Borders and Consequences

Trace how a border dispute reshaped two countries.

8.H.18 "Analyze the causes and effects of the Mexican War (1846-1848)."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three causes of the Mexican War and circle three effects. Number the causes in the order they appear so you can trace how the conflict developed.

A Disputed Border

1 At the edge of Texas, two rivers became a reason to fight. Texas claimed the Rio Grande as its southern border, while Mexico said the border was the Nueces River, farther north. Mexico had never accepted Texas's independence, and the United States annexed Texas in 1845. President James K. Polk also wanted land farther west, including California. In 1846 he sent U.S. troops into the disputed strip between the rivers. After fighting broke out there, Polk asked Congress to declare war, saying Mexico had attacked U.S. forces.

2 Both countries fought for more than a line on a map. Mexican leaders resisted what they saw as an invasion of their country. U.S. forces captured Mexico City in 1847, but the war also killed soldiers and civilians and damaged towns and farms. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the war in 1848. Mexico recognized the Rio Grande as Texas's border and gave up a vast northern region, including present-day California and New Mexico. In return, the United States paid Mexico $15 million.

3 The new border changed life for people already living on the land. The treaty offered U.S. citizenship to Mexican residents in the ceded territory and promised to protect their property, yet many later faced discrimination and land loss. Indigenous peoples in the region were not consulted as their homelands came under U.S. control. The new territory also sharpened a bitter U.S. argument: Would slavery spread west? That dispute increased tensions between northern and southern states. For Mexico, losing so much land weakened the country and left lasting anger toward the United States.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the annexation of Texas and the two countries' border claims combine to help cause the war?

2. Why did Polk's decision to send troops into the disputed strip make war more likely?

3. How did the war's outcome change both countries' control of land?

4. How did the land gained from Mexico affect politics within the United States?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 70 to 90 word museum label that traces two causes of the war to two different effects, one on people in the ceded territory and one on U.S. politics. Explain at least one link rather than listing facts.

ANSWER KEY

Borders and Consequences

GRADE 8 · 8.H.18

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three causes of the Mexican War and circle three effects. Number the causes in the order they appear so you can trace how the conflict developed. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the annexation of Texas and the two countries' border claims combine to help cause the war?	**The United States annexed Texas, whose independence Mexico had not accepted. Texas claimed land to the Rio Grande, while Mexico claimed the border was the Nueces River, leaving a disputed strip.**
2	Why did Polk's decision to send troops into the disputed strip make war more likely?	**Fighting broke out in the disputed strip after Polk sent troops there. Polk then used the fighting to ask Congress to declare war.**
3	How did the war's outcome change both countries' control of land?	**Mexico recognized the Rio Grande as Texas's border and gave up a vast northern region to the United States.**
4	How did the land gained from Mexico affect politics within the United States?	**The new territory raised the question of whether slavery would spread west, increasing tensions between northern and southern states.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

When the United States annexed Texas, Mexico still rejected Texas's independence, and the two countries disagreed about its southern border. Polk sent troops into the disputed strip, where fighting began and Congress declared war. After U.S. forces captured Mexico City, Mexico gave up a large northern region in the 1848 treaty. Mexican residents there were promised property rights, but many later lost land. The newly acquired territory also raised the question of slavery's expansion, increasing tensions between northern and southern states.

Accept different accurate causes and effects supported by the passage. In the museum label, look for a clear explanation of how the war led to both a change in residents' lives and a political dispute.