

The Louisiana Territory Act-It-Out

Follow the narration below to create an act-it-out about the Louisiana Territory. When your teacher says *Action!*, the actors will move, act, and speak as described. When your teacher says *Audience!*, the audience members will gasp loudly and in unison.

Locations: Your teacher will point out the locations of Washington, D.C., the Louisiana Territory, Appalachian Mountains, Mississippi River, and New Orleans on the floor map, as well as France east of the map.

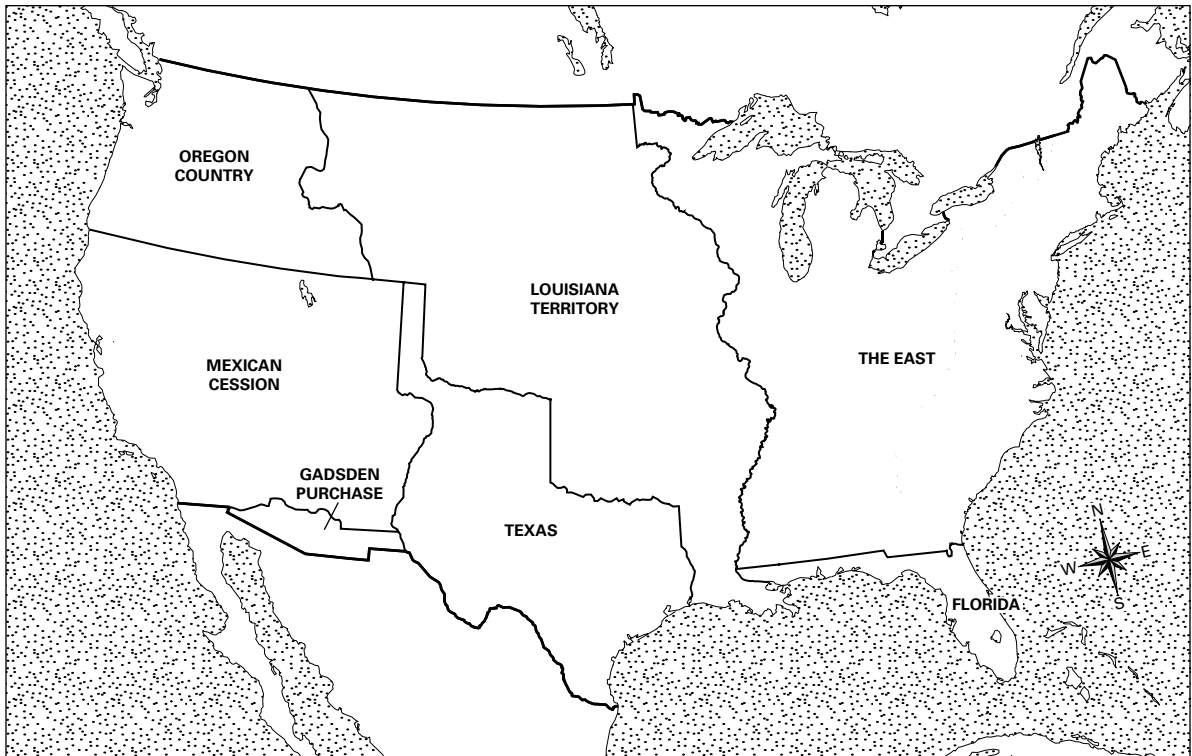
Characters and starting positions: two American farmers (east of the Appalachians), President Jefferson (Washington, D.C.), James Monroe (stay seated), French foreign minister (France)

Narration

- In the year 1800, France controlled the territory of Louisiana, which included the port city of New Orleans. Many **American farmers** were moving into and settling the region between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River. (*Action!*)
- These **farmers** worked hard tending and harvesting their crops. (*Action!*)
- When it came time for **farmers** to sell their crops, they would load them on boats and float them down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. (*Action!*)
- Once in New Orleans, the **farmers** would load the crops onto ships and send them to markets in cities on the East Coast or in Europe. (*Action!*)
- France had plans to settle Louisiana on the other side of the Mississippi with their own farmers. (*Audience!*)
- **American farmers** looked across the Mississippi, where French farmers might someday settle, and began to panic. They feared that only French farmers would be allowed to use the port of New Orleans to transport their crops. (*Action!*)
- **President Jefferson** understood the farmers' concerns. He called for **James Monroe** and said, "Go to France and offer to buy New Orleans for \$7.5 million." (*Action!*)
- **Monroe** set sail for France. When he arrived, he presented his offer to the **French foreign minister**. (*Action!*)
- To **Monroe's** surprise, the **foreign minister** said, "I will sell all of Louisiana to you for \$15 million." (*Action!*) (*Audience!*)
- **Monroe** was stunned. Instead of just one city, the nation would gain a piece of land as large as the entire country. "I'll take it!" he said. (*Action!*)
- Days later, **Monroe** signed the treaty that gave our nation the Louisiana Territory. (*Action!*)

Discussing U.S. Expansion

U.S. Expansion in the 1800s



Part 1: Discuss these questions in your group, and then take a class vote.

Question A: Was U.S. expansion into the Louisiana Territory justifiable?

Question B: Was U.S. expansion into Florida justifiable?

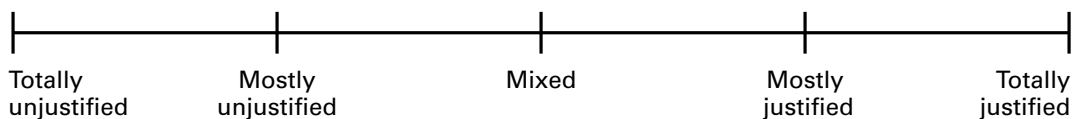
Question C: Was U.S. expansion into Texas justifiable?

Question D: Was U.S. expansion into Oregon Country justifiable?

Question E: Was U.S. expansion after the Mexican-American War justifiable?

Part 2: Discuss the question below with your group, and decide where your answer belongs on the spectrum. Prepare a spokesperson to explain and defend your position. When your teacher calls on your group, have your spokesperson begin by saying, *[Name of previous spokesperson], our group agrees/disagrees with your group's position because . . .*

How justifiable was U.S. expansion in the 1800s?



Florida Act-It-Out

Follow the narration below to create an act-it-out about Florida. When your teacher says *Action!*, the actors will move, act, and speak as described. When your teacher says *Audience!*, the audience members will say “Govern or get out!” loudly and in unison.

Locations: Your teacher will point out the locations of Florida, Georgia, and Washington, D.C., on the floor map.

Characters and starting places: Seminole Indian (Florida), slave (Georgia), President Monroe (Washington, D.C.), General Jackson (stay seated), two cabinet members and John Quincy Adams (seated together near Washington, D.C.)

Narration

- In the early 1800s, Florida was controlled by Spain. Sometimes **Seminole Indians** from Florida would cross the border, raid U.S. lands, and escape back into Florida. (*Action!*)
- Sometimes **slaves** from Georgia would escape to Florida, where **Seminole Indians** would hide them.
- The Spanish government seemed to have no control over its territory. Years later, problems with the Seminoles continued. In 1818, **President Monroe** called for **General Andrew Jackson**. (*Action!*)
- **Monroe** ordered **Jackson** to chase the Seminoles back into Florida. He added, however, “Do not invade Florida.” (*Action!*)
- **General Jackson** ignored **President Monroe’s** instructions. He took his army to Florida and captured Spanish military posts. (*Action!*)
- Government officials in Spain were furious and wanted **General Jackson** punished. **President Monroe** said, “I fear there will be war between the United States and Spain.” (*Action!*)
- **Monroe** went to his cabinet and asked, “What should I do?” (*Action!*)
- The **cabinet members** said, “Remove Jackson!” and demanded, “Apologize to Spain!” (*Action!*)
- One cabinet member, Secretary of State **John Quincy Adams**, disagreed. He took **President Monroe** aside and quietly explained his plan. (*Action!*)
- **Adams** convinced **Monroe** to stand firm and send a loud and clear message to Spain. (*Action!*) (*Audience!*)
- Adams’s plan worked. Rather than risk war with the United States, Spain decided to get out. **Adams** sat down and wrote the treaty, which bears his name and gave us Florida. (*Action!*)

Texas Act-It-Out

Follow the narration below to create an act-it-out about Texas. When your teacher says *Action!*, the actors will move, act, and speak as described. When your teacher says *Audience!*, the audience members will say “Remember the Alamo!” loudly and in unison.

Locations: Your teacher will point out the locations of Missouri and Texas on the floor map, as well as Mexico City south of the map.

Characters and starting places: Stephen F. Austin (Missouri), two American settlers/Texans (Missouri), General Santa Anna (Mexico City)

Narration

- In 1821, **Stephen F. Austin** moved to Texas to follow his father’s dream of starting a U.S. colony in this territory now controlled by Mexico. (*Action!*)
- By 1830, thousands of **American settlers** had joined Austin. Some even moved to Texas illegally. (*Action!*)
- Because of the illegal immigrants in Texas and other problems with the Americans, Mexican government officials ordered Texas closed to Americans. Some **American settlers** claimed “Unfair!” and called for revolution. (*Action!*)
- **Stephen F. Austin** calmed his fellow American settlers, now called **Texans**, and said he would travel to Mexico City to negotiate with the government. (*Action!*)
- When **Austin** arrived, he met with the new Mexican leader, **General Santa Anna**. First Austin said, “Reopen Texas.” Then he said, “Make Texas its own state.”(*Action!*)
- **Santa Anna** ignored him and jailed **Austin** for causing a rebellion. (*Action!*)
- Two years later, when **Austin** was released from jail, the **Texans** were still unhappy. They rose up in revolt. (*Action!*)
- Furious, **Santa Anna** and his army marched to Texas to crush the rebellion. (*Action!*)
- The worst battle for the Texans was at the Alamo, where every Texan was killed. This only spurred on American supporters, who flooded into Texas to help and cried . . . (*Audience!*)
- Just one month later, **Santa Anna** and his troops were sleeping in the afternoon near a river. (*Action!*)
- Suddenly, **Santa Anna** and his troops were awoken by the charge of the Texans. (*Audience!*) (*Action!*)
- The **Texans** won the battle and captured **Santa Anna**. (*Action!*)
- Mexican rule in Texas ended, and Texas became an independent country. Many wondered for how long, but for now the **Texans** cheered their victory and the Lone Star Republic. (*Action!*)

Oregon Country Act-It-Out

Follow the narration below to create an act-it-out about Oregon Country. When your teacher says *Action!*, the actors will move, act, and speak as described. When your teacher says *Audience!*, the audience members will say “All of Oregon or none!” loudly and in unison.

Locations: Your teacher will point out the locations of the Rocky Mountains, Washington, D.C., and Oregon on the floor map.

Characters and starting places: Jedediah Smith (Rockies), three settlers (near Washington, D.C.), James K. Polk (Washington, D.C.)

Narration

- In the early 1800s, many nations claimed Oregon Country. By 1825, however, only two nations held firm in their claim. The United States and Great Britain agreed to a peaceful joint occupation of Oregon. Circumstances would soon change, however, and some Americans would call for more. (*Audience!*)
- It was very difficult to reach Oregon in the early 1800s. In 1824, a trapper named **Jedediah Smith** was excited to find a low, flat passage through the Rocky Mountains. (*Action!*)
- Now the way was wide open for **settlers**. They heard that Oregon was a “pioneer’s paradise,” and many of them packed up their belongings and moved from the East to Oregon. (*Action!*)
- When **settlers** arrived in Oregon, they were thrilled by the fertile soil, amazed by the tall trees, and excited by the sunny weather. (*Action!*)
- In 1844, a man named James K. Polk ran for president. He wanted the nation to expand across North America. One of his campaign slogans was repeatedly heard throughout the nation. (*Audience!*)
- **James K. Polk** stood in front of voters and promised that the United States would one day own all of Oregon Country, even if it had to fight Great Britain for it. (*Action!*)
- Later that year, **Polk** was elected president. Americans who favored expansion celebrated. (*Audience!*)
- Once in office, Polk changed his mind. He decided it wasn’t worth a war to gain all of Oregon Country. Instead, he made a deal to divide Oregon Country between the United States and Great Britain. The **settlers** in Oregon cheered for the diplomacy that secured their land. (*Action!*)

Mexican-American War Act-It-Out

Follow the narration below to create an act-it-out about the Mexican-American War. When your teacher says *Action!*, the actors will move, act, and speak as described. When your teacher says *Audience!*, the audience members will say “It is our manifest destiny!” loudly and in unison.

Locations: Your teacher will point out the locations of Washington, D.C., the Rio Grande, Nueces River, New Mexico, and California on the floor map, as well as Mexico south of the map.

Characters and starting places: President Polk (Washington, D.C.), two Mexican officials (Rio Grande), two U.S. soldiers (near Rio Grande), three more U.S. soldiers to play the U.S. Army (stay seated)

Narration

- In 1845, Mexico owned the California and New Mexico territories. **President Polk** offered to buy these territories, but Mexico refused. Polk was disappointed and began pacing the floor, trying to think of a way to gain these lands. (*Action!*)
- Relations between Mexico and the United States were strained at this time. The United States had recently annexed Texas and claimed the Rio Grande as the border. **Mexican officials** pointed to the Rio Grande and said, “The Rio Grande is in *our* land!” (*Action!*)
- These **Mexican officials** also pointed to the Nueces River and said, “You belong here, north of the Nueces River!” This conflict would only become worse. (*Action!*)
- One day in 1846, **U.S. soldiers** were patrolling along the Rio Grande. (*Action!*)
- Believing that the U.S. soldiers were on Mexican land, a group of Mexican soldiers attacked. When it was all over, 16 **U.S. soldiers** were wounded or lay dead on the ground. (*Action!*)
- When **President Polk** heard the news, he was outraged. “Mexico has invaded our land!” he declared. (*Action!*)
- Congress declared war on Mexico, and some Americans celebrated. (*Audience!*)
- The Mexican-American War raged for the next two years. First, the **U.S. army** invaded New Mexico and easily took the territory without firing a shot. (*Action!*)
- The **U.S. army** then invaded California and captured the territory with very few problems. (*Action!*)
- Next, the **U.S. army** invaded Mexico, where they faced fierce fighting. (*Action!*)
- Eventually, the Mexican army surrendered. By early 1848, the United States had won the war and gained control of half of Mexico’s lands. Many Americans cheered and celebrated. (*Audience!*)