

# THE TEXAS RANGERS IN THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR

**Grade Level Focus:** 5th

**Topic:** The Texas Rangers and the Mexican-American War

**Compelling Question:** How did news coverage of the Texas Rangers during the Mexican-American War shape the nation's perception of them?

**TEKS:**

- Social Studies: 5.4(C)
- Language Arts: 11(A), 12(B)

**Materials:** document with an image of Texas Rangers and an image of the US army; worksheet with an image of Texas Ranger and a newspaper quote

**Background Information:**

Things began changing for the Texas Rangers in 1845 when Texas became part of the United States. Mexico officially declared war on the US in 1846 because it seemed to Mexico like the U.S. had stolen Texas from them and a dispute over the boundaries of Texas. The Texas Rangers served as scouts in the United States army and significantly contributed to the U.S. winning the war in 1848. Many of the Mexican and American newspaper correspondents called the Texans "Texas Rangers", even though they were technically part of the U.S. Army. The Mexican-American War and the Texans' exploits in it brought them national attention for the first time. The Texans would become known for their fearless assaults at the battles of Monterrey and Buena Vista, as well as their merciless treatment of the Mexican guerrilla troops. The sensational way the "Texas Rangers" were reported created a perception of the Rangers that would stand the test of time.

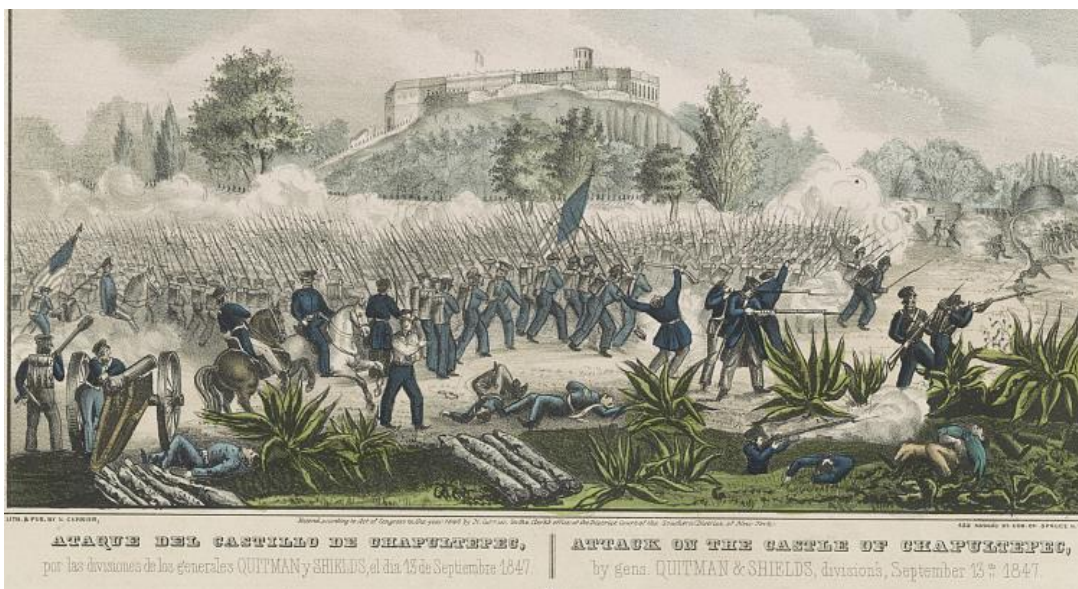
Engage	<p>What differences do you see between the Texas Rangers from the 1840s and the US Army?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display document with comparison images</li> <li>• Ask students what differences they see</li> </ul>
Explore	<p>Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask students how they think the difference in visual appearance between the Texans and the US troops would have affected how journalists reported on the war and the Texans.</li> <li>• Ask students why they think the journalists reported the Texans to be Rangers, even though they were in fact part of the US Army.</li> </ul>
Explain	<p>Newspaper Account</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have students read the quote from a newspaper about the Texans in the Mexican-American War. It is printed at the top of the worksheet and you can also display it on a projector.</li> <li>• Discuss the words that the journalist used and ask students why they think the journalist chose those words and what kind of image of the Rangers did they create?</li> </ul>



Elaborate/ Evaluate	<p data-bbox="342 180 1421 220"><b>Write Your Own Article</b></p> <ul data-bbox="342 220 1421 367" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="342 220 1421 367">• Ask students to write their own newspaper article describing the Texans fighting in the Mexican-American War. They can base their article on only the quote from the “Explain” phase and the image on the worksheet. That is all the information many Americans had.</li></ul>
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## COMPARISON: THE TEXANS TO THE U.S. ARMY



*Attack on the Castle Chapultepec, print by Nathaniel Currier, 1848.  
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (file no. LC-USZC2-1948)*



*Texas Ranger. Watercolor by military illustrator Joseph Hefter, 1847. Hardin, Stephen. Elite Series: The Texas Rangers. London: Osprey Publishing, 1991.*

# NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS OF THE TEXAS RANGERS

Newspapers from both the United States and Mexico wrote extensively about the Mexican-American War and the Texas Rangers. Here is a quote from an American war correspondent:

“Perhaps you would like to know who these terrific beings are. They are nothing more or less than Jack Hays and his Texan Rangers, with their old-fashioned maple stock rifles lying across their saddles, the butts of two large pistols sticking out of the [saddle] holsters, and a pair of Colt’s six-shooters belted around their waists...

The [people of Mexico] believe them to be a sort of semi-civilized, half-man, half devil, with a slight mixture of lion and the snapping turtle, and have a more holy horror of them than they have of the evil saint himself.”



Harper’s Weekly, 1861. Hardin, Stephen. *Elite Series: The Texas Rangers*. London: Osprey Publishing, 1991.

Based on the image to the left and the quote above, write your own description of the Texas Rangers.

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