

History of the Border (for teacher use only)

In 1803, the United States bought the Louisiana Purchase from France. For the first time, the U.S. and Mexico shared a border. The border was a gray area that was not clearly defined for another sixteen years. The Adams-Onis Treaty of 1819 used the Sabine, Red, and Arkansas Rivers as a rough border.

The next change came in 1845 when Texas was annexed by the United States. Texas had fought a war with Mexico in 1836 to gain its independence. The Rio Grande River became the new border, but it was disputed by Mexico. This resulted in a war that changed the border again.

In 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican-American War. This treaty gave the United States a huge amount of land that would become the states of California, Nevada, and Utah. Parts of what would become Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Wyoming were also included in what would be called the Mexican Cession. The border was now pushed south to where it is today except for land south of the Gila River in southern Arizona and the panhandle of New Mexico. The border ran east from San Diego to the Colorado River, followed the Gila River, and then dropped down to a line (incorrectly drawn) that went to El Paso.

The final addition to U.S. territory came in 1853 with the Gadsden Purchase. For the sum of \$10 million, the United States bought the land south of the Gila River in Arizona and the panhandle area of New Mexico, which was south of the incorrectly drawn line from El Paso. The border was now complete.

History of the Border Chart

Year	Agreement Name	Border Located

History of the Border Chart-Key

Year	Agreement Name	Border Located
1803	Louisiana Purchase	border unclear
1819	Adams-Onis Treaty	Sabine, Red, and Arkansas Rivers
1845	Annexation of Texas	Rio Grande River
1848	Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo	San Diego east to Colorado River, Gila River, line east to El Paso
1853	Gadsden Purchase	current border with Mexico

Borderlands Issues Information Sheet

Because of changes in its location over time, the U.S.-Mexico borderlands have certain issues that affect both countries. Some of these issues have positive implications, others are not so positive. You will read about four areas and the issues that come with them. They are: immigration, economics, crime, and the environment. Record the name of each area and its issues on the Borderlands Issues Chart as you read.

Immigration, both legal and illegal, has always been associated with the borderlands. Historically, people have migrated north to Mexican territory that is now part of the United States. These land routes took people to San Antonio, Texas; Santa Fe, New Mexico; Tucson, Arizona,;and coastal California. Even when the border changed, these migration routes continued to be used. Americans also migrated into Mexican territory in Texas, New Mexico, and California. The border was more of a gateway than a barrier to the movement of people. In fact, the U.S. government even created a guest worker program, called the Braceros Program, which encouraged Mexican workers to come to the United States on a temporary basis during the 1940's and 1950's to help ease a shortage of U.S. workers due to World War II.

When the Braceros Program was ended, illegal immigration became a problem. People seeking jobs and a better way of life began to cross the border illegally. At first, this was just considered a minor issue, but as numbers increased and working conditions for migrant workers got worse, the problem grew in the United States. The United Farmworkers Association began to point out the low wages, long hours, and unsafe working conditions of migrant workers. Their demands for equal rights pointed out the rising number of people entering illegally. The U.S. government began to patrol the border to catch illegal crossers. As enforcement increased, the routes people took shifted to desert regions of the borderlands. These routes proved deadly. Unprepared for the heat and distances to be covered, those crossing illegally often died. In 2002-2003, 352 people died crossing the border. Both Mexico and the U.S. have tried various means to stop the flow of people, but none have worked. The current plan calls for fortifying the border with fences, surveillance mechanisms, sensors, and more border patrol agents. In spite of this, hundreds of thousands of people enter illegally every year.

The economics of the borderlands has a history as well. Fur trappers, ranchers, and miners from both countries have taken advantage of the resources available no matter where the border was situated. Tourism also had a role in Americans going to border communities for less

expensive goods and entertainment. Today, Americans travel to Mexico for prescription drugs and medical services that can much less than they are in the United States. The streets of border communities are lined with pharmacies, dental and optical clinics, and even surgeons. U.S. companies send parts to Mexico to be assembled in maquiladoras. These foreign-owned factories can assemble the products for re-export more cheaply than it can be done in the U.S. Mexico also sends many products to the United States. In fact, Mexico is the #1 supplier of produce to the U.S. Around 4 billion tons of produce enter the United States from Mexico every year. The flow of money sent home by immigrants, both legal and illegal, is also great. It is estimated that over \$9 billion was sent to Mexico in just one year. This money was used to improve the lives of their families and communities. Finally, the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA, greatly expanded the flow of goods between the two nations. However, one issue is slowing things down, and that is the issue of Mexican trucks on U.S. roads. Currently, trucks from both nations arrive at the border and transfer their cargo onto other trucks for transport within the other nation. At the heart of the problem is concern over the safety of and fuel emissions from Mexican trucks. U.S. officials claim Mexican trucks do not meet U.S. safety and fuel emissions standards; Mexican officials say they do. In spite of this, goods and money flow both ways over the border, benefiting both nations.

Crime along the border is as old as the shifting border. From American fur trappers illegally trapping in Mexico; to raids on both sides of the border by Native American tribes; to Pancho Villa's famous 1916 raid on Columbus, New Mexico; the frontier nature of the border has always meant crime. Both nations have responded with increased law enforcement officers, a military presence (several border communities began as U.S. military installations), and even invasion. Today, drug trafficking and human smuggling account for the majority of criminal activity in the borderlands. Drug traffickers send illegal substances into the U.S. through tunnels under the border, on planes, in cars and trucks, and with people. They make millions of dollars on this trade. Because of that, they resort to violence to protect their trade routes and drugs. Drug lords will not hesitate to hurt or kill anyone who tries to stop it. This violence often prevents authorities on both sides of the border from doing their job. Human smugglers, called coyotes, also resort to violence to ensure their human cargo makes it across the border. It is not uncommon for border patrol officials to have rocks thrown at them or guns fired. High speed chases have occurred with vehicles full of migrants on highways when coyotes fail to stop at border checkpoints; some end in tragic accidents. Even the illegal immigrants are victims. Coyotes have abandoned their human

cargo in the middle of the desert to figure out how to survive. Others have stuffed migrants into sealed trucks with poor ventilation and no food or water for long trips; sadly, some of these people have died as a result. Other coyotes have held migrants hostage in drop houses (homes designated as safe havens for migrants) until their families pay even more money for their release. This crime along the border harms many innocent people and is overwhelming law enforcement officials on both sides. There seems to be no solution in sight.

The environment is an area of recent concern in the borderlands. In the past, both nations blamed the other for air pollution that floated over the border from industrial and mining operations. Today, the United States complains that untreated sewage from Mexico is polluting rivers and coastlines in the U.S. This is due to accidental spills and outdated facilities in Mexico. Mexico complains that the United States is reducing the flow of water in the Colorado and Rio Grande Rivers that is needed for farming. This is because the U.S has built dams that restrict the flow by supplying needed water to American farms and communities. Illegal immigrants leave behind large amounts of trash when they cross the border. This includes clothing, water bottles, food containers, plastic bags, and other items they no longer need. This trash marks the points of entry and paths illegal crossers use and pollutes the land. Acres of grassland and desert have been burned by fires accidentally set by the campfires of illegal crossers. The campfires were built to keep warm during winter crossings and were not properly put out. And finally, Americans against the building of border barriers point out the effect they will have on border habitats and animals. The clearing of the land near the barriers will harm or destroy habitats. The barriers will also block the migration routes of certain animals. The borderlands environment is fragile and one of a kind. The current issues facing it may be irreversible.

As you have read, there are many issues that exist in the borderlands shared by the United States and Mexico. They are complex and the solutions will not be easy. As history has shown, they will not go away on their own.

Border Issues Chart

Immigration	Economics	Crime	Environment

Border Issues Chart-Key

Immigration	Economics	Crime	Environment
Illegal immigration	Prescription drugs	Drug trafficking	Untreated sewage from Mexico
Border deaths	Medical services	Human smuggling	U.S. restricting flow of rivers
Fortifying the border	Maquiladoras Produce supplier Money sent home Mexican trucks	Attacks on border patrol agents Crimes against illegal crossers	Trash left by illegal crossers Accidental fires by illegal crossers Border barriers harming habitats Border barriers blocking animal migration routes

Borderlands Assessment

Directions: Put a T for true or an F for false in the space before each of the following statements concerning the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

- 1. The U.S. states of California, Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico form the border with Mexico.**
- 2. The U.S.-Mexico border has remained the same throughout history.**
- 3. The Gadsden Purchase completed the border as we know it today.**
- 4. People have migrated across the border in both directions for a long time.**
- 5. Illegal immigration is not a problem.**
- 6. Mexico is the #7 supplier of produce to the United States.**
- 7. Americans travel to Mexico for cheaper prescription drugs.**
- 8. Drug trafficking is one type of criminal activity found in the borderlands.**
- 9. There are no environmental problems along the U.S.-Mexico border.**
- 10. Border barriers could result in habitat destruction.**

Borderlands Assessment Key

1. T

2. F

3. T

4. T

5. F

6. F

7. T

8. T

9. F

10. T

Borderlands Writing Prompt

You are a reporter for your school newspaper. The editor has assigned you the task of writing an article on United States-Mexico immigration. You need to write about 5 fictional students who are immigrants from Mexico. Your article's focus is to analyze why they and their families came to the United States (What were the pull factors?). Each immigrant should have a different reason for coming to the U.S.

Your article will be evaluated on Ideas and Content (how well do you discuss the issue) and Conventions (spelling, grammar, sentence structure). Use the check list below to guide your writing.

I have an introductory paragraph which identifies the topic I am writing about _____

I have at least 5 paragraphs that support/explain my topic_____

I have included who, what, where, when, and why facts in my paragraphs_____

I have a concluding paragraph_____

I have used correct spelling and grammar_____