

**TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT**  
***Lesson Title – American Imperialism: For and Against***  
***From Kimberly Weber***

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 lossed 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.

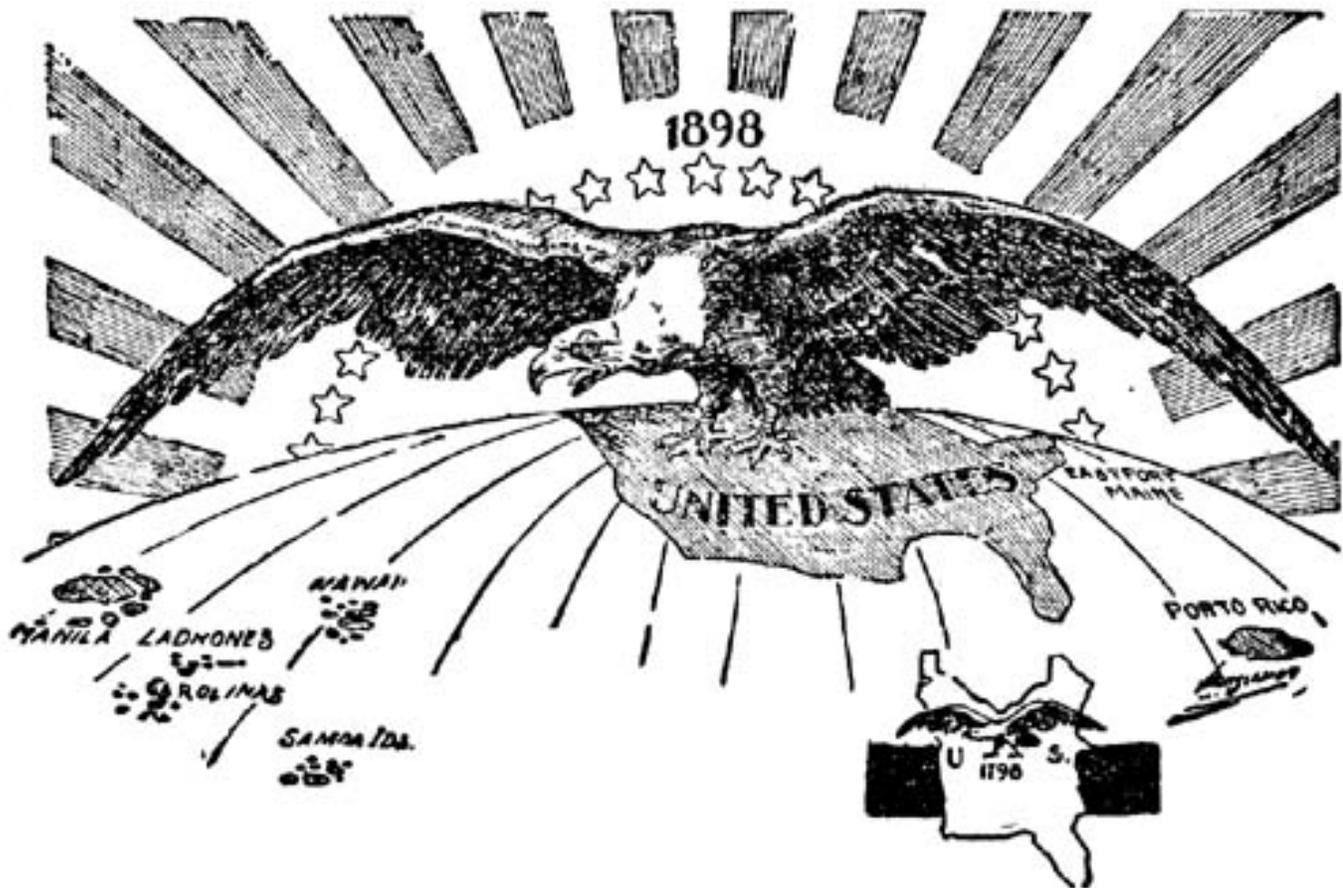
Chorus

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

**ALBERT J. BEVERIDGE : “In Support of an American Empire” (1902)**

“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, trustee, under God, of the civilization of the world. And we will move forward to 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, henceforth to lead in the regeneration of the world.

When I next realized that the Philippines had dropped into our laps I confess I did not know what to do with them. I sought counsel from all sides—Democrats as well as Republicans—but got little help. I thought first we would take only Manila, then Luzon, then other islands perhaps also. I walked the floor of the White House night after night until midnight, and I am not ashamed to tell you, gentlemen, that I went down on my knees and prayed Almighty God for light and guidance more than one night. And one night late it came to me this way—I don't know how it was, but it came: (1) That we could not give them back to Spain—that would be cowardly and dishonorable; (2) that we could not turn them over to France and Germany—our commercial rivals in the Orient—that would be bad business and discreditable; (3) that we could not leave them to themselves—they were unfit for self-government—and they would soon have anarchy and misrule over there worse than Spain's was; and (4) that there was

nothing left for us to do but to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them, and by God's grace do the very best we could by them, as our fellow-men for whom Christ also died. And then I went to bed, and went to sleep, and slept soundly, and the next morning I sent for the chief engineer of the War Department (our map-maker), and I told him to put the Philippines on the map of the United States, (pointing to a large map on the wall of his office), and there they are, and there they will stay while I am President.”

But to hold it will be no mistake. Our largest trade henceforth must be with Asia. The Pacific is our ocean. More and more Europe will manufacture the most it needs, secure from its colonies the most it consumes. Where shall we turn for consumers of our surplus? Geography answers the question. China is our natural customer. She is nearer to us than England, Germany, or Russia, the commercial powers of the present and the future. They have moved nearer to China by securing permanent bases on her borders. The Philippines give us a base at the door of all the East.

Lines of navigation from our ports to the Orient and Australia, from the Isthmian Canal to Asia, from all Oriental ports to Australia converge at and separate from the Philippines. They are a self-supporting, dividend-paying fleet, permanently anchored at a spot selected by the strategy of Providence, commanding the Pacific. And the Pacific is the ocean of the commerce of the future. Most future wars will be conflicts for commerce. The power that rules the Pacific, therefore, is the power that rules the world. And, with the Philippines, that power is and will forever be the American Republic. . . .”

Available in full on <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/ajb72.htm>



## **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 ]resident of the United States.