

**TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT—2009-2012**  
*American Imperialism Supporters and Naysayers*  
*From Dan Martin*

Grade: 11<sup>th</sup>

Length of Class: 48 minutes

Inquiry (Essential Questions):

- How did the concept of imperialism divide the plan for American conquest overseas?
- Were writings created by Twain, Tillman & Kipling presented to discourage or promote American imperialism.

Objectives (Content & Skills):

- Students will:
  - Analyze primary source documents
  - Explain the use of symbolic language
  - Compare and contrast the differing opinions over imperialism

Materials (Included below):

- Mark Twain's "To the Person Sitting in Darkness"
- Senator Tillman's speech to Congress
- Rudyard Kipling's "The White Man's Burden"
- Worksheets (document analysis)

Activities:

- Students are expected to work in pairs deciphering & analyzing the primary source documents to identify the differing opinions over imperialism
- Each pair is responsible for completing the worksheets attached
- A class discussion will follow using the worksheets as the basis for the conversation

Assessment:

- Students will be assessed based on the responses provided on the chart below as well as a class participation grade from the discussion. All material will be collected and graded.

Connecticut Grade Level Expectations:

- Standard 1.1
  - 3. Trace the changing role of U.S. participation and influence in world affairs.
  - 7. Analyze the influence of nationalism on American society
- Standard 1.3

- 18. Provide examples of conflict and cooperation in world affairs
- Standard 2.1
  - 1. Find relevant and accurate information from a variety of sources to answer a history/social studies question
- Standard 2.2
  - 3. Cite evidence from a source to determine an author's purpose and intended audience
- Standard 3.1
  - 1. Use evidence to develop an interpretation of a historical event
- Standard 3.2
  - 5. Develop criteria for judging the actions or policies of an individual or group in the past

**Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden" published in *McClure's Magazine*, Feb. 1899**

Take up the White Man's burden--  
 Send forth the best ye breed--  
 Go, bind your sons to exile  
 To serve your captives' need;  
 To wait, in heavy harness,  
 On fluttered folk and wild--  
 Your new-caught sullen peoples,  
 Half devil and half child.

Take up the White Man's burden--  
 No iron rule of kings,  
 But toil of serf and sweeper--  
 The tale of common things.  
 The ports ye shall not enter,  
 The roads ye shall not tread,  
 Go, make them with your living  
 And mark them with your dead.

Take up the White Man's burden--  
 In patience to abide,  
 To veil the threat of terror  
 And check the show of pride;  
 By open speech and simple,  
 An hundred times made plain,  
 To seek another's profit  
 And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden,  
 And reap his old reward--  
 The blame of those ye better  
 The hate of those ye guard--  
 The cry of hosts ye humour  
 (Ah, slowly!) toward the light--  
 "Why brought ye us from bondage,  
 Our loved Egyptian night?"

Take up the White Man's burden--  
 The savage wars of peace--  
 Fill full the mouth of Famine,  
 And bid the sickness cease;  
 And when your goal is nearest  
 (The end for others sought)  
 Watch sloth and heathen folly  
 Bring all your hope to nought.

Take up the White Man's burden--  
 Ye dare not stoop to less--  
 Nor call too loud on Freedom  
 To cloak your weariness.  
 By all ye will or whisper,  
 By all ye leave or do,  
 The silent sullen peoples  
 Shall weigh your God and you.

Take up the White Man's burden!  
Have done with childish days--  
The lightly-proffered laurel,  
The easy ungrudged praise:  
Comes now, to search your manhood  
Through all the thankless years,  
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,  
The judgment of your peers.

## Senator Benjamin Tillman of South Carolina: Speech made to the Senate February 7<sup>th</sup> 1899

As though coming at the most opportune time possible, you might say just before the treaty [with Spain that ceded sovereignty over the Philippines in return for \$20,000,000] reached the Senate, or about the time it was sent to us, there appeared in one of our magazines a poem by Rudyard Kipling, the greatest poet of England at this time. This poem, unique, and in some places too deep for me, is a prophecy. I do not imagine that in the history of human events any poet has ever felt inspired so clearly to portray our danger and our duty. It is called "The White Man's Burden." With the permission of Senators I will read a stanza, and I beg Senators to listen to it, for it is well worth their attention. This man has lived in the Indies. In fact, he is a citizen of the world, and has been all over it, and knows whereof he speaks.

"Take up the White Man's burden--  
Send forth the best ye breed--  
Go, bind your sons to exile,  
To serve your captive's need;  
To wait, in heavy harness,  
On fluttered folk and wild--  
Your new-caught sullen peoples,  
Half devil and half child."

I will pause here. I intend to read more, but I wish to call attention to a fact which may have escaped the attention of Senators thus far, that with five exceptions every man in this chamber who has had to do with the colored race in this country voted against the ratification of the treaty. It was . . . because we understand and realize what it is to have two races side by side that can not mix or mingle without deterioration and injury to both and the ultimate destruction of the civilization of the higher. We of the South have borne this white man's burden of a colored race in our midst since their emancipation and before.

It was a burden upon our manhood and our ideas of liberty before they were emancipated. It is still a burden, although they have been granted the franchise. It clings to us like the shirt of Nessus, and we are not responsible, because we inherited it, and your fathers as well as ours are responsible for the presence amongst us of that people. Why do we as a people want to incorporate into our citizenship ten millions more of different or of differing races, three or four of them? But we have not incorporated them yet, and let us see what this English poet has to say about it, and what he thinks.

Ah, if we have no other consideration, if no feeling of humanity, no love of our fellows, no regard for others' rights, if nothing but our self-interest shall actuate us in this crisis, let me say to you that if we go madly on in the direction of crushing these people into subjection and submission we will do so at the cost of many, many thousands of the flower of American youth. There are 10,000,000 of these people, some of them fairly well civilized, and running to the extreme of naked savages, who are reported in our press dispatches as having stood out in the

open and fired their bows and arrows, not flinching from the storm of shot and shell thrown into their midst by the American soldiers there.

The city of Manila is surrounded by swamps and marshes, I am told. A few miles back lie the woods and jungles and mountains. These people are used to the climate. They know how to get about, and if they mean to have their liberties, as they appear to do, at what sacrifice will the American domination be placed over them? There is another verse of Kipling. I have fallen in love with this man. He tells us what we will reap: Those peoples are not suited to our institutions. They are not ready for liberty as we understand it. They do not want it. Why are we bent on forcing upon them a civilization not suited to them and which only means in their view degradation and a loss of self-respect, which is worse than the loss of life itself?

### **To the Person Sitting in Darkness (excerpted) By Mark Twain**

*Shall we?* That is, shall we go on conferring our Civilization upon the peoples that sit in darkness, or shall we give those poor things a rest? Shall we bang right ahead in our old-time, loud, pious way, and commit the new century to the game; or shall we sober up and sit down and think it over first? Extending the Blessings of Civilization to our Brother who Sits in Darkness has been a good trade and has paid well, on the whole; and there is money in it yet, if carefully worked -- but not enough, in my judgement, to make any considerable risk advisable. The People that Sit in Darkness are getting to be too scarce -- too scarce and too shy. And such darkness as is now left is really of but an indifferent quality, and not dark enough for the game. The most of those People that Sit in Darkness have been furnished with more light than was good for them or profitable for us. We have been injudicious.

The Blessings-of-Civilization Trust, wisely and cautiously administered, is a Daisy. There is more money in it, more territory, more sovereignty, and other kinds of emolument, than there is in any other game that is played. But Christendom has been playing it badly of late years, and must certainly suffer by it, in my opinion. She has been so eager to get every stake that appeared on the green cloth, that the People who Sit in Darkness have noticed it -- they have noticed it, and have begun to show alarm. They have become suspicious of the Blessings of Civilization. More -- they have begun to examine them. This is not well. The Blessings of Civilization are all right, and a good commercial property; there could not be a better, in a dim light. In the right kind of a light, and at a proper distance, with the goods a little out of focus, they furnish this desirable exhibit to the Gentlemen who Sit in Darkness:

LOVE  
JUSTICE  
GENTLENESS  
CHRISTIANITY

PROTECTION TO THE  
WEAK  
TEMPERANCE  
LAW AND ORDER  
LIBERTY

EQUALITY  
HONORABLE DEALING  
MERCY  
EDUCATION

...And by and by comes America, and our Master of the Game [President McKinley] plays it badly. It was a mistake to do that; also, it was one which was quite unlooked for in a Master who was playing it so well in Cuba. In Cuba, he was playing the usual and regular *American* game, and it was winning, for there is no way to beat it. The Master, contemplating Cuba, said: "Here is an oppressed and friendless little nation which is willing to fight to be free; we go partners, and put up the strength of seventy million sympathizers and the resources of the United States: play!" Nothing but Europe combined could call that hand: and Europe cannot combine on anything. There, in Cuba, he was following our great traditions in a way which made us very proud of him, and proud of the deep dissatisfaction which his play was provoking in Continental Europe. Moved by a high inspiration, he threw out those stirring words which proclaimed that forcible annexation would be "criminal aggression;" and in that utterance fired another "shot heard round the world." The memory of that fine saying will be outlived by the remembrance of no act of his but one -- that he forgot it within the twelvemonth, and its honorable gospel along with it.

For, presently, came the Philippine temptation. It was strong; it was too strong, and he made that bad mistake: he played the European game. . . . It was a pity; it was a great pity, that error; that one grievous error, that irrevocable error. For it was the very place and time to play the American game again. And at no cost. Rich winnings to be gathered in, too; rich and permanent; indestructible; a fortune transmissible forever to the children of the flag. Not land, not money, not dominion -- no, something worth many times more than that dross: our share, the spectacle of a nation of long harassed and persecuted slaves set free through our influence; our posterity's share, the golden memory of that fair deed. The game was in our hands. If it had been played according to the American rules, Dewey would have sailed away from Manila as soon as he had destroyed the Spanish fleet -- after putting up a sign on shore guaranteeing foreign property and life against damage by the Filipinos, and warning the Powers that interference with the emancipated patriots would be regarded as an act unfriendly to the United States. The Powers cannot combine, in even a bad cause, and the sign would not have been molested.

Dewey could have gone about his affairs elsewhere, and left the competent Filipino army to starve out the little Spanish garrison and send it home, and the Filipino citizens to set up the form of government they might prefer, and deal with the friars and their doubtful acquisitions according to Filipino ideas of fairness and justice -- ideas which have since been tested and found to be of as high an order as any that prevail in Europe or America.

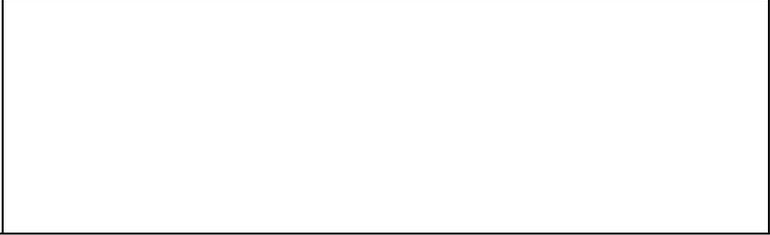
But we played the [European] game, and lost the chance to add another Cuba and another honorable deed to our good record. The more we examine the mistake, the more clearly we perceive that it is going to be bad for the Business. The Person Sitting in Darkness is almost sure to say: "There is something curious about this -- curious and unaccountable. There must be two Americas: one that sets the captive free, and one that takes a once-captive's new freedom away from him, and picks a quarrel with him with nothing to found it on; then kills him to get his land."



<p>(The end for others sought) Watch sloth and heathen folly Bring all your hope to nought.</p>	
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in our press dispatches as having stood out in the open and fired their bows and arrows, not flinching from the storm of shot and shell thrown into their midst by the American soldiers there.”



**Mark Twain's: "To the Person Sitting in Darkness"**

<b>General Questions:</b>	<b>Your Responses:</b>
Why was this document written?	
Identify and explain the position of the author?	
Who is the intended audience?	
Provide two pieces of evidence that the author uses to persuade the reader to his opinion?	1)  2)
<b>Explain the Quotation:</b>	<b>Your Responses:</b>
"The most of those People that Sit in Darkness have been furnished with more light than was good for them or profitable for us. We have been injudicious."	

"But we played the [European] game, and lost the chance to add another Cuba and another honorable deed to our good record ... There must be two Americas: one that sets the captive free, and one that takes a once-captive's new freedom away from him, and picks a quarrel with him with nothing to found it on; then kills him to get his land."