

REMEMBERING TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

Learning Objectives: Students will:

1. Understand the importance of Texas Independence Day.
2. Identify the contributions of great Texans such as Stephen F. Austin, William Travis, and Sam Houston.
3. Express their thoughts and ideas by participating in pantomime/role-playing, decision-making, and class discussions.

TEKS: SS K.2A, 15A, 16B, 1.1A, 2A, 17B, 19B, 2.1A, 19A, 20B

Materials: Voices of the Alamo by Sherry Garland, masking tape, 12" x 18" drawing paper, crayons or markers

Vocabulary: abolish, arrogant, convention, disgruntled, foe, futile, government, harsh, independence, massacre, ruffians, scoundrels, siege, surrender

Teaching Strategy:

1. Begin the lesson by telling students that on March 2 of each year, Texans observe Texas Independence Day. Ask students to define "independence." Ask students what they already know about Texas Independence Day and have them share the information with the class.
2. Tell students that they are going to review the importance of Texas Independence Day by discussing and pantomiming/role-playing specific selections from the book, Voices of the Alamo, by Sherry Garland.
3. The teacher should turn to the page labeled "1830" in the book and read the text to the class. Tell students that Stephen F. Austin is called the "Father of Texas" because he brought more than 1,200 families to Texas. Ask for four or five students to volunteer to pantomime the actions of the Texian, Stephen F. Austin, and the children while the text is read again. Discuss why the farmer still loved Texas even though he had many difficult times.
4. Turning to the next page (1834), the teacher should read the "voice" of Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. Divide the class into two groups: "Defenders of Santa Anna" and "Defenders of the Texians." Have the "Defenders of Santa Anna" state reasons why Santa Anna had a right to be upset with the colonists and then ask the "Defenders of the Texians" to explain why the colonists had a

right to be angry with Santa Anna. The teacher should list the arguments on the board or overhead.

5. Inform students that on March 2, 1836, the Texas Declaration of Independence was signed by fifty-nine delegates. The declaration stated what it was like to live under the rule of Santa Anna, a list of complaints against the Mexican government, and the reason for Texans to go to war against Mexico in order to become a free, independent republic.
6. Turning to the page labeled "March 5, 1836," the teacher should read the "voice" of William Travis stopping after the following quotation: "Cross this line if you will stand and fight with me, but know that surely you will die." The teacher should put a long piece of masking tape on the floor. Have all the students in the class stand on one side of the tape and then ask them to cross the line if they would have been willing to fight and die with Colonel Travis. (Emphasize that students have the right to not cross the line if they honestly wouldn't be willing to fight if it meant that they might be killed.) Read the last line of the "voice" of William Travis and tell students that Travis and all of his 184 men died. Have students discuss their feelings about William Travis and his men.
7. Tell students that following the Battle of the Alamo, Santa Anna and his army murdered over 300 unarmed Texas prisoners at Goliad. Turning to the page labeled "April 21, 1836," the teacher should read the "voice" of Sam Houston. Share with students that at the Battle of San Jacinto, Sam Houston and his 750+ men defeated Santa Anna in a battle that was approximately 18 minutes long. Santa Anna's entire army of 1,600 men were either killed or captured and only nine Texans died in the battle.
8. Give each student a piece of drawing paper and instruct them to design a flag that symbolizes and/or represents those Texans who fought for Texas independence in 1836. Have students share their flags with classmates and then display the flags in the classroom for everyone to enjoy.

Extension for Gifted/Talented: Have students create a diary entry that might have been written by one of the Texas volunteers right before the final Battle of the Alamo.
