

Why Texas?

Identify economic opportunity, competition, and expansion in early Texas history.

4.2.A "summarize motivations for European exploration and settlement of Texas, including economic opportunity, competition, and the desire for expansion;"

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each reason Europeans explored or settled Texas. Write 1 by economic opportunity, 2 by competition, and 3 by the desire to expand or control more land.

European Goals in Texas

- ① In the 1500s, Spain sent explorers north from Mexico into the land now called Texas. Spanish leaders hoped to find riches, such as gold and silver, and new trading opportunities. They also wanted to claim land for Spain. Explorers, including Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, described the land and its people. Their reports made Spanish officials curious about what Texas might offer.
- ② France entered the contest in 1685, when René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle, started a colony on the Texas coast by mistake. France wanted a base near Spanish lands and hoped to grow its power in North America. Spain worried that France could claim Texas or threaten Spanish routes and settlements. Competition between the two countries pushed Spain to pay closer attention to Texas.
- ③ To strengthen its claim, Spain sent soldiers, priests, and settlers into East Texas. Soldiers built presidios, or forts, and priests began missions. Spain wanted these settlements to spread Spanish control into new territory. Missions also aimed to convert American Indians to Christianity, while farms and ranches could supply communities. These choices show that expansion, security, and economic hopes worked together.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 What economic opportunities did Spanish leaders hope to find in Texas?

2 How did the French colony create competition for Spain in Texas?

3 Why did Spain send soldiers, priests, and settlers into East Texas?

4 Name two kinds of settlements Spain built or began in Texas, and tell how they supported Spanish goals.

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write a three-sentence summary explaining why Europeans explored and settled Texas. Include economic opportunity, competition, and expansion, and use at least one specific detail from the passage.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each reason Europeans explored or settled Texas. Write 1 by economic opportunity, 2 by competition, and 3 by the desire to expand or control more land. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What economic opportunities did Spanish leaders hope to find in Texas?	They hoped to find gold, silver, and new trading opportunities.
2	How did the French colony create competition for Spain in Texas?	Spain feared that France could claim Texas or threaten Spanish routes and settlements.
3	Why did Spain send soldiers, priests, and settlers into East Texas?	Spain wanted to strengthen its claim and spread Spanish control into new territory.
4	Name two kinds of settlements Spain built or began in Texas, and tell how they supported Spanish goals.	Spain built presidios and began missions. They helped Spain protect its claim and expand Spanish control.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

European leaders hoped Texas would bring wealth through gold, silver, trade, farms, and ranches. France and Spain competed because each wanted to claim Texas and increase its power. Spain sent soldiers, priests, and settlers to build forts and missions, expanding Spanish control.

Accept equivalent statements of wealth or trade for economic opportunity, rivalry between France and Spain for competition, and claiming or controlling new land for expansion. For the summary, look for all three motivations and at least one accurate passage detail.