

Westward Expansion The Story of the Alamo

In the 1820s and 1830s, many Americans moved to Texas from the southern United States. The territory officially belonged to Mexico, but the land was open to settlers. The settlers had governed themselves for about 15 years when the Mexican government realized that Americans **outnumbered**¹ Mexicans in Texas! The Mexican government became worried that the U.S. would take Texas. Mexico decided to push the settlers back to the United States. The settlers refused to leave.

Mexican General Santa Anna marched into Texas with many troops. He crossed the Rio Grande and approached San Antonio. Here, the Texans were awaiting attack. The Texans used the Alamo as a **fort**.² Originally it was a **mission**,³ used for religious reasons. The man in command of the Texans was William Barret Travis. He sent appeal after appeal to the U.S. government for back up. No one answered.

The Texans knew that they were outnumbered 10 to 1. Still, they decided to defend themselves to the death. From February 23, 1836 to March 6, 1836, the settlers waited. On March 6, Santa Anna stormed the walls of the Alamo. The Texans fought until death, even after hours of arm-to-arm combat.

Remember the Alamo! – Revenge

On April 21, 1836, a new Texan army under Sam Houston fought and defeated Santa Anna. These men were fighting for the rights of themselves and their families to live in Texas. They were also fighting for revenge. When Sam Houston led his men into battle, he rallied his men by shouting, “Remember the Alamo!”

When Houston won, Texas became the Lone Star Republic. Did you know that Texas was the only U. S. state to have been its own country? In 1845 Texas asked to be a part of the United States. The Republic was **annexed**⁴ by the U.S. government and became the Lone Star State.

¹ **outnumber** – to be of a greater number than

² **fort** – a place where the army is stationed

³ **mission** – a church established by missionaries

⁴ **annex** – to add a territory to an existing country

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Who was in charge of the Texans at the Alamo in 1836?

- a. General Santa Anna
- b. William Barret Travis
- c. Sam Houston
- d. George W. Bush

2. In this passage, the word **Americans** refers to

- a. Citizens of the United States of America.
- b. Native Americans.
- c. Citizens of the United States of Mexico.
- d. Canadians.

3. Why was Mexico worried that the U.S. might try to take Texas from them?

- a. Americans outnumbered Mexicans in Texas.
- b. Mexicans outnumbered Americans in Texas.
- c. They weren't worried.
- d. They just worried a lot.

4. According to the passage, Sam Houston

- a. was successful in getting revenge for the Alamo.
- b. was unsuccessful in getting revenge for the Alamo.
- c. decided revenge for the Alamo wasn't worth fighting for.
- d. was an important person during the California Gold Rush.

5. The passage "The Story of the Alamo" is mostly about

- a. the history of building the Alamo.
- b. the differences between Santa Anna and other generals.
- c. a made-up story that Texans still tell.
- d. Texas's fight for independence.

6. What was one similarity and one difference between Santa Anna and Sam Houston?

7. What was the Alamo used for originally, and what was it used for during battle?

8. The question below is an incomplete sentence. Choose the word that best completes the sentence.

The Texans lost to the Mexican army at the Alamo, but _____ they got their revenge.

- a. always
- b. never
- c. eventually
- d. during

9. Answer the following questions based on the sentence below.

In 1836, Sam Houston fought for the right of his family to live in Texas.

Who? _____

(did) What? fought for the right of his family to live

Where? _____

When? _____

10. **Vocabulary Word:** outnumber: to be of a greater number than.

Use the vocabulary word in a sentence: _____
