was an outspoken champion of the Texans' demand for independence.

Despite these victories, the Texans encountered problems. With the Mexican withdrawal, some Texans left San Antonio, thinking the war was won. Various groups argued over who was in charge and what course of action to follow. In early 1836, when Texas should have been making preparations to face Santa Anna, nothing was being done.

The Battle of the Alamo

Santa Anna marched north, furious at the loss of San Antonio. When his army reached San Antonio in late February 1836, it found a small Texan force barricaded inside a nearby mission called the **Alamo.**

Although the Texans had cannons, they lacked gunpowder. Worse, they had only about 180 soldiers to face Santa Anna's army of several thousand. The Texans did have brave leaders, though, including Davy Crockett, who had arrived with a band of sharpshooters from Tennessee, and a tough Texan named Jim Bowie. The commander, William B. Travis, was only 26



"We must now act or abandon all hope!"

—Sam Houston, before the Battle of San Jacinto

years old, but he was determined to hold his position. Travis managed to send messages out through Mexican lines. He wrote several messages to the people of Texas and the United States, asking them for assistance. In his last message, Travis described the fighting that had already taken place and repeated his request for assistance. He warned that

> "the power of Santa Anna is to be met here, or in the colonies; we had better meet them here than to suffer a war of devastation to rage in our settlements."

Travis concluded with the statement that he and his troops were determined to hold the Alamo.

For 12 long days, the defenders of the Alamo kept Santa Anna's army at bay with rifle fire. The Mexicans launched two assaults but had to break them off. During the siege, 32 volunteers from Gonzales slipped through the Mexican lines to join the Alamo's defenders.

On March 6, 1836, Mexican cannon fire smashed the Alamo's walls, and the Mexicans launched an all-out attack. The Alamo defenders killed many Mexican soldiers as they crossed open land and tried to mount the Alamo's walls. The Mexicans were too numerous to hold back, however, and they finally entered the fortress, killing William Travis, Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, and all the other defenders. Only a few women and children and some servants survived to tell of the battle.

In the words of Santa Anna's aide, "The Texans fought more like devils than like men." The defenders of the Alamo had killed hundreds of Mexican soldiers. But more important, they had bought Texans some much needed time.

Texas Declares Its Independence

During the siege of the Alamo, Texan leaders were meeting at Washington-on-the-Brazos, where they were drawing up a new constitution. There, on March 2, 1836—four days before the fall of the Alamo—American settlers and Tejanos firmly declared independence from Mexico and established the Republic of Texas.

The Texas Declaration of Independence was similar to the Declaration of the United States, which had been written 60 years earlier. The Texas Declaration stated that the government of Santa Anna had violated the liberties guaranteed under the Mexican Constitution. The declaration charged that Texans had been deprived of freedom of religion, the right to trial by jury, the right to bear arms, and the right to petition. It noted that the Texans' protests against these policies were met with force. The Mexican government had sent a large army to drive Texans from their homes. Because of these grievances, the declaration proclaimed the following:

> "The people of Texas, in solemn convention assembled, appealing to a candid world for the necessities of our condition, do hereby resolve and declare that our political connection with the Mexican nation has forever ended; and that the people of Texas do now constitute a free, sovereign, and independent republic...."

HISTORY Online

Student Web Activity
Visit tarvol1.glencoe.com and click on **Chapter 12—Student Web Activities** for an activity on the fight for Texas independence.

With Mexican troops in Texas, it was not possible to hold a general election to ratify the constitution and vote for leaders of the new republic. Texas leaders set up a temporary government. They selected officers to serve until regular elections could be held.

David G. Burnet, an early pioneer in Texas, was chosen president and Lorenzo de Zavala, vice president. De Zavala had worked to establish a democratic government in Mexico. He moved to Texas when it became clear that Santa Anna would not make reforms.

The government of the new republic named **Sam Houston** as commander in chief of the Texas forces. Houston had come to Texas in 1832. Raised among the Cherokee people, he became a soldier, fighting with Andrew Jackson against the Creek people. A politician as well, Houston had served in Congress and as governor of Tennessee.

Houston wanted to prevent other forts from being overrun by the Mexicans. He ordered the troops at **Goliad** to abandon their position. As they retreated, however, they came face to face with Mexican troops led by General Urrea. After a fierce fight, several hundred Texans surrendered. On Santa Anna's orders, the Texans were executed a few days later. This action outraged Texans, who called it the "Goliad Massacre."

The Battle of San Jacinto

Houston moved his small army eastward about 100 miles, watching the movements of Santa Anna and waiting for a chance to strike. Six weeks after the Alamo, he found the opportunity.

After adding some new troops, Houston gathered an army of about 900 at **San Jacinto** (SAN juh•SIHN•toh), near the site of present-day Houston. Santa Anna was camped nearby with an army of more than 1,300. On April 21 the Texans launched a surprise attack on the Mexican camp, shouting, "Remember the Alamo! Remember Goliad!" They killed more than 600 soldiers and captured about 700 more—including Santa Anna. On May 14, 1836, Santa Anna signed a treaty that recognized the independence of Texas.

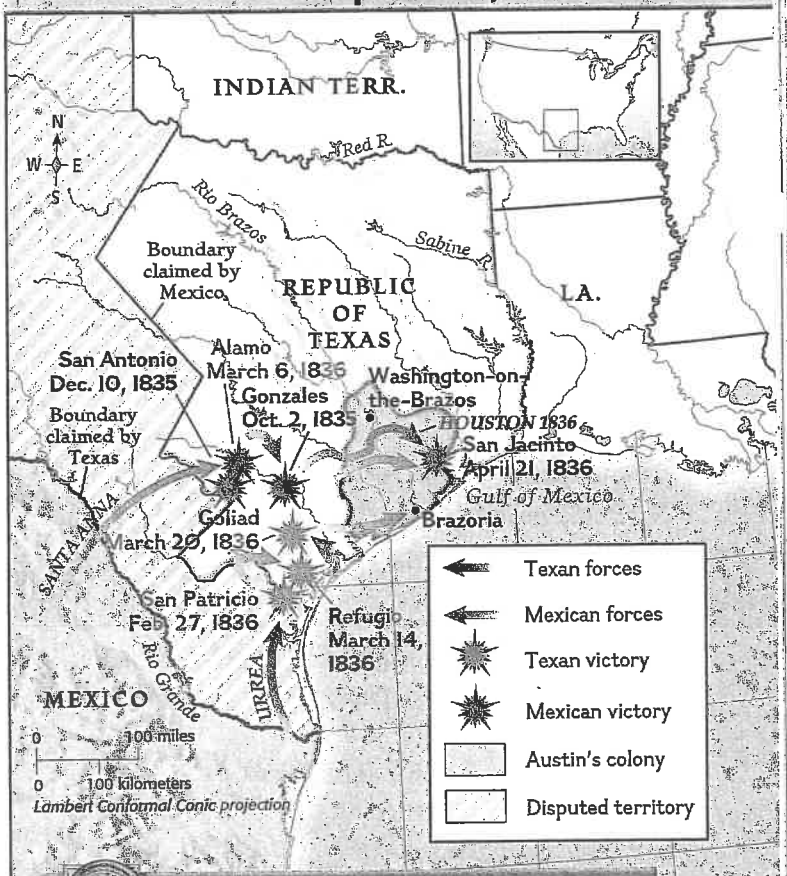
Reading Check **Identifying** Who was commander in chief of the Texas forces?

The Lone Star Republic

Texans elected Sam Houston as their president in September 1836. Mirabeau Lamar, who had built a fort at Velasco and had fought bravely at the Battle of San Jacinto, served as vice president. Houston sent a delegation to Washington, D.C., asking the United States to annex—take control of—Texas. The nation's president Andrew Jackson refused, however, because the addition of another slave state would upset the balance of slave and free states in Congress. For the moment Texas would remain an independent country.

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

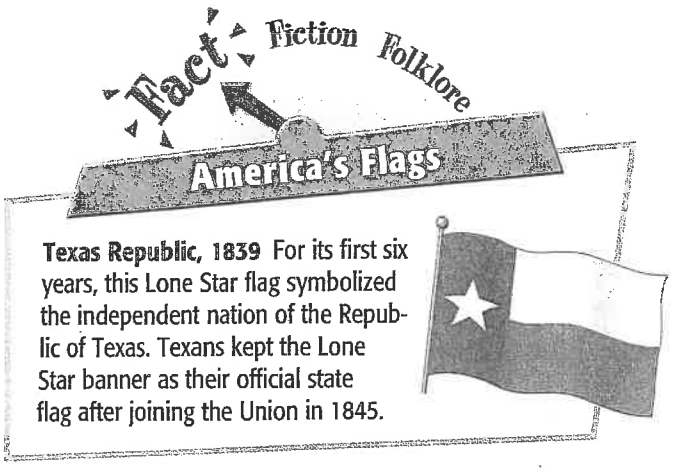
Texas War for Independence, 1835–1836 *In Motion*



Geography Skills

In 1836 General Santa Anna led Mexico's main forces across the Rio Grande into Texas.

1. **Location** At which battles did Texans win victories?
2. **Analyzing Information** What battle immediately followed the Alamo?



Texas Republic, 1839 For its first six years, this Lone Star flag symbolized the independent nation of the Republic of Texas. Texans kept the Lone Star banner as their official state flag after joining the Union in 1845.

The Question of Annexation

Despite rapid population growth, the new republic faced political and financial difficulties. The Mexican government refused to honor Santa Anna's recognition of independence, and fighting continued between Texas and Mexico. In addition Texas had an enormous debt and no money to repay it.

Many Texans still hoped to join the United States. Southerners favored the annexation of Texas, but Northerners objected that Texas would add another slave state to the Union. President Martin Van Buren, like Jackson, did not want to inflame the slavery issue or risk war with Mexico. He put off the question of annexing Texas.

John Tyler, who became the nation's president in 1841, was the first vice president to become president upon the death of a chief executive. He succeeded William Henry Harrison, who died in April, just one month after taking office. Tyler supported adding Texas to the Union and persuaded Texas to reapply for annexation. However, the Senate was divided over slavery and failed to ratify the annexation treaty.

Texas Becomes a State

The situation changed with the 1844 presidential campaign. The feeling of Manifest Destiny was growing throughout the country. The South favored annexation of Texas. The North demanded that the United States gain control of the Oregon country from Britain. The Democratic candidate, James K. Polk, supported both actions. The Whig candidate, Henry Clay, initially opposed adding Texas to the Union. When he finally came out for annexation, it lost him votes in the North—and the election.

After Polk's victory, supporters of annexation pressed the issue in Congress. They proposed and passed a resolution to annex Texas. On December 29, 1845, Texas officially became a state of the United States.

Reading Check **Identifying** Who was president of the Texas Republic?

SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

HISTORY Online **Study Central™** To review this section, go to tarvol1.glencoe.com and click on **Study Central**

Checking for Understanding

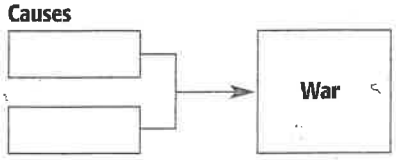
1. **Key Terms** Write a short history about events in Texas using the following terms: **Tejano, empresario, decree, annex.**
2. **Reviewing Facts** Name the four things that American settlers agreed to do in exchange for receiving land in Texas.

Reviewing Themes

3. **Geography and History** Why did Northerners and Southerners disagree on the annexation of Texas?

Critical Thinking

4. **Analyzing Information** How did the fall of the Alamo help the cause of Texas independence, even though it was a defeat for the Texans?
5. **Categorizing Information** Re-create the diagram below. In the boxes, describe two causes of the war between Mexico and Americans in Texas.



Analyzing Visuals

6. **Sequencing** Study the map on page 367. Place these battles in order, starting with the earliest: Gonzales, San Jacinto, the Alamo, Goliad.

Interdisciplinary Activity

Descriptive Writing Look at the painting of the Battle of the Alamo on page 365. Write one paragraph that describes what is happening in the picture.