

**AP US History Document Based Question**  
**Territorial Expansion (Time Period 5)**

**Directions:** The following question is based on the accompanying Documents 1–7. The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise. This question is designed to test your ability to apply several historical thinking skills simultaneously, including historical argumentation, use of relevant historical evidence, contextualization, and synthesis. Your response should be based on your analysis of the documents and your knowledge of the topic. Write a well-integrated essay that does the following:

- States an appropriate thesis that directly addresses all parts of the question.
- Supports the thesis or an appropriate argument with evidence from all or all but one of the documents AND your knowledge of United States history beyond/outside the documents.
- Analyzes a majority of the documents in terms of such features as their intended audience, purpose, point of view, format, argument, limitations, and/or social context as appropriate to the argument.
- Places the argument in the context of broader regional, national, or global processes.

- 1. Explain how territorial expansion impacted federal government policy in the United States from 1800 to 1855.**

**Document A**

Source: Congressional Debate, October 1803.

*James Elliot, Federalist, Vermont:*

The Constitution is silent on the subject of the acquisition of territory. By the treaty we acquire territory; therefore the treaty is unconstitutional.

*Samuel Thatcher, Federalist, Massachusetts:*

This acquisition of distant territory will involve the necessity of a considerable standing army, so justly an object of terror. do gentlemen flatter themselves that by purchasing Louisiana, we are invulnerable? No, sir; Spain will still border on our southern frontier, and so long as Spain occupies that country we are not secure from the attempts of another nation more warlike and ambitious.

*William Plumer, Federalist, New Hampshire:*

Admit this western world into the union, and you destroy with a single operation the whole weight and importance of the eastern states.

### Document B

Source: Lewis Cass, in *Documents and Proceedings Relating to the Formation and Progress of a Board in the City of New York, for the Emigration, Preservation, and Improvement of the Aborigines of America*, 1829

Existing for two centuries in contact with a civilized people, [the Cherokees] have resisted, and successfully too, every effort to meliorate [improve] their situation, or to introduce among them the most common arts of life. Their moral and their intellectual condition have been equally stationary. And in the whole circle of their existence, it would be difficult to point to a single advantage which they have derived from their acquaintance with the Europeans. All this is without a parallel in the history of the world. That it is not to be attributed to the indifference or neglect of the whites, we have already shown. There must then be an inherent difficulty, arising from the institutions, character, and condition of the Indians themselves.

### Document C

Source: Thomas Hart Benton, speech in the United States Senate, 1844.

[T]he settlers in Oregon will also recover and open for us the North American road to India! This road lies through the South Pass, and the mouth of the Oregon; and as soon as the settlements are made, our portion of the North American continent will immediately commence its Asiatic trade on this new and national route.

### Document D

Source: Letter from Andrew Jackson to Moses Dawson, published in *Niles' National Register*, 1844

If there be patriotism in the effort to increase the wealth and happiness of all classes in our society - to diffuse the blessings of equal laws, and a just government... if there be love in the spirit which finds in this free land of ours the means to spread the light of the Gospel, and to teach fallen man throughout the world how he may recover his right to civil and religious liberty - it seems to me that all this patriotism-all this philanthropy-all this religion-appeals to us in favor of the addition of Texas to our Union.

### Document E

Source: John C. Calhoun, address to Congress on Mexico, 1848

We are anxious to force free government on all; and I see that it has been urged in a very respectable quarter, that it is the mission of this country to spread civil and religious liberty over all the world, and especially over this continent. It is a great mistake. None but people advanced to a very high state of moral and intellectual improvement are capable, in a civilized state, of maintaining free government; and amongst those who are so purified, very few, indeed, have had the good fortune of forming a constitution capable of endurance.

### Document F

Source: Henry David Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience*, 1849.

The government itself, which is only the mode which the people have chosen to execute their will, is equally liable to be abused and perverted before the people can act through it. Witness the present Mexican War, the work of comparatively a few individuals using the standing government as their tool; for, in the outset, the people would not have consented to this measure.

Document G

