The Mexican War

Big Idea: Balance of Power

Lesson 1

Standards	7.4A Identify and discuss events and conflicts in the state of Texas
	7.9C Analyze the effects of geographical factors that influenced the Mexican War
	7.21B Analyze information by sequencing and identifying cause-and-effect relationships
Lesson Topic	The Mexican War Begins

Objectives	Key Vocabulary
CONTENT—Students will: • Learn that the dispute over who owned the land between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande was a major reason for the Mexican War. **LANGUAGE—Students will:** • Use key vocabulary in reading, writing, listening and speaking throughout the lesson. • Watch and listen to video, write responses in their notebooks, and contribute in whole-class discussion. • Listen to and/or read the lesson passage, and write question responses in their notebooks. • (In the review/assessment activity) Fill out the "Balance of Power" table to determine which side had more power at the start of the war, and to predict what will happen later.	• declare • claim • dispute • boundary

Materials	Preparation
• Student notebooks • Overhead projector and transparency markers • Video: "Zachary Taylor in the Disputed Territory" • Passages: "Causes of the War" (pgs. 326–328) & "War Declared (end reading at …cram in slaves) (pg. 328) • Transparency: Questions • Transparency: Map of Disputed Territories • Transparency: Balance of Power	• Post the objectives • Links to background

Motivation (Engagement/Linkages)   3 min.

- Display Transparency: Map of Disputed Territories.
    — *This week, we will learn about some of the disputes/conflicts that the United States had with Mexico.*
- Discuss the word *dispute*.
    — *Many of these disputes had to do with different groups fighting for land that is now part of Texas. We'll learn about how these disputes led to the Mexican War, as well as about the outcomes of the war and the lives of the people in Texas at the time.*
    — *Today we will learn about how the Mexican War began. Many Mexicans were afraid that the United States wanted to take over all of Mexico's land. They felt that the annexation of Texas was just the first step, so Mexico attempted to protect its land.*

Presentation   30 min.

Vocabulary   (10 min.)

- Introduce today's vocabulary and discuss "turn and talk" questions among pairs and/or whole group. Students write vocabulary terms and synonyms in their notebooks.

Video: "Zachary Taylor in the Disputed Territory"   (5 min.)

- Preview proper nouns:
    — *Zachary Taylor: U.S. general sent to protect Texas from attack*
    — *Rio Grande: same as Rio Bravo*
    — *So far, we have learned that Texas joined the United States and became a new state government.*
- Question students for understanding of the annexation of Texas.
    — *This made the relationship between the United States and Mexico even more fragile. Tensions grew after the annexation of Texas, as Mexicans did not want to recognize that Texas had joined the United States.*
- Introduce the video.
    — *Let's watch a short video about Zachary Taylor in the disputed territory. As you watch, try to answer the following: Which army was stronger and which country had more power?*
- Teacher summarizes the video, highlighting the question above by using a few responses from the students.

Teacher-led Reading: "Causes of the War" (pg. 326–328)
& "War Declared (end reading at …cram in slaves" (pg. 328)   (15 min.)

- State the big idea of the reading.
- Preview the reading by asking questions to help activate background knowledge and guide students' thinking about what they will learn.
- Read the questions (on transparency) that students will focus on during the reading.
    — *What were some of the causes of the Mexican War?*
    — *Why was it so important to Mexico that the Nueces River, not the Rio Grande be marked the border between Mexico and Texas (hint: think of balance of power)?*

- Model thinking aloud as you read in order to make sense of text.
- As you read, demonstrate how to generate different types of questions while allowing them to respond to these questions.

Practice   5 min.

- After reading the passage, in pairs, have students discuss and write responses to the above question/s in their notebooks.
- Once students are done, begin discussion of the questions while helping students to center on the big idea/s in the selection.

Review/Assessment   10 min.

- Introduce the activity.
  — *We've seen from the readings and video today how the United States took the first step toward claiming land and how Mexico responded.*
- Explain the meaning of the factors, like *morale of troops.*
  — *This marked the beginning of the war. Let's fill out the table below to determine which side had more power at the start of the war and to predict what will happen later. Add more factors to the list as you think of them. After filling out the table, complete the sentence below it.*
- Students fill out their graphic organizer and complete the sentences.
- Students contribute their answers in a whole-class discussion.

Balance of Power

Factors affecting balance of power	Mexico	United States
Battles won		
Morale of troops		
Financial situation		
Manpower		

- Therefore, the United States had _____ power compared to Mexico (more/less/the same).
- Prediction: The balance of power might shift in favor of _____ (the United States, Mexico).