Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Brame Vanguard Texas History Period: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Ready For Revolution**

**CAUSES OF Mexican Independence**

After 300 years of living under Spanish rule, many Mexicans were unhappy and wanted a change in government. Below are the reasons that the Mexicans began to rebel. Read and highlight important facts as you go. Choose one of the following assignments to convince Spain that you need help settling the rising tensions in New Spain.

**1) The inequalities of life under a caste system.** This caste system gave power to certain people based on race. Those at the top lived very well. Those at the bottom lived very harsh lives. At the top of this caste system were **Peninsulares** (people born in European Spain, but living in New Spain). Next, were the **Criollos (or Creoles)** who were of pure Spanish blood but were born in New Spain. Socially below the Criollos were the **Mestizos** who were a mix of Spanish and native Indian blood. Below the Mestizos were the **Mulattos** who were a mix of Spanish and African blood. Finally, last on the social ladder were the pure blooded Natives **(Indigenous**) and the pure blooded **Africans**. The Criollo men were prevented by law from holding the highest ranking positions in the church and the government, positions their parents held, simply because they had been born in New Spain. The Native Americans and Africans were subject to a tribute, which was a tax placed on every Native American or Black. If the tribute was not paid, that individual could be thrown in jail.

**2) The flow of wealth out of New Spain to Spain.** Spain was busy fighting the wars of Napoleon in Europe. To raise money to fight these wars, the Spanish government increasingly demanded more money from New Spain in the form of taxes. When the government of Spain found that raising taxes was not making them enough money, the Spanish government passed a law stating that they were going to take the wealth of the Church in New Spain. The church did not have much actual money, but it was owed money by many people of New Spain. To pay the government of Spain, the Catholic Church was forced to call in those debts. The extremely wealthy could pay off their debt, but most people did not have enough. This resulted in the forced sale of many properties owned mostly by Criollos and Mestizos. Many people lost fortunes.

**3) The inability of New Spain to feed its own people.** In 1808, and again in 1809, New Spain suffered severe droughts. The harvest was poor. The price of maize (corn), which was one of the staple foods for most of the lower castes, was skyrocketing. People could not afford to buy enough food to feed their families. Some people were starving – especially those who lived in the cities. The government of New Spain tried to regulate the price of maize to control this problem but failed when farmers started to legally sell their corn on the black market (like drugs today)!

**4) The confusion in the governments of Spain.** In 1808, Napoleon (Emperor of France) invaded Spain. He held Ferdinand VII, the king, captive, and put his brother Joseph Bonaparte on the Spanish throne. This raised the question of who was the legitimate ruler. Who should be obeyed – Napoleon’s brother or the true king? Who was the rightful leader of the colonies? Should the colonies obey the agents that Joseph Bonaparte sent to them? The Spanish people did not accept Joseph Bonaparte as king and revolted. Several cities in Spain proclaimed Juntas (local governments) to be in charge. In 1809, these Juntas turned power over to the Cortes (the Spanish legislature). In 1810, the Cortes met and officially proclaimed Spain's independence from Joseph Bonaparte and drafted a constitution. The colonists were torn in their allegiances. Should they support Prince Ferdinand? Should they support Bonaparte, or the Cortes, or go their own way? Various factions in New Spain supported all of these ideas.

**5) The flow of new ideas on government and peoples’ rights arriving from America and France.** One of the first political revolutions to occur because of Enlightenment thinking was the American Revolution of the late 1700s.  The rights and liberties of American colonists were being compromised by the British government, which led to a revolution and the formation of the United States of America.  Inspired by the success of the American Revolution, French citizens overthrew the noble ruling class and established a democratic government. The people of France rose to overthrow the oppressive system and established a society controlled by the people and not a monarch. They wanted to govern themselves as a democracy. The ideas of democracy, racial equality, political freedom, independence, social peace, land reform, and the abolishment of slavery gained wide spread popularity in New Spain. The people in New Spain believed that revolution and independence could be achieved after hearing of the success in the US and France. Many people in New Spain started discussing these ideas. A group of Criollos started meeting in Queretaro to talk about these revolutionary ideas and ways to overthrow the unjust Spanish rule in New Spain. The leader of this group was a Criollo priest named Father Miguel Hidalgo.

**YOUR ASSIGNMENT: CHOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING METHODS TO PERSUADE KING FERDINAND THAT YOU NEED HELP IN THE COLONY.**

**You are a loyal Peninsulare living in New Spain. You do not want the colonists of New Spain to rebel against the government of Spain because you will most likely lose your land, your fancy government title of Viceroy [ruler of a colony or city under the king], and the privilege you have of not paying taxes. You feel rebellion in the air and you want to stop it. You do not want your way of life disrupted –things are going great for your family and yourself. You know that King Ferdinand has been very busy in Europe and is completely unaware of the volatile situation boiling around you in New Spain. You have to let him and your fellow Spaniards know immediately of the situation so that they can stop it from happening. You know that the motherland would not want to lose its most productive colony. You decide on two very important measures to take to try to get help you need from Spain.**

**\*\*\*You will be graded based on how persuasively you communicate information and ideas about the causes of Mexican Independence to your chosen audience.\*\*\***

1. **You write a 3 paragraph letter to King Ferdinand explaining what is actually happening in his colony. You address each of the 5 reasons that the Mexicans want to rebel in your letter to the king. Not only do you tell him what is going on, but you also give him two pieces of advice on how he can better the situations that are causing unrest in New Spain (choose two to fix). Your letter is very direct, because the more clear your information is, the better chance you will have of the king sending help to New Spain. Remember your audience and that you are persuading a very powerful man.**
	1. **Highlight your two pieces of advice within your letter.**
	2. **Underline your explanation of each of the 5 causes.**
2. **You create a petition for your fellow Spaniards living in New Spain. The petition will ultimately be shared with the king to show that you have the support of the colonists. You will address each of the five major reasons that the colonists are upset in two summary sentences for each cause. Of course, you want to appeal to all the colonists, so in order to get their attention create a visual at the top of the petition. The visual should show the main reason you feel your people are upset. Make sure your petition has a clear title that will stand out in the plaza [town square]. Remember your audience and that you are persuading even those Spaniards that are not as well off as you.**
	1. **Your summary sentences need to be formatted into 2 paragraphs.**
	2. **Create a caption for your visual explaining why you chose that cause as the main reason for the lower classes’ unrest.**