

History of the Border **(Background Information for Maps)**

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.

Name _____ - **History of the Border Chart**

Year	Agreement Name	Border Located

History of the Border Chart-Answer 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 Introduction

Because of its international scope, 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 (immigration, economics, crime, and the environment) and the issues that come with them. As you read the following introduction, record key issues under the correct area on the Borderlands Issues Chart.

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 territories of Texas, New Mexico, and California in the 1800s. 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 1940s and 1950s to help ease a shortage of U.S. workers.

When the Braceros Program was ended, illegal immigration became more of an issue. People seeking jobs and a better way of life began to cross the border without documentation. 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 without documentation. 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 the desert often died. It is estimated that about 10,000 people have died crossing the border since 1994. Both Mexico and the U.S. have tried various means to stop the flow of people. The current plan calls for fortifying the border with fences, surveillance mechanisms, sensors, and more border patrol agents.

Almost 800,000 young undocumented immigrants (who were brought by their parents before they were 18 years old) currently reside in the U.S. In an effort to legalize their residency in the U.S., the **Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM)** has been proposed in Congress. It allows for these young people to have a path to citizenship if certain requirements are met. For many of these DREAMers, they have gone to American schools and have little association with their birth country. They very much wish to become U.S. citizens but because of their illegal entry to the country, they cannot qualify without returning to their country of birth. The DREAM Act has still not been passed.

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 cost much less than 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 70% of our vegetables and 40% of our fruits come from Mexico every year. The flow of money sent home by immigrants, both legal and undocumented, is also great. It is estimated that over \$30 billion was sent to Mexico in 2017. This money was used to improve the lives of their families and communities. In the 1990s, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) greatly expanded the flow of goods between the two nations. A new trade agreement, called the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), was signed into law in 2020 and replaces NAFTA.

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 unlawful activities could take place. Both nations have responded with increased numbers of 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 billions 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. Coyotes have abandoned their human cargo in the middle of the desert. 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 (U.S. homes used to hide the human cargo) 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.

The environment is an area of recent concern in the borderlands. In the past, both nations blamed each 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 in Mexico. It is true that the U.S has built dams to facilitate the supply water for 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 migrant crossers use and pollutes the land. Acres of grassland and desert have been burned by fires accidentally set by the campfires of crossers. The campfires were built by migrants to keep warm during winter and were not properly extinguished. 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 barriers are going through lands sacred to Native Americans or in protected wilderness areas. The borderlands environment is fragile and one of a kind.

Name _____

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	Attacks on border patrol agents	Trash left by illegal crossers
DREAM Act	Produce supplier	Crimes against migrant crossers	Accidental fires by illegal crossers
	Money sent home		Border barriers harming habitats
			Border barriers blocking animal migration routes
			Border barrier in sacred or wilderness lands

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. NAFTA is the current trade agreement with Mexico.
- _____ 5. DREAMers are guest workers in the Bracero program.
- _____ 6. Mexico provides very little of the fruits and vegetables consumed in the United States.
- _____ 7. Americans travel to Mexico for cheaper prescription drugs.
- _____ 8. Drug trafficking is a large problem between the US-Mexico.
- _____ 9. All issues with the Mexico-U.S. borderlands are at the local level.
- _____ 10. Border barriers could result in habitat destruction.

Borderlands Assessment **Answer Key**

1. T
2. F
3. T
4. F
5. F
6. F
7. T
8. T
9. F
10. T

Borderlands— Writing an Argument Your Turn

Pick one of the following topics. Research the topic using a variety of resources keeping in mind that some of the sources you will find will be bias on the issue. Write an argument to supporting your claims. Your argument can be in support of a bill or program (USMCA, etc.), or it can be a solution to a problem (drug trafficking, etc.).

Topics:

- The Border Wall
- DREAM Act or DREAMers
- Immigration Policies with Mexico
- Guest Worker Programs with Mexico
- United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)
- Human Trafficking between Mexico and U.S.
- Drug Trafficking between Mexico and U.S.
- Immigration Policies and Impact on the Borderlands Environment

Scoring Guide

Requirement	Points Possible	Points Earned
Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.	20	
Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience’s knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.	20	
Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.	10	
Establish and maintain a style and tone appropriate to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.	10	
Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.	10	
Document sources used to research and write the argument.	10	
Total	80	