

Remember The Alamo



PUPIL WORKBOOK

In this unit you will:

- Hear the story of the heroes of the Alamo
- Practise your research skills
- Use your imagination to write a diary entry
- Find out about Scots-Irish hero Davy Crockett
- Listen to a folk song of the event
- Discuss a social issue
- Learn to 'read' and analyse a media text
- Review a film
- Create your own advertisement
- Listen to and write a rap



What Happened At The Alamo

This is your chance to do some independent research. By the end of your project you will need to know

- What happened before the Siege of the Alamo
- What happened during the siege
- What happened after the siege was over
- When it all happened
- Who was there at the siege (on both sides)
- Why this event was important



SPECULATE

Why do you think the story of the Alamo has passed into folklore and is still remembered today?

Task

When you have gathered all your information you must present it for others. This could take the form of :-

- A wall display
- A talk to the class
- A PowerPoint presentation
- A feature for a radio programme
- An excerpt from a TV documentary
- A cartoon strip version of the events
- An eye-witness account (oral/taped or written)



Website to get
you started:

www.thealamo.org

Where Was The Alamo?

- Look at a map of the U.S.A. either in an atlas or on the Internet
- Find the state of Texas.
- Now find San Antonio

This was the site of the Alamo and you can still find the building there today.



What Was The Alamo?

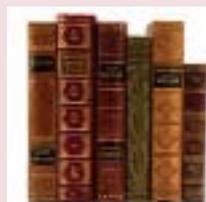
Work began on the site in 1724 to build a mission station for Catholic missionaries. The Alamo was originally named Misión San Antonio de Valero and was the home of missionaries and the Indians who joined their faith.

In 1793, Spanish officials (Texas belonged to Spain) secularized San Antonio's five missions and gave their lands to the Indian residents. The Indians farmed the fields - which now belonged to them - and participated in the growing community of San Antonio.

At the beginning of the 19th century, a Spanish cavalry unit was stationed at the former mission. The soldiers named the old mission the Alamo in honour of their hometown Alamo de Parras, Coahuila. The military commander established the first recorded hospital in Texas in the Long Barrack. The Alamo was home to both Revolutionaries and Royalists during Mexico's ten-year struggle for independence. The military - Spanish, Rebel, and then Mexican - continued to occupy the Alamo until the Texas Revolution.

Find Out

What does the word secularized mean?



The Alamo

The story of the siege of the Alamo is one of the most famous episodes in the history of the West. The brave men who defended the Spanish mission have gone down in American history and folklore as heroes. This is their story.....

The Alamo was originally a Spanish Mission building which was built in 1758. It was made out of adobe and limestone.

In 1793 the mission was secularised and the local community became a self-governing pueblo (town). At the beginning of the 19th century Spanish forces in East Texas were mobilised to meet threats from firstly the French and then from the Americans after the Louisiana Purchase.



In 1810 a war broke out when Mexico sought its independence from Spain. During the 10 years of war the Alamo changed hands between the opposing forces on several occasions until Mexico gained independence in 1821.

After this war, more and more Americans moved into Texas. First came the trappers and mountain men. They were followed by others who wanted to settle this new country and claim land to set up farms. Most of these settlers were from Alabama and Tennessee and many of them were of Ulster-Scots descent. The initials "G.T.T."* became a frequent sight on doors. Can you guess what they meant?* The land was good and the Mexicans offered freedom from taxes. Every family moving in was allowed to purchase over 4000 acres at only 4 cents an acre. As a result, by 1830 75% of the population of Texas was American.

On 6th April 1830 the Mexican Congress passed a law forbidding any further immigration. This law also suspended all unfulfilled colonisation contracts and required all foreigners to carry passports issued by the Mexican consulate. The Texians opposed this. In 1834 Santa Anna established himself as dictator and ordered the arrest of the Texian's leaders.

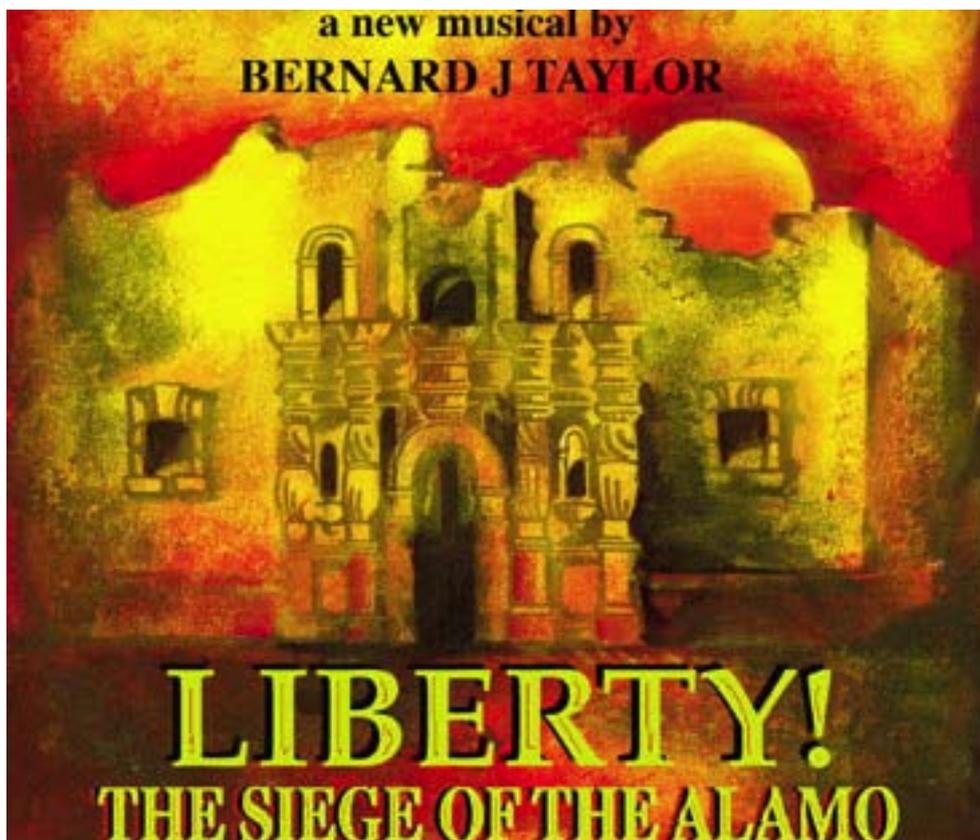
During the Texas War of Independence (from Mexico) the Alamo endured 2 sieges and changed hands 3 times. This is the story of the notorious final siege.

*G.T.T. = *Gone to Texas*

The Alamo

“If we succeed the Country is ours. It is immense in extent, and fertile in its soil and will amply reward all our toil. If we fail, then death in the cause of liberty will amply reward all our toil. If we fail, then death in the cause of liberty and humanity is not cause for shuddering. Our rifles are by our side, and choice guns they are, we know what awaits us, and are prepared to meet it.”

The words of Daniel Cloud who died at the Alamo on 6 March 1836 in a letter to a relative.



Numerous books, several films and even a musical have been written about the siege at the Alamo.

Derry's Walls To The Alamo

Read the article entitled “Derry’s Walls to the Alamo” on the next page. It was written by Gerry Anderson and published in the *Belfast Telegraph*. Then answer the following questions:

1. To help you understand what Gerry Anderson is writing about find synonyms for the following words :

unparalleled
behest
provisionally
fabled
virginal
aftermath
scepticism
alleged
vibrant



2. Gerry Anderson mentions a number of famous people both from the present and the past. Choose one of these people and find out 5 facts about them.
3. Explain in your own words what Gerry Anderson’s point of view is about the Scots Irish in relation to other Irish Americans.
4. What is the ‘tone’ of the article. Give examples from the text to support your answer.



Derry's Walls To The Alamo

Life according to Gerry Anderson

It's been a week of unparalleled excitement. In the wind-blown vastness of Kincasslagh, Cliff Richard emerged from the crypt as Daniel O'Donnell's 'Belle of the Ball' and the good people of Tyrone are reeling yet from the heady excitement of being allowed to look after Shiny Sam for a year.

Me? I'm looking forward to a trip to the heartland.

No, not football-crazy mid-Ulster this time. I'm going to the real Ulster Heartland on the other side of the Atlantic. At the behest of BBC Radio Four, I'm going to put together, a short series of programmes provisionally titled 'The Forgotten Americans'.

In a few weeks I will make my way down the fabled 'Wagon Trail', following in the wheel-ruts of the Scots-Irish who left Northern Ireland during the 18th century to carve out new lives in this virginal fruited land.

I will sweep leisurely through Pennsylvania, the Carolinas, Kentucky and Tennessee in a bid to discover if any trace of certain aspects of our national character survives. Hopefully, I will be disappointed. Later, I shall explain why.

Ever since the citizens of Northern Ireland were comprehensively 'Riverdanced' by our Southern counterparts, an irritating bone of contention has been the failure of outsiders to acknowledge that the Scots-Irish played a huge part in making America what it is today.

In the simplest of terms, the world

romantically believes instead that the post-Famine Irish made America. Daniel Day-Lewis, Bono, Maureen O'Hara and the Kennedy dynasty have all seen to that. Nothing short of a triumph in public relations.

And, of course, it's true that millions fled to America in the aftermath of the Famine to get a bite to eat and kill Indians. But they did not scatter and till the land as the Ulster-Scots did a century before them. Certainly not. Would you?

Any man who had managed to avoid starving in Ireland by the skin of his teeth would look upon resuming the farming life with a certain degree of scepticism.

And so it turned out to be the case. The post-Famine Irish huddled together for meagre comfort in cities like New York and Boston, thereby retaining forever their sense of being Irish. Numbers matter.

A century before that though, the Davy Crocketts and Kit Carsons of this world blazed a trail, tilled the land and became John Wayne and Burt Lancaster, the men from Mayo and west Cork who got fed up in the tenements of New York, joined the US Cavalry and fell heavily at Little Big Horn. It's an altogether different route.

And, lest you scoff, both John Wayne and Burt Lancaster had strong family ties with Ulster.

Davy Crockett, in particular, is a peculiar case in that he didn't seem to learn much from his family history.



**Davy Crockett...
out of the frying pan into the fire**

The original Crocketts spent what were alleged to be uncomfortable days in Derry during the Siege. Poor Davy did the same thing at the Alamo. He wasn't so lucky. Nine of those who died at the Alamo were born in Ireland and dozens of the other fallen had strong Scots-Irish connections.

It's a fascinating subject and accounts for the recent surge of interest in the language and history of Ulster-Scots. Nearly all of us have some of that heady blood flowing in our veins, and it's a fine thing that Ulster-Scots have woken up to the fact that (just like their secure Southern dancing, leaping, fiddle-sawing fellow islanders) they have a vibrant culture of their own that consists of something more than bawling 'I Belong to Glasgow' on a slow Saturday night.

Oh, about surviving aspects of our natural character. I confidently expect to hear no bickering about flags and emblems. The Scots-Irish purged that from their system a long time ago. Maybe we could too.....

Edited extract of an article by Gerry Anderson in the Belfast Telegraph October 2003

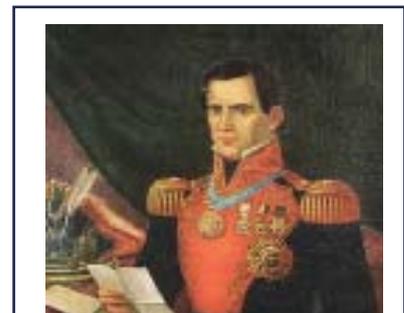
THE 13 DAY SIEGE NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN

The siege of the Alamo started on Tuesday, 23rd February 1836 and ended on Sunday, 6th March. The Mexican leader, Santa Anna, could have simply bypassed the fort and moved his troops on but because his brother-in-law, General Martin Perfecto de Cos, had been defeated there the previous year, he had a personal reason for wanting to conquer the old mission and defeat the armed men inside.

DAY 1

Rumours that Santa Anna and his forces were only 8 miles away, led many of the locals in San Antonio to pack up and leave. At 1pm a soldier in the belfry of San Fernando Church, rang the bell to warn of the enemies' approach and Travis ordered his men to fall back to the mission. These 146 men were a collection of volunteers and regular army under the joint command of Travis and Bowie. By 3pm Santa Anna's men had control of San Antonio without a shot being fired. Travis placed David Crockett and his band of Tennesseans at the defence perimeter where it was most vulnerable.

Bowie wanted to negotiate with the Mexicans and sent a messenger. Santa Anna was not interested. His aide replied: "As the Aide-de-Camp of His Excellency, the President of the Republic, I reply to you, according to the order of His Excellency, that the Mexican army cannot come to terms under any conditions with rebellious foreigners to whom there is no other recourse left, if they wish to save their lives, than to place themselves immediately at the disposal of the Supreme Government from whom alone they may expect clemency after some considerations are taken up. God and Liberty!"



Santa Anna said:

"I neither ask nor give quarter."

What do you think he meant?

Travis assembled his forces and told them Santa Anna's terms. They pledged never to surrender.

Words

Siege	bypass	belfry	perimeter	negotiate
Recourse	clemency	pledged		

DAY 2

During the night the Mexicans had built a gun emplacement of two 8-pounders and a howitzer. They kept up continuous firing during the day. None of the cannons were big enough to seriously damage the walls but they prevented men and supplies going in and out. Inside there were not enough men to defend the Alamo. Travis would have needed about 500. He had too few artillery men to even fire all the cannons. They did not have a large supply of food or gunpowder. Water was in short supply too and the men got little sleep due to the constant enemy fire.

Bowie had been ill for some time and today he took a turn for the worst. He could not even get out of bed. Travis was now in full command. He wrote to "The People of Texas & all Americans in the world" -

Fellow Citizens & Compatriots

I am besieged by a thousand or more of the Mexicans under Santa Anna—The enemy has demanded surrender at discretion, otherwise the garrison are to be put to the sword, if the fort is taken—I have answered the demand with cannon shot & our flag still waves proudly from the walls—I shall never surrender or retreat. Then I call on you in the name of Liberty, of patriotism & everything dear to the American character, to come to our aid with all dispatch— the enemy is receiving reinforcements daily & will no doubt increase to three or four thousand in four or five days. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself as long as possible & die like a soldier who never forgets what is due to his honour and that of his country—Victory or Death!

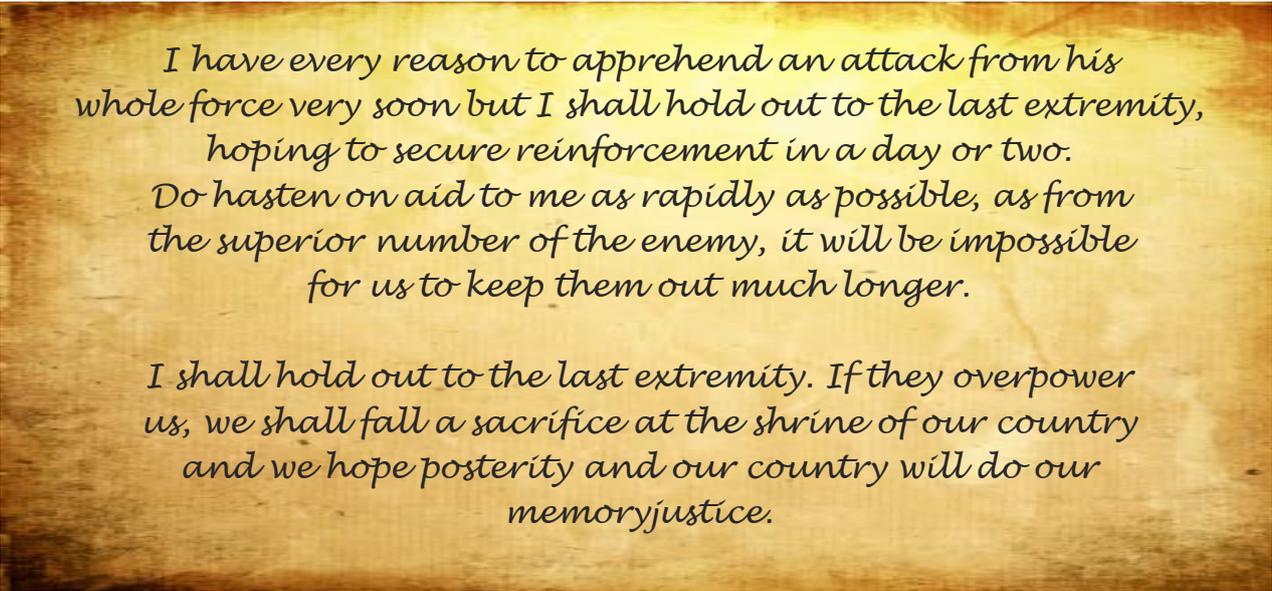
Lt Col William Barret Travis

On this second night Santa Anna began to have Mexican music played interspersed with heavy gunfire. This was to keep the "Texians", as they were known, in the fort awake. It was a type of simple psychological warfare.

DAY 3

It was a hot day for February. From early morning the Mexicans kept firing at the mission station while those inside kept under cover. Santa Anna moved over 400 soldiers into position towards the Alamo.

Crockett, Travis and the others inside had an advantage over the Mexicans. They were using long rifles with a range of 200 yards while the Mexicans used muskets which were only effective from 70 yards. For two hours the Texians kept the soldiers pinned down over 100 yards away and Travis wrote to Sam Houston: "David Crockett was seen at all points animating men to do their duty." Eventually the Mexicans were forced to retreat but Travis knew this was only a temporary setback and they would return with even greater forces. He wrote urgently to Sam Houston:



I have every reason to apprehend an attack from his whole force very soon but I shall hold out to the last extremity, hoping to secure reinforcement in a day or two. Do hasten on aid to me as rapidly as possible, as from the superior number of the enemy, it will be impossible for us to keep them out much longer.

I shall hold out to the last extremity. If they overpower us, we shall fall a sacrifice at the shrine of our country and we hope posterity and our country will do our memory justice.

During the night the temperature dropped. Under cover of darkness and constant firing the Mexicans moved their artillery even nearer.

A council of Texians met inside the mission and decided to send a messenger on Jim Bowie's horse to seek help from Sam Houston.

During the night nine men are thought to have deserted the Alamo under cover of darkness. They informed Santa Anna where the Texians had hidden at least 50 rifles.

DAY 4

A cold day with the strong wind dropping the temperatures to just above freezing. At first light a Mexican cavalry detachment was beaten back by rifle fire. The men inside the Alamo spent the day strengthening their defences, digging ditches and earthworks under constant enemy fire. They only fired back when absolutely necessary as ammunition was low. Their supplies of wood to burn to keep warm and to cook what food they had were also running low and men dodged bullets to collect wood outside the walls.

DAY 5

The Mexicans managed to cut off the Alamo's main source of water supply - the San Antonio River. David Crockett fired on the soldiers as they set up their guns in the bend of the river. Reports from townspeople say that he killed the first soldier to fall with a 200 yard shot from his rifle. Meanwhile Travis sent another urgent message to summon help.

DAY 6

This day is mainly remembered for a musical "duel". David Crockett tried to raise the spirits of the men inside the Alamo by challenging a Scot named John McGregor to a fiddle/bagpipe duel. We know from witnesses that among the tunes played were *Soldier's Joy*, *Flowers of Edinburgh*, *Temperance Reel* and *Old Rosin the Bow* but we do not know who won!

DAY 7

This was Monday, February 29th—the extra day of a leap year. No news and no reinforcements for the Alamo.

In the morning the Mexicans offered an amnesty to any who would come out of the fort. He gave them 3 days to decide. A few of the local peasants still inside the Alamo chose to leave today.

Santa Anna received news that reinforcements were coming to the Alamo's rescue. He sent a battalion to meet them. His words to the officer in charge were: *"In this war, you know, there ought to be no prisoners."*



DAY 8

The weather has turned bad again. There is heavy rain and thunder and lightning. During the night 32 men of the Gonzales Ranging Company made it inside the Alamo to reinforce the Texians - the only help they were to receive. Their arrival raised the men's spirits.

DAY 9

Unknown to those inside the Alamo, it was on this day that Texas independence was declared at Washington-on-the-Brazos. It was as well that they did not know that their letters seeking help were being circulated as either lies or exaggerations. Some even suggested they were forgeries. No help was coming.

DAY 10

Travis wrote another letter appealing for help to the President of the Convention and sent it along with two personal letters. John "El Colorado" Smith was to deliver them. Travis told Smith that he would fire the large gun in the fort three times a day, morning, afternoon and night to let everyone know they were still holding out.

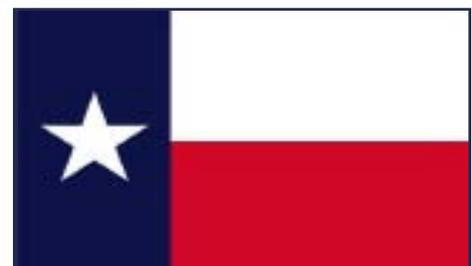


Travis' last letter was written on Day 10 of the siege, 3rd March 1836 and sent to David Ayers:-

Take care of my little boy. If the country should be saved, I may make for him a splendid fortune; but if the country be lost and I should perish, he will have nothing but the proud recollection that he is the son of a man who died for his country.

William Barret Travis died at his post on the cannon platform at the northeast corner of the Alamo on the morning of March 6, 1836.

He was 26 years old.



DAY 11

At dawn the Mexicans started firing from a new position north of the Alamo. They were only 250 yards away now and today they would receive reinforcements bringing the total number of Mexican troops to 2500.

Santa Anna proposed launching an all-out attack on the mission immediately but some of his officers wanted to wait until heavier artillery arrived. Santa Anna would not listen. He wanted above all else to capture the Alamo no matter how many of his soldiers were killed in the process. It has been suggested that he was afraid that the garrison might surrender and that would steal the glory of his defeating them.

DAY 12—EVE OF BATTLE

The Mexican guns were now only 200 yards from the walls of the old mission. Santa Annamet with his officers and outlined the plan of attack for the next day, Sunday 6th March.

Here is the battle plan:

	Led by	Consisted of	Target
1st column	General Martin Perfecto de Cos	300 men from the Aldama and San Luis battalions with 11 ladders to scale the walls	The West Wall
2nd column	Colonel Francisco Duque	400 men from the Toluca and San Luis battalions with 10 ladders	The North Wall
3rd column	Colonel Jose Maria Romero	400 men from the Matamoros, Jimenez and San Luis battalions with 6 ladders	The East Wall
4th column	Colonel Juan Morales	100 men from the Matamoros, Jimenez and San Luis battalions with 2 ladders	South gate & wooden stake palisade
5th column	Colonel Amat	400 men from the elite Zapadores and 5 companies of grenadiers. They would wait in reserve with Santa Anna	Wherever they were needed
Cavalry	General Sesma	300 lancers	Prevent anyone escaping (both from the Alamo and the Mexican army!)

That afternoon word came to the beleaguered garrison that they could expect no help or reinforcements—they were on their own!

Legend

When Travis heard the news he called all the men together. It is said that he drew a line in the dust and invited those who wanted to stay to the bitter end to step across the line and join him. The legend says that only one man - Louis Rose—did not step across. He escaped over the wall.

At 10.00pm the Mexican guns fell silent as the troops settled down for a good night's sleep before the coming battle. Inside the mission, a final messenger, James Allen, prepared to set out with yet another plea for help.

DAY 13—BATTLE ON!

At 1.00am on the morning of Sunday 6th March 1836, Santa Anna's troops began to move into position. They lay waiting through the hours of darkness for the order to attack.



At 5.00am just before sunrise an over-eager soldier cried out “Viva Santa Anna!” Immediately 1200 Mexican soldiers rose from their hidden positions and the battle began. Travis was killed by a head wound in the first minutes of the fighting. Meanwhile Davy Crockett's forces repelled the assault on the south wall palisade and the Mexicans were driven back on the east, north and west. Santa Anna ordered his reserve forces into action. As they moved forward many of the original Mexican troops were caught in the crossfire and killed by “friendly fire”.

The walls of the mission were breached and the Mexicans poured through. Crockett's men retreated into the church. Only twenty minutes had passed from the time the first shot was fired. It took another hour for the Mexicans to subdue the last defender and take complete control of the Alamo. The Mexican troops took no prisoners. Survivors were killed.

By 6.30am the battle was over. Santa Anna entered the mission station. The final surviving men were brought before him for mercy but they were soon slaughtered. Legend says Davy Crockett was among them. Only the remaining women and children were spared.

The Alamo

One Mexican eye witness described the scene at the Alamo like this:

“ a devastated area littered with corpses, with scattered limbs and bullets, with weapons and torn uniforms.....what a sad spectacle...What a horror!”

The Texian dead were burned in three huge pyres. The bodies were laid between layers of wood and set alight in the late afternoon. The number of Texian dead varies between 180 and 250. The difference counted be accounted for by the men killed outside the walls of the Alamo by the cavalry as they tried to escape.

Mexican dead and wounded were estimated at between 370 and 1600 depending on which source is used. It is thought that three-quarters of these were from “friendly fire”.

The story of the events at the Alamo quickly spread and “Remember the Alamo” became the war cry for the Texans.

On 16th April Sam Houston and his Texian army defeated Santa Anna and his forces in just twenty minutes at the battle of San Jacinto. They declared the Republic of Texas and requested U.S. statehood.

The story of the Alamo is remembered to this day. Thousands of tourists flock to the city of San Antonio each year to visit the old building and to hear again the story of these early heroes of American history. Davy Crockett and Sam Houston played important roles in the development of Texas and Houston is commemorated in the name of the fourth largest city in the USA.



The 13 Day Siege cloze Task

Having heard or read the story of the Siege at the Alamo fill in the blanks in the following account of the siege.

The siege began on _____ 23rd February 1836. The leader of the Mexican forces was _____. Inside the Alamo command was shared by _____ and _____. The Mexicans played music to

_____.

A message was sent to _____ asking him to send reinforcements to help defend the Alamo.

The Mexicans tried to cut off water supplies to the mission. The mission got its water from _____. On Day 6 Davy Crockett took part in a duel between two instruments. They were a _____ and a _____.

The final battle of the siege began at _____ on Sunday 6th March _____. Travis was killed by a _____ wound. Legend has it that _____ was one of the men sentenced to death after the battle.

This is not the end of the story. _____ became a rallying cry for the Texians and they took their revenge by defeating the Mexicans at the battle of _____ just a few weeks later.

Keeping A Diary

Task



Keeping a diary can be a useful activity. Not only does it allow you to read, years later, what you were doing on a particular day but it can also let you express your thoughts and feelings about what is happening in your life.

Imagine you were one of the defenders of the Alamo and keep the diary of your time up to the night of Day 12. You might well have realised by that stage that no help was coming and you were likely to be killed so you might include some messages to your family that they would read after your death.

The most famous diarist is probably Samuel Pepys. He was born on 23 February 1633 off Fleet Street in London. He worked as secretary to the Earl of Sandwich who was First Lord of the Admiralty.

He is remembered for his less than ten years of personal diaries which still exist. They are both personal to him but also record historical and literary events. They are a good record of life in the London of the 1660s.



Find out more at <http://www.pepys.info/pepbiog.html>

Your task is to research the life of one of the main characters in the heroic story of the Alamo.

You may choose from:-

DAVID (DAVY) CROCKETT

JIM BOWIE

WILLIAM BARRET TRAVIS

SANTA ANNA

SAM HOUSTON

Now present your findings.

You may chose from:-

- Cartoon strip of their life story
- Fact File for others to read
- An imaginary interview with them reported in a magazine



Sam Houston



Extension Activity

Working with a partner (one the interviewer and one the interviewee) role play a chat show type interview with your chosen character from the Alamo story.



Extension Activity

Davy Crockett was a politician before he became a national hero.

He served in the House of Representatives.

Find out who represents that state in the House of Representatives today.

NAME: **DAVID CROCKETT**

NICKNAME:

Year of Birth:

Place of Birth:

Where in Ulster his family originated:

.....

Name of Wife:

Names of Children:

.....

Musical Instrument played:

Name of TV series Walt Disney made about him:

.....

Remember The Alamo

A hundred and eighty were challenged by Travers to die,
By a line that he drew with his sword as the battle drew nigh.
A man that crossed over the line was for glory,
And he that was left better fly,
And over the line crossed a hundred and seventy nine.

Chorus

Hey, Up, Santa Anna, they're killing your soldiers below,
So the rest of Texas will know, and remember the Alamo.

Jim Bowie lay dying, his blood and his powder were dry,
But his knife at the ready to take him a few in reply.
Young Davey Crockett lay laughing and dying,
The blood and the sweat in his eyes,
For Texas and freedom a man was more willing to die.

A courier came to battle, once bloody and loud.
And found only skin and bones where he once left a crowd.
Fear not, little darling, of dying, if the world is sovereign and free,
For, we'll fight to the last for as long as liberty be.



Remember The Alamo



and Play Along

(G) A hundred and (D) eighty were (G) challenged by (C) Travers to (G) die,
By a (G) line that he (D) drew with his (G) sword as the (C) battle drew
(G) nigh. (G7)

A (C) man that crossed over the (Bmin) line was for glory,
And (C) he that was left better (G) fly, (D)

And (G) over the (D) line crossed a (G) hundred (C) and seventy (G) nine. (G7)

Chorus

(C) Hey, Up, Santa Anna, they're killing your soldiers be (Bmin) low,
So the (C) rest of Texas will (G) know, (C) and remember the (G) Alamo.

Jim Bowie lay dying, his blood and his powder were dry,
But his knife at the ready to take him a few in reply.
Young Davey Crockett lay laughing and dying,
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Consider

You have now heard the story of the brave men who fought and died at the Alamo.

In groups consider the following questions:

- Do you think they were brave?
- Was the independence of Texas worth their lives?

Of course, bravery and war are not just issues from history. We must also think about them today.

In your groups discuss:

- When is it justified for an individual to use violence?
- When is it justified for a country to use violence?

Vote

Now take a class vote on the issues:

1. This class believes it is never justified for an individual to use violence
2. This class believes it is never justified for a country to use violence



YOU WILL NEVER FORGET.

THE ALAMO

DENNIS QUAID • BILLY BOB THORNTON • JASON PATRIC • PATRICK WILSON

Sam Houston David Crockett James Bowie William B. Travis

TRISTAR PICTURES and WAGNER ENTERTAINMENT present a BRIAN CRAZER / MARK JOHNSON production a JOHN LEE HANCOCK film DENNIS QUAID
BILLY BOB THORNTON JASON PATRIC "THE ALAMO" JONAH MALLA EMILIO FENE VARRIA PATRICK WILSON MICHAEL BURNETT JAMES DUNN ORLANDO JEFFREY BEASON
MICHAEL GUNN WALTER JACOBSON ANDREW JACOBSON TONY KATHONVILLE PHILIP STEUER MARK JOHNSON KEN HOWARD BRIAN CRAZER
IMAGINE ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS A WAGNER ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTION "THE ALAMO" A JOHN LEE HANCOCK FILM
alamo.movies.com

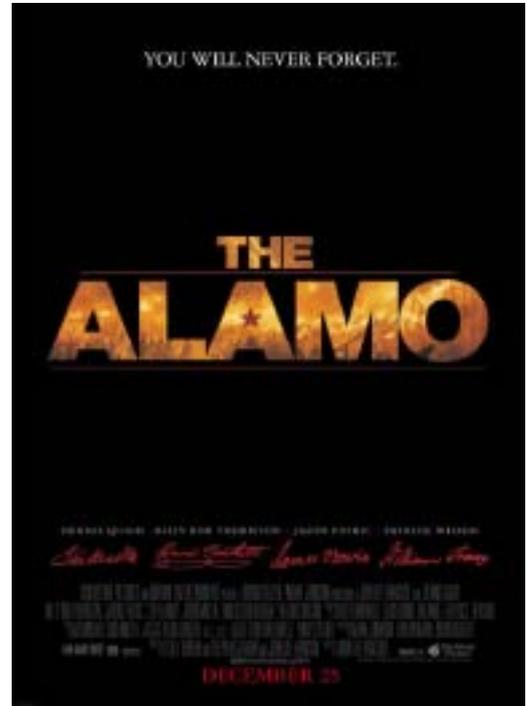
DECEMBER 25

'Reading' A Film Poster

We are all surrounded by media texts— advertisements, TV programmes, films and posters to name but a few. Here is a poster to promote the film 'The Alamo' which was released in 2004.

Answer the following questions:

- 1 The colours in an advertising poster are very important. What colours are used in this poster? What is their significance; why do you think these particular colours have been used?
- 2 The poster features both the names of the main actors and the roles they play. The characters' names are written as signatures. Why do you think it has been done this way?
- 3 Why is the centre area of the letter 'A' in the shape of a star?
- 4 What is the slogan or tagline for the poster and the film? What does this remind the reader of?



Design your own poster either for a film about the Alamo or any other event you have read about in 'The American Connection' e.g. the Lewis-Clark Expedition or the Battle of King's Mountain.

Writing A Film Review



If you watch a film either in the cinema or on television, you will have your own opinion of it. You might think it was great and want to recommend it to your friends or you might not have liked it and hope your friends don't waste their money going to see it.

Film critics write in newspapers to let the public know what they think of films. Sometimes they are complementary and sometimes they are highly critical—although they will never be abusive.

This is your chance to be a film critic. Think of a film you have watched and write your opinion of it. This does not mean telling the story of the film—that would spoil it for anyone who has not seen it although you will have to give some idea of what the film is about and a few details.

You should also comment about the standard of the acting and any other aspects you thought were especially good or bad.

Here is a review which has been posted on a website. You will find it at http://movies2.nytimes.com/gst/movies/movie.html?v_id=283301.

This person is giving their opinion of the film:

John Hancock's directing of "The Alamo" is well done and I encourage all to view this film, as it should be seen, on the big screen. I enjoy and appreciate films and rate them as either – bad, fair, good, great, or outstanding. I know I've seen either a great or outstanding film if I find myself remembering scenes for days after viewing the film. I found myself waking up at night thinking of scenes from this film – scenes that moved me, directing style that was captivating, lighting effects that were eerie, acting that made the characters real. Scenes that woke me up at night: The burning of the jacales followed by Crockett's lone stand before two Mexican soldiers. Crockett then approaches a dying Mexican soldier – these few moments of acting, with few words spoken, should earn Billy Bob Thornton an Oscar nomination. Crockett preparing Bowie, who is deathly ill and bedridden, for the final fight by placing pistols beside each hand. In darkness the Mexican army approaches the Alamo for the final attack and it's at this moment that Crockett peers over the walls to suddenly see them coming. Crockett saying goodbye to Micajah Autry as Autry dies should also earn Thornton an Oscar nomination. Crockett and a few of his men's last stand in the Church and then his death. There are several more great scenes but space does not allow me to describe these. From a historical perspective, this is the most accurate Alamo film ever made. It is very moving as well.

creating A Radio Advertisement



Imagine that your group has been given the job of creating a radio advertisement to promote the 'new' film of the Alamo. It does not have to be either the most recent version or any of the other earlier films. You can create your own cast list!

Create a 30 second commercial for the film.

To do this you will need:-

- Music
- Sound effects
- Voiceover script

Now record your advertisement.



Remember

To ask for a help sheet if you are not sure what to do or how to do it.

What is a rap?

Rap music has been around in the USA for about 20 years. The tradition of performing stories can be traced back even further to West African singers and storytellers who were known as Griots.

Rap is part of the hip hop culture which also includes break dancing and the use of graffiti, which has now been established as an art form. Hip hop originated in the Bronx area of New York among the street gangs.

Rap music was greatly influenced by Jamaican music. 'Toasting' was the name given to a style of music where Jamaican DJs talked over the music they were playing. At first the DJs would 'toast' over the music with slogans to encourage the dancers but gradually the 'toasts' got longer and longer.

In rap music there is a strong beat. The rapper speaks his/her lines in time with the rhythm of the music. Raps can be about anything e.g. a news event, a message or boast or even a nonsense rap.



Can you find the Bronx area of New York on the map?

The Alamo Rap

Now it's YOUR turn

You may work -

- By yourself
- With a partner
- In a group

Your task is to write a rap about The Alamo.

Your teacher can give you a backing track or you may use your own.

THE PROCESS

1. Make sure you have all the details/facts you need
2. Write the lyrics
3. Practise them to the beat of the music
4. Perform your rap



Tip

You do not have to perform 'live' If you are nervous about standing up in front of your class, why not tape your rap and lay it back to the class? Or make a video of your performance and show it to the class?