Grade – 10

Length of class period – 60 minutes

Inquiry – What were some of the arguments for and against American imperialism?

Objectives –
  • Students will be able to know and understand the arguments for and against American imperialism.
  • Students will be able to analyze primary source documents.
  • Students will be able to work cooperatively in groups.

Materials – See attached
  • “The Battle Hymn of the Republic, Updated” by Mark Twain
  • “USA Imperialism, 1898” political cartoon
  • “What the United States has Fought for” political cartoon
  • “In Support of an American Empire” by Albert J. Beveridge
  • “Interview with President William McKinley”
  • The Platt Amendment, 1902

Activities –
  • The teacher will post each document around the room on the walls of the classroom.
  • Below each document, he or she will post the observation sheet.
  • Students will go around the room in groups and write down their observations about each document, recording their initials next to their comments. Their observations should aim toward answering the essential question: what were some of the arguments for and against American imperialism?
  • Each group will be given approximately eight minutes at each document for observations. They will switch when prompted by the teacher, rotating around the room. When students arrive at the next document, they should add onto the other students’ observations, not repeating the same ones.
  • When all groups have seen each of the documents, the teacher will gather the class together and will read through each of the observations for the documents, and compile a master list on the white board of arguments for and against American imperialism.

Assessment –
The teacher will collect the observation sheets and grade them as a classwork grade. He or she will use the initials next to the observations to assess each student.

Connecticut Framework Performance Standards –
1.1 Demonstrate an understanding of significant events and themes in United States history.
2. Trace the changing role of U.S. participation and influence in world affairs (e.g., trade, United Nations, NATO, globalization).
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Observation Log

**Essential question:** What were some of the arguments for and against American imperialism? Record your observations based on the document below. Keep the essential question in mind…
The Battle Hymn of the Republic, Updated
By Mark Twain

Mine eyes have seen the orgy of the launching of the Sword;
He is searching out the hoardings where the stranger’s wealth is stored;
He hath loosed his fateful lightnings, and with woe and death has scored;
His lust is marching on.

I have seen him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps;
They have builded him an altar in the Eastern dews and damps;
I have read his doomful mission by the dim and flaring lamps—
His night is marching on.

I have read his bandit gospel writ in burnished rows of steel:
“As ye deal with my pretensions, so with you my wrath shall deal;
Let the faithless son of Freedom crush the patriot with his heel;
Lo, Greed is marching on!”

We have legalized the strumpet and are guarding her retreat:
Greed is seeking out commercial souls before his judgement seat;
O, be swift, ye clods, to answer him! Be jubilant my feet!
Our god is marching on!

In a sordid slime harmonious Greed was born in yonder ditch,
With a longing in his bosom—and for others’ goods an itch.
As Christ died to make men holy, let men die to make us rich—
Our god is marching on.

*** Compare with original below.

The Battle Hymn of the Republic

Julia Ward Howe, 1861

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored.
He has losted the fateful lightening of His terrible swift sword
His truth is marching on.

Chorus:
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
His truth is marching on.

I have seen Him in the watch-fires of a hundred circling camps
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damps
I can read His righteous sentence by the dim and flaring lamps
His day is marching on.

Chorus

I have read a fiery gospel writ in burnish’d rows of steel,
“As ye deal with my contemners,
So with you my grace shall deal;”
Let the Hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with his heel
Since God is marching on.

Chorus

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat.
He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment-seat
Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer Him!
Be jubilant, my feet!
Our God is marching on.

Chorus

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me;
As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free.
While God is marching on.

Chorus
Ten thousand miles from tip to tip.—Philadelphia Press.

“USA Imperialism, 1898” from the Philadelphia Press
“What the United States has Fought for,” 1914 by John T. McCutcheon
“MR. PRESIDENT, the times call for candor. The Philippines are ours forever, "territory belonging to the United States," as the Constitution calls them. And just beyond the Philippines are China's illimitable markets. We will not retreat from either. We will not repudiate our duty in the archipelago. We will not abandon our opportunity in the Orient. We will not renounce our part in the mission of our race, trusted, under God, of the civilization of the world. And we will move forward, as our work, not howling out regrets like slaves whipped to their burdens but with gratitude for a task worthy of our strength and thanksgiving to Almighty God that He has marked us as His chosen people, heretofore to lead in the regeneration of the world."

This island empire is the last land left in all the oceans. If it should prove a mistake to hold it, the error can be corrected when we will. Every other progressive nation stands ready to relieve us. But to hold it will be no mistake. Our largest trade henceforth must be with Asia. The Pacific is our ocean. Most of the trade of most of the world will be Pacific. The United States, as a manufacturing power, must have a share in the Pacific trade. The Philippines will be a great opportunity for the development of our manufactures. The population will be able to take care of itself. The Chinese will come and work for us. Therefore, we will not only hold the Philippines but will make them a part of our empire. Therefore, I am for the annexation of the Philippines. I am for the annexation of China. I am for the annexation of Japan. I am for the annexation of everything that we can get. And I am for the annexation of the Orient.
The Platt Amendment, 1903

[This amendment outlined the withdrawal of United States troops remaining in Cuba from the Spanish-American War. It defined the terms of U.S. relations with Cuba, ensuring U.S. involvement in Cuban affairs, both foreign and domestic, and gave the U.S. legal standing to U.S. claims to certain economic and military territories in Cuba, including Guantanamo Bay].

Article I. The Government of Cuba shall never enter into any treaty or other compact with any foreign power or powers which will impair or tend to impair the independence of Cuba, nor in any manner authorize or permit any foreign power or powers to obtain by colonization or for military or naval purposes, or otherwise, lodgment in or control over any portion of said island.

Article II. The Government of Cuba shall not assume or contract any public debt to pay the interest upon which, and to make reasonable sinking-fund provision for the ultimate discharge of which, the ordinary revenues of the Island of Cuba, after defraying the current expenses of the Government, shall be inadequate.

Article III. The Government of Cuba consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty, and for discharging the obligations with respect to Cuba imposed by the Treaty of Paris on the United States, now to be assumed and undertaken by the Government of Cuba. . . .

Article V. The Government of Cuba will execute, and, as far as necessary, extend the plans already devised, or other plans to be mutually agreed upon, for the sanitation of the cities of the island, to the end that a recurrence of epidemic and infectious diseases may be prevented, thereby assuring protection to the people and commerce of Cuba, as well as to the commerce of the Southern ports of the United States and the people residing therein....

Article VII. To enable the United States to maintain the independence of Cuba, and to protect the people thereof, as well as for its own defense, the Government of Cuba will sell or lease to the United States lands necessary for coaling or naval stations, at certain specified points, to be agreed upon with the President of the United States.