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INCLUDING THE COMPLETE FIRST LESSON

Prepared for:
America’s History in the Making
Oregon Public Broadcasting

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Organization of American Historians
and the
National Center for History in the Schools, UCLA
Series: Conflicts and Foreign Policy
INTRODUCTION

APPROACH AND RATIONALE

The National Center for History in the Schools at UCLA (NCHS) and the Organization of American Historians (OAH) have developed the following lessons for teaching with primary sources. This unit, like others copublished by NCHS and OAH, is the fruit of a collaboration between an academic historian and an experienced teacher of United States history. These units represent specific “dramatic episodes” in history at which you and your students can pause to delve into the deeper meanings of these selected landmark events and explore their wider context in the greater historical narrative. By studying a crucial turning point in history, the student becomes aware that choices had to be made by real human beings, that those decisions were the result of specific factors, and that they set in motion a series of historical consequences. We have selected dramatic episodes that bring alive this decision-making process. We hope that through this approach, your students will realize that history is an ongoing, open-ended process, and that the decisions they make today create the conditions for tomorrow’s history.

Our teaching units are based on primary sources, taken from government documents, artifacts, magazines, newspapers, films, and literature contemporary to the period under study. What we hope you achieve by using primary source documents in these lessons is to have your students connect more intimately with the past. In this way, we hope to recreate for your students a sense of “being there,” a sense of seeing history through the eyes of the very people who were making decisions. This will help your students develop historical empathy, to realize that history is not an impersonal process divorced from real people like themselves. At the same time, by analyzing primary sources, students will actually practice the historian’s craft, discovering for themselves how to analyze evidence, establish a valid interpretation, and construct a coherent narrative in which all the relevant factors play a part.

CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

Within this unit, you will find: 1) Unit Objectives, 2) Correlation to the National History Standards, 3) Teacher’s Background Materials, 4) Lesson Plans, and 5) Student Resources. This unit, as we have said above, focuses on certain key moments in time and should be used to supplement your customary course materials. Although these lessons are recommended for grades 7–12, they can be adapted for other grade levels. The teacher’s background section should provide you with a good overview of the entire unit and with the historical information and context necessary to link the specific “dramatic moment” to the larger historical narrative. You may consult it for your use, and you may choose to share it with students if they are of sufficient grade level.

The lesson plans include a variety of ideas and approaches for the teacher which can be elaborated upon or cut as you see the need. These lesson plans contain student resources which accompany each lesson. The resources consist of primary sources of the lessons offered on any given topic, or you can select and adapt the ones that best support your particular
course needs. We have not attempted to be comprehensive or prescriptive in our offerings but rather give you an array of enticing possibilities for in-depth study, at varying grade levels. We hope that you will find the lesson plans exciting and stimulating for your classes. We also hope that your students will never again see history as a boring sweep of inevitable facts and meaningless dates, but rather as an endless treasure of real-life stories, and an exercise in analysis and reconstruction.
The sinking of the *USS Maine* in Havana harbor in April, 1898, caused outrage in the United States and precipitated the war between the United States and Spain. This armed conflict lasted only four months and resulted in few American casualties from military engagements. This brief, “splendid little war,” as diplomat John Hay called it, ended with a peace treaty that transferred the Spanish overseas empire in the Caribbean and in the Pacific to the United States. Cuba received independence but was forced to agree to accept America’s rights to intervene in its affairs. The United States government quietly annexed Puerto Rico and Guam. However, in the Philippine Islands, a bloody conflict broke out between Filipino forces battling for independence and American troops sent there to quell what they and many other American citizens viewed as a rebellion. This war lasted far longer than the Spanish-American conflict and resulted in many more deaths.

Most secondary school textbooks devote considerable space to the four-month war between Spain and the United States. Few such books, however, focus on the long and brutal conflict that followed in the Philippines. The Philippine-American War deserves the attention of both students and teachers for several reasons. First, it was a longer and more costly conflict than the previous war with Spain. Second, the Philippine-American War illustrates the conflicting views that Americans had about their goals in foreign policy, including questions of strategic national interest and the role and place of American cultural values abroad. It elicited a thorough debate on the merits of the policies of the United States. Third, depending on one’s perspective, the war forecasts or does not forecast many of the problems that the United States faced in the later military entanglements in Korea and Vietnam. Fourth, this conflict marks the beginning of a long-term commitment to an American presence in Asia and global involvement outside the Western Hemisphere. Fifth, the resulting occupation has had profound effects on the Filipino government and society.

This unit will examine the causes of the conflict between the American government and the Filipino independence fighters, the arguments for and against annexation of the Philippines, and the nature and impact of the resulting military conflict.

II. Unit Context

The Philippine-American War should be taught as part of a larger unit on United States imperialism in the period from 1890 to 1914. In a typical United States history course, the activities in this unit would be preceded by study of American industrialization in the nineteenth century, the politics of the Gilded Age, the causes of American expansionism, and the events of the Spanish-American War. The unit should prepare students for examination of American foreign policy during the Progressive Era and World War One.
III. Correlation with the National Standards for United States History


IV. Unit Objectives

- Students will explain the causes of American imperialist policies and values in the 1890s.
- Students will identify key events that led to armed conflict between Filipino and American military units.
- Students will evaluate the arguments for and against U.S. annexation and subjugation of the Philippine Islands and their people.
- Students will examine the nature of the military conflict between Filipinos and Americans and analyze the consequences and impact of the war.

V. Historical Background

The Philippine-American War, 1899–1902

Teddy Roosevelt, the Rough Riders, and the sinking of the U.S.S. Maine are but a few of the images people have about the United States’ 123-day war with Spain, in 1898. What they may not remember is that this was the war that launched the United States as a world power. Victorious over Imperial Spain in both Cuba and the Philippines in the span of months, the United States became the “New Spain” by taking over Spanish territorial holdings in the Caribbean, the Pacific, and in Asia. At the same time that the U.S. acquired overseas possessions in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War, it began a century-long debate over its newly assumed role as empire builder. The Spanish-American War may have catalyzed the debate, but the ensuing Philippine-American War—a long, bloody, and costly affair—truly crystallized the argument over America’s new international role. Pro-imperialist arguments held sway until the high costs of war triggered an anti-imperialist backlash, caused an agonizing reappraisal of the assumed benefits of empire-building, and contributed to a long-term amnesia regarding America’s first overseas imperial war.

Nineteenth-Century Background

The American people’s belief that they had a sacred obligation to spread their institutions and way of life (“manifest destiny”) shaped the westward expansion in the 1840s into Texas and the Southwest, Utah and the Great Basin, and California, Oregon, and the Pacific Northwest. The process of empire building resumed soon after the Civil War. In 1867, Secretary of State William
Seward acquired Alaska from Russia for $7.2 million, and, in the early 1870s, the United States debated the annexation of the island of Santo Domingo in the Caribbean. Although the Senate refused to ratify the Santo Domingo treaty, American activity overseas continued with economic interventions in Latin America and with growing interest in gaining islands in the Pacific and a share of the Asian market. Washington negotiated a treaty in 1878 to gain a naval station in Samoa. In July 1898, Congress approved the annexation of Hawaii; and in 1899 Secretary of State John Hay issued his first Open Door note to lay claim to trading rights in China equal to those already enjoyed by other European occupying powers.

1898: America’s War with Spain and the Race for Empire

No step in American empire-building was as significant as Washington’s war with Spain in 1898 and the resulting global territorial expansion involving Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, Hawaii, and the islands of the Philippines archipelago. America’s war with Spain exploded within a larger wave of European and Japanese global expansion, sometimes called the “new imperialism.” What became a rush for territorial acquisition sprang from many different motivations, ranging from economic, missionary, and moral imperatives to a policy of pure “realpolitik”—a raw, competitive drive for national power and prestige. The assumption that white, Anglo-Saxon, western nations were superior to the “inferior” peoples of the world and therefore had the right to spread their principles, institutions, and religion around the globe was inherent in the missionary rhetoric of European and American imperialism. Many considered this a God-given responsibility (and “burden”) to advance the progress of the world.

For the United States, this Great Power race for empire coincided with Spanish mismanagement of colonial Cuba, an island only 90 miles from the U.S. shores. News reports of Spanish atrocities created American sympathy for the Cubans. When the Cuban insurrection escalated in early 1898, President William McKinley sent the battleship USS Maine into Havana Harbor, ostensibly to protect U.S. citizens. In an atmosphere of heightened tension, the Maine mysteriously blew up, and American newspapers fanned the angry reaction at home, accusing Spain of treachery. Domestic pressure, therefore, contributed to McKinley’s declaration of war on Spain in April. American victory after only four months left the United States in control of the former Spanish colonies of Cuba and Puerto Rico in the Caribbean and Guam and the Philippines in the Pacific.
The year 1898 was a major turning point in Philippines history. From the time of the first settlers, dating back to land bridge crossings during the late glacial period, until the Spanish arrived in the early 1500s, separate and interconnected Filipino communities, ruled over by chieftains, developed across the islands. The Spanish period began when Ferdinand Magellan landed on Cebu on 16 March 1521 and claimed the archipelago for Spain. In 1542 the island-chain was named Islas Filipinas in honor of Prince Felipe (later Philip II) of Spain. The first permanent Spanish settlement was a fort and church on Cebu in 1565.

While over a thousand islands were inhabited, the capital of Manila increasingly dominated culture and commerce in the course of the next 350 years. Sugar, hemp, and tobacco left Manila Harbor to the markets of China and beyond. Unlike Cuba, however, whose sugar industry generated tremendous wealth for Spain, the Philippines sugar economy yielded little profit. Meanwhile, the Filipino population itself remained mostly rural. Few islanders benefited from the Spanish shipping trade. Filipino men built the ships and served as sailors, but the pay was poor. For those outside of the galleon trade, their economic and social circumstances were even worse. In addition, Spanish missionaries forced the Filipinos to convert to Catholicism and collected taxes on their best land. Filipinos who challenged their oppressive conditions typically ended up in jail or faced execution.

Finally, in the late 19th century, a new group of Filipino activists began to emerge following an 1872 incident. Filipino workers and troops at the Cavite arsenal mutinied against the Spanish for better pay and work conditions. While the uprising was quickly squelched, three local priests who sought equality with Spanish priests were arrested and then executed near Manila Bay. They became the first modern martyrs in the Filipino movement for national independence. The independence struggle blossomed around a group of Filipino doctors, lawyers, and other professionals educated in Europe and the United States. These Western-trained leaders were called “ilustrados”—the enlightened ones.
The Filipino Revolution, therefore, began in 1896 when, under the flag of the Katipunan, or “Society of the Sons of the People,” some 20,000 Filipinos staged an uprising against their Spanish overlords. Twenty-seven-year-old Emilio Aguinaldo, the son of a wealthy aristocrat, rose quickly to the top of the revolutionary movement, and became president of the Katipunan in the spring of 1897. “Filipino citizens!” he declared. “Let us follow the example of European and American nations. Let us march under the Flag of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity!” With 200,000 Spanish troops tied down in Cuba, Madrid could ill afford a war in the Philippines. Spanish authorities offered Aguinaldo a declaration of peace in exchange for his promise to move the revolutionary leadership to Hong Kong. The Spanish sweetened the peace overture with an undisclosed amount of cash and a commitment to grant certain reforms to the Filipinos. Though Aguinaldo did not believe the Spanish would deliver on their guarantees of political, land, and economic reforms, he desperately needed the money for food and supplies. Aguinaldo thus agreed to resettle in Hong Kong, where he could then buy guns to smuggle back to freedom fighters in the Philippines.

1898–1902:
The Collision of Cultures—U.S. Empire Building and the Filipino Drive for Independence

The Spanish-American battle over Cuba in 1898 soon entangled Washington and Madrid in the Philippine Revolution and the larger struggle over Spain’s colonial possessions in East Asia. The U.S. contest for the Philippine Islands, in particular, turned on the actions of McKinley’s Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt ordered Commodore George Dewey to move the American fleet from Hong Kong to Manila to keep the Spanish navy from leaving the Philippines for Cuba. Whether Roosevelt’s order was accidental, instinctive, or prescient, it enabled subsequent military steps to be that much more effective. Therefore, following President McKinley’s April 22 order to blockade Havana, Cuba, Spain’s declaration of war response on the U.S. in Cuba, and Congress’s own war declaration against Spain, the American Navy was prepared to act half a world away in the Philippines.
The Americans easily won a showdown against the Spanish fleet in Manila Harbor on May 1, 1898. On that date, Commodore George Dewey directed an American fleet into the Harbor, where he faced the Spanish naval presence. Just after midnight, Dewey’s nine modernized ships made five devastating passes at the Spanish fleet. Twelve hours later, the Spanish surrendered their naval base in Manila, as ten of their ships lay ruined. Only one U.S. sailor was killed. That American forces could rout a European power thousands of miles from home made Dewey’s victory all the more compelling. Overnight, Dewey became the most famous man in the United States.

Filipino nationalists were ecstatic. Led by General Aguinaldo, and, following years of fighting for independence, they hoped for the honor of liberating Manila and declaring the birth of their sovereign nation. Meanwhile, Dewey—now promoted to rear admiral—waited in Manila for the U.S. Army to arrive. Intent on securing support from Filipino fighters, he sent a ship to Hong Kong to retrieve Aguinaldo. Dewey welcomed the revolutionary leader as a co-equal.

By the time of his arrival back in Manila, Aguinaldo had developed the idea that while the Filipinos desired immediate and complete independence, they also needed the protection of the United States because of threats posed by the German, French, and British navies in the South Pacific. Later, Aguinaldo wrote in his memoirs that Dewey promised to support the revolution. He recorded Dewey saying, “My word is stronger than the most strongly written statement there is.” Unfortunately for him, and for the chroniclers of history, the rear admiral provided no such written promise.
Aguinaldo now returned to his family’s mansion in Kawite [Cavite], just southwest of Manila, to plot a strategy to defeat a Spanish force that found itself bottled up inside the walled-in district of Intramuros. As Aguinaldo announced,

Divine Providence is about to place independence within our reach. The Americans have extended their protecting mantle to our beloved country, now that they have severed relations with Spain, owing to the tyranny that nation is exercising in Cuba. The American fleet will prevent any reinforcements coming from Spain. There, where you see the American flag flying, assemble in numbers; they are our redeemers.

Independence fighters attacked the Spanish position for nearly two months, and had cut off water and food supplies, when Aguinaldo sought his enemy’s surrender of Manila. The Spaniards balked, however, out of pride and out of fear that they would face murder and humiliation. Hoping for the additional leverage of American naval firepower to force a Spanish surrender to the Filipinos, Aguinaldo was disappointed. Instead of backing the Filipino assault on the Spaniards, Dewey directed newly arriving U.S. soldiers to occupy positions along the outskirts of Manila, adjacent to the revolutionary army.

Facing the prospect of defeat to a Great Power or to an upstart Filipino military, the Spanish proposed surrender terms to the United States that involved a mock battle for Manila, and the exclusion of Filipino insurgents. A staged battle would cause harm to few soldiers while enabling the Spanish to maintain a higher sense of national honor. After agreeing with the Americans to such conditions, the Spaniards raised the white flag to the U.S. “conquerors.” American military units obliged by charging the city as the Filipinos watched helplessly. On
August 14 in the church of San Augustine, the Spanish formally yielded control of Manila to the Americans. Blocked from entering the city, Aguinaldo and his followers rendezvoused in a monastery north of Manila to establish a sovereign government, independent of the United States. It was there that Aguinaldo wrote, “The people struggle for their independence, absolutely convinced that the time has come when they can and should govern themselves.”

While Aguinaldo wrestled with the fate of the movement he led, United States-Spanish peace talks began in Paris on October 1, 1898. No Filipinos or Cubans attended the deliberations, nor were any invited. McKinley clearly wanted Cuba from the Spanish, but he was not yet sure about the Philippines. Ultimately, he decided that he needed the port of Manila in the Philippines in order to have a naval base in the Western Pacific. After considerable debate and reflection, McKinley also recommended annexing the Philippines rather than giving the Filipinos outright independence. Undeterred by American actions in Paris and the White House, as well as the upcoming treaty debate in the United States Senate, the Filipinos approved a constitution in January 1899 based on the republican representative principles embodied in the United States Constitution.

The 1898 election kept the Republicans in control of Congress. Five days later, President McKinley’s cabled his terms to U.S. treaty negotiators in Paris. Secretary of State John Hay then sent a follow up wire to the representatives: “Insist upon the cession of the whole of the Philippines. If necessary, pay to Spain twenty million dollars.” Spain accepted the amended terms and relinquished the Philippines, Cuba, Guam, and Puerto Rico. The 400-year-old, global Spanish Empire had now vanished. But had the United States also become the “New Spanish Empire” with the transfer of territories?

Empire or No Empire?

The Treaty of Paris, agreed to on December 10, 1898, required U.S. Senate ratification, with approval of at least two-thirds of its members. Despite all that had come before—in newspapers, on
battlefields, and through election rhetoric—was the fundamental question of whether the United States should become an imperial power?

Two days prior to the climactic Senate vote of February 6, 1899, the unofficial headcount showed the treaty opponents two votes ahead. Meanwhile, in Manila, as American and Filipino sentries kept close watch on one another across a neutral divide, a U.S. Army private saw two Filipino soldiers crossing the San Juan Bridge into American-controlled ground. The private called out for the Filipinos to “halt” immediately. One Filipino soldier either did not comprehend “halt” or he chose to ignore the command. Whereupon, as he proceeded onto American ground, U.S. soldiers opened fire and Filipinos forces replied in kind. Sixty U.S. soldiers and 700 Filipinos died in the shootout. When the story reached the U.S. Senate, an emotional wave to “support our boys in the Philippines” caused the defection of two Democrats, and the body narrowly ratified the treaty.

The United States had officially acquired its first colonies—and also its first colonial rebellion. As a result of McKinley’s decision and the Senate’s action, the U.S. Army battled Filipino nationalist insurgents for four years, from 1898 to 1902. This was a timetable ten times longer than the war with Spain. In sum, the American-Philippine war was a drawn-out series of encounters that caused the deaths of over 4,000 Americans (compared to 385 in Cuba) and at least 50,000 Filipinos, many of whom were civilians dislocated by American policies. (It should be pointed out that fighting did not completely cease in 1902, as occasional skirmishes flared up until Philippine independence in 1946.)

In early 1899, as Rear Admiral Dewey doubled his order of ammunition to deal with the Filipino insurrection, the U.S. public and press rallied to the effort. As the New York Times wrote in February 1899:

> The insane attack of these people upon their liberators! It is not likely that Aguinaldo himself will exhibit much staying power. After one or two collisions, the insurgent army will break up.

To avoid a similar revolt in Cuba, U.S. officials appealed to rebel leaders to demobilize their troops, based on the hope that the United States would follow through on the proposed Teller Amendment (Henry Teller, D, CO), which promised eventual independence for Cuba. The Teller Amendment did pass in 1902. For Filipinos in 1899, however, they received no assurances of long-term independence, no Teller Amendment. Instead, they continued to resist. Within two months, they had killed or wounded 500 U.S. soldiers. By August, the U.S. government met Dewey’s request for 60,000 more troops. Aguinaldo responded, in kind, with an open call for guerilla warfare.
Anti-Imperialism

At the same time, the Anti-Imperialist League that had begun only months before grew in membership. Among the most vocal of anti-imperialists were members of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). As Bessie Scovel of the WCTU put it:

Again and again has my blood boiled at the hundreds of American saloons being established throughout our new possessions. And, shame of shame’s, our military authorities in the Philippines have introduced the open and official sanction of prostitution!

What particularly unsettled Temperance Union members were the repeated stories of sexually transmitted diseases coming out of South Asia. They were appalled to discover that their “pure boys” had left behind their loving mothers and strong values, gone to the Philippines, and returned home sick, wounded, or dead. The founder of the Anti-Imperialist League, Edward Atkinson, also published pamphlets on venereal disease and sent them to troops in the Philippines. In part, Atkinson wanted to prove that empire building would undermine traditional American principles, such as free speech. When the Postmaster General had the pamphlets confiscated en route to the Philippines, Atkinson publicly proclaimed, “You see? This is what happens. If we seize the Philippines to go and become an imperialist power, we’ll no longer have our freedoms.”

Costs of Empire Building

By late summer 1899, when stepped-up American troop reinforcements faced Aguinaldo’s equally serious pledge to wage guerrilla-style war, the price tag for empire-building shot up. Casualty figures in the Philippines also worried President McKinley. Three thousand Americans and 15,000 Filipinos had been killed. U.S. generals in Manila were ordered to censor reporters’ dispatches that contained any unfavorable news. Yet, American reporters in the Philippines blamed the generals and not the President for this censorship.

At the same time, Filipino fighters wore common dress, blended into the larger population, and engaged in nighttime raids, sniper assaults, and setting booby-traps. Stunned American soldiers reacted in a variety of ways. A. A. Barnes of the Third U.S. Artillery reported:
Last night one of our boys was found shot and his stomach cut open. Immediately orders were received to burn the town and kill every native in sight. I am probably growing hard-hearted for I am in my glory when I can sight my gun on some dark skin and pull the trigger.

An anonymous soldier wrote:

I don't believe the people in the United States understand the condition of things here. Even the Spanish are shocked. I have seen enough to almost make me ashamed to call myself an American.

Theodore Conley of the *Kansas Regiment* commented:

Talk about dead Indians! Why they are lying everywhere. The trenches are full of them.

In June 1900, the Republicans gathered in Philadelphia for their national convention. President McKinley was easily re-nominated, largely because the nation prospered after a devastating depression in the 1890s. Teddy Roosevelt was selected as his running mate, not because he was Governor of New York State, but because he was a war hero and could add excitement to the Republican ticket.

The election of 1900, a rematch of the 1896 race between McKinley and his Democratic rival, William Jennings Bryan, revolved as much around the question of economy as the on-going war in the Philippines. Bryan, in fact, hoped to defeat the incumbent president by repeatedly raising the war and turning the election into a referendum on McKinley’s foreign policy. McKinley won in a landslide on the basis of returning America to prosperity following a brief depression while Bryan’s strategy of attacking U.S. imperialism—and the Philippines War in particular—backfired. The Republicans could now argue that McKinley’s reelection signaled not only popular approval for the president’s handling of the economy but also resounding support for the empire-building campaign in the Philippines and elsewhere.

Shortly after his second inaugural address, in March 1901, President McKinley offered Cuba limited self-government under the terms of the Platt Amendment, a congressional document that previously made Cuba a U.S. protectorate. However, the grant of Cuban autonomy was quite restricted, as the United States retained the right to intervene in Cuba’s affairs, at any point, and to establish an indefinite naval presence at Guantánamo Bay. The Cubans ultimately acceded to American pressure and barely voted the Platt Amendment into their constitution.

During precisely the same time frame, in the Philippines, U.S. soldiers infiltrated rebel headquarters outside of Manila and captured Emilio Aguinaldo, the military and spiritual leader of the Filipino independence movement. While the war against American troops continued in the southern Philippines, the battle around Manila died down considerably in the summer of 1901. In tapping William Howard Taft as the first civilian governor of the Philippines, President McKinley defined “Big Bill” Taft’s purpose in terms of “benevolent assimilation.” Taft referred
to the Filipinos as his “little brown brothers.” Treating the Philippines as a quasi-laboratory for Progressive Era reforms, Taft’s colonial government set up American-style schools and American education methods, including English language emphasis. In order to reinforce the process of Americanization, Taft adopted a draconian law that banned any form of anti-American behavior, whether written, spoken, or represented in art, music, or Philippine flag-waving. Still, Filipinos continued to struggle for independence at all levels.

In September 1901 President McKinley, when visiting the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, spoke about the nation’s new role and position in the world.

We have a vast and intricate business built up through years of toil and struggle, in which every part of this country has its stake. Isolation is no longer possible or desirable.

McKinley was the first president to tell Americans they had global responsibilities as well as global economic opportunities. The next afternoon while at a public reception, the anarchist-assassin, Leon Czolgosz, fired his concealed gun into the president’s stomach. Unable to recover from the severe laceration, William McKinley died eight days later, to be replaced by Vice President Theodore Roosevelt.

Ten days into the Roosevelt presidency, Americans stationed in Balangiga, 400 miles southeast of Manila, came under attack. As Yankee troops sat to breakfast that morning, armed Filipinos emerged from hiding places and hacked forty-eight soldiers to death. While most Filipinos viewed the event as a blow for independence, the twenty-four American survivors—and a horrified U.S. public—interpreted the daylight raid as an unprovoked atrocity. In direct response, General Jacob Smith commanded U.S. forces to pursue revenge across the larger island of Samar. “I want no prisoners,” ordered Smith. “I want all persons killed who are capable of bearing arms against the United States.” “I’d like to know the limit of age to respect, sir,” requested his subordinate, Littleton Waller. “Ten years,” replied General Smith. American troops, therefore, set about to torch villages, destroy property, and slaughter men, women, and children.

South of Manila, in the province of Batangas, the Americans assembled all non-insurgents into military zones of protection. The similarities to Spanish methods in Cuba were unmistakable, as anyone found outside of these zones was assumed to be hostile, and were killed or imprisoned. A leader of the anti-imperialist faction in the U.S. Senate, George Hoar, pushed for a thorough investigation into the American reprisals. In the process, three Army officers, including General Jacob Smith, found themselves court-martialed.

From Surrender to Independence

In April 1902, following more than three years of warfare, Filipino leaders conceded defeat to the United States. For their part, the exhausted Americans had lost most of the zeal that had led to late nineteenth-century imperialism. Even President Roosevelt, once a champion of U.S. empire-building, admitted that his nation was ill-suited for imperialism. On reflection, he opined that the Philippines had become America’s Achilles heel. While the United States would use military force, time and again, across Latin America, and in portions of Asia, the Pacific, and elsewhere, it did so primarily for the purpose of constructing and maintaining a largely informal,
economic empire. The Spanish-American War (1898) and the Philippine-American War (1899–1902) from which it sprang are among the exceptions that prove the rule of U.S. empire-building, at least in the early twentieth century. Given the unexpected difficulties of the Philippines conflict, the United States assiduously avoided open-ended military campaigns until the Second World War.

During World War II, Japan conquered the Philippines. Sixty-thousand Americans and more than a million Filipinos died while driving the Japanese from the islands. Soon after, on July 4, 1946, the United States granted the Filipinos their independence.

VI. UNIT LESSONS

Lesson 1: Causes of the Philippine-American War

Lesson 2: The United States Senate Debates the Annexation of the Philippines

Lesson 3: Warfare in the Philippines

Lesson 4: The Impact of the War
## Time Line

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 15, 1898</td>
<td>Explosion sinks the battleship <em>USS Maine</em> in Havana Harbor, Cuba</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 25, 1898</td>
<td>United States declares war on Spain</td>
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<td>May 1, 1898</td>
<td>Commodore George Dewey’s United States naval forces defeated the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 24, 1898</td>
<td>General Emilio Aguinaldo establishes a provisional government in the Philippines</td>
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<td>June 12, 1898</td>
<td>Philippines proclaims independence.</td>
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<td>June 30, 1898</td>
<td>United States volunteer troops arrive in the Philippines.</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 12–13, 1898</td>
<td>Spain and the United States sign a Protocol of Peace establishing terms for a peace treaty. Spanish forces in Manila surrender to American military units.</td>
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<td>December 10, 1898</td>
<td>United States and Spain sign the Treaty of Paris, ending the war and transferring the Philippines to the United States.</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 4, 1899</td>
<td>Fighting begins between United States forces and Filipino Nationalists.</td>
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<td>February 6, 1899</td>
<td>United States Senate ratifies the Treaty of Paris.</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 12, 1899</td>
<td>General Aguinaldo dissolves the Filipino army and commences guerilla warfare against the American forces.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 13, 1901</td>
<td>American forces capture General Aguinaldo.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 4, 1901</td>
<td>United States establishes an American civilian government in the Philippines.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 4, 1902</td>
<td>President Theodore Roosevelt issues a proclamation ending the Philippine-American War.</td>
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The following narrative describes the opening shots fired in the Philippine-American War.

“About eight o’clock, Miller and I were cautiously pacing our district. We came to a fence and were trying to see what the Filipinos were up to. Suddenly, near at hand, on our left, was a low but unmistakable Filipino outpost signal whistle. It was immediately answered by a similar whistle about twenty-five yards to the right. Then a red lantern flashed a signal from blockhouse number seven. We have never seen such a sign used before. In a moment, something rose up slowly in front of us. It was a Filipino. I yelled, “Halt!” and made it pretty loud, for I was accustomed to challenging the officer of the guard in approved military style. I challenged him with another loud “Halt!” Then he shouted “Halto!” to me. Well, I thought the best thing to do was to shoot him. He dropped. If I didn’t kill him, I guess he died of fright. Two Filipinos sprang out of the gateway about fifteen feet from us. I called, “Halt!” and Miller fired and dropped one. I saw that another was left. Well, I think I got my second Filipino that time.”


American Troops on Ramparts at Manila
Edward H. Hart, ca. 1898–1901
Library of Congress, LC-D4-21488

Pasig River Suspension Bridge, from north side
Manila, Philippine Islands
Available: <http://www.oac.cdlib.org>
A. OBJECTIVES

- To examine the causes of the conflict between the United States government and Philippine citizens during the period 1899–1902.
- To evaluate the relative importance of factors causing the conflict.
- To analyze primary source documents to determine their main ideas and points of view.

B. ACTIVITIES (Suggested Time: 60–90 minutes)

Activity One: Discussion of Causes

1. Distribute copies of the Causes of the Philippine-American War (Student Handout 1). Explain that the items listed are different reasons that historians use to explain this conflict. Ask the students to read the items on the list.

2. Discuss the meaning of each cause listed on the handout. Ask students to cite examples from other periods in American history when the causes of conflict were evident.

Activity Two: Primary Source Interpretation

1. Distribute Documents Related to the Causes of the Conflict (Student Handout 2). Explain to students that they will work in cooperative groups to examine these documents to determine which causes were evident in the conflict over the Philippines. Following that, they will determine, from the documents, which cause seemed to be most important.

2. Distribute Comparison Chart: Causes of the Conflict (Student Handout 3). Explain that students will review the documents and determine in which categories of causes they best fit. Documents may fit in more than one category. They are to place the name of the document in the appropriate block on the chart, giving the author and a phrase explaining how it relates to the overall cause.

3. When students have completed the chart, have them consider the question: Which factor, in your view, was most important in causing the conflict? Ask them to explain their reasons.
Activity Three: Discussion of Work Completed

1. When the cooperative groups have completed the tasks noted above, ask students to provide oral examples of documents that fit the categories on the comparison chart. What documents could be put in more than one category? Why?

2. Discuss the evaluative question at the bottom of the comparison chart. Which factor was most important in causing the conflict?

C. Evaluation

Evaluate student work and understanding of the lesson by utilizing either or both of the following methods:

1. Listening to student responses in oral discussion.

2. Collecting and evaluating the comparison chart and the answer to the summary question.
Causes of the Philippine-American War

Geopolitical
Nations exhibit a desire for national power and/or they fear that their nation’s security is threatened by a foreign power. This may be manifested by calls for larger or more modern armed forces, the establishment of overseas bases, or the need to build political support for a future military conflict.

Economic
Nations enunciate policies that seek to increase the economic prosperity of their country and its citizens. This may include demands for access to additional products and/or raw materials from foreign nations or the increased development of markets for their nation’s goods in foreign lands.

Racial Ideology
Nations express the belief that certain cultural, ethnic or race-based societies are superior to others. National leaders may then argue that their own civilization exhibits better government, superior cultural values, a more enlightened economic system, and/or a higher religious order.

Missionary Zeal
Nations may offer humanitarian assistance to those societies that they perceive as less fortunate. This desire to help may be mixed with a belief in the superiority of one’s government, cultural values, economy or religious views. As a price for accepting aid from the powerful missionary nation, the recipient nation may be “convinced” to adopt certain values and practices characteristic of the dominant power.

Nationalism
Nations strive to be free of foreign influence and interference. They desire to be recognized by other countries as an independent state, based upon the nation’s defining qualities—its particular blend of government, culture, economy and/or religion. Once national sovereignty has been achieved, it then follows that “nationalistic” nations act to increase their prestige through the fulfillment of expansive political, territorial, economic and/or cultural objectives. More often than not, the effort to impose the “idea” or ideology of one nation upon another is an exercise in self-righteousness.

Militarism
Nations may see warfare as an end in itself to develop manly character and patriotism. Once war has been initiated, the honor of the nation must be upheld and citizens should “rally around the flag” to maintain national unity against foreign foes. Attacks upon a nation’s troops must, in this view, be avenged by further military action.

NOTE: The above categories represent viewpoints held by political leaders, social leaders, media centers, and common citizens. These interest groups often held more than one of the above perspectives simultaneously. Also, disagreements existed between members of those same groups.
Documents Related to the Causes of the Conflict

NOTE: Filipino sources are noted with an asterisk (*) at the end of each bibliographic reference.

The Filipino is the true child of the East. His moral fiber is as the web of the pineapple gauze of which the women make their dresses. He will cheat, steal, and lie beyond the orthodox limit of the Anglo-Saxon. His unreliability and the persistence with which he disobeys orders are irritating beyond description; besides this, his small stature and color invite abuse.


I am reliably informed that the natives of these islands are no farther advanced in civilization than they were 300 years ago.


The natural resources of the Philippines are very good, and under a civilized administration, these islands would be rich and prosperous. But the mildew of Spanish administration is upon everything.

—Trumbull White, Pictorial History of Our War With Spain for Cuba’s Freedom (Freedom Publishing Company, 1898), 399.

In the West Indies and the Philippines alike we are confronted by most difficult problems. It is cowardly to shrink from solving them in a proper way; for solved they must be, if not by us, by some stronger and more manful race.

I want to get this country out of war and back to peace. . . . I want to enter upon a policy which shall enable us to give peace and self-government to the natives of these islands.


Damn, damn the Filipinos!
Cut-throat Khadiac *ladrone*! (thieves)
Underneath the starry flag
Civilize them with a *Krag* (rifle)
And return us to our beloved home!


It is as a base for commercial operations that the islands seem to possess the greatest importance. They occupy a favored location, not with reference to one part of any particular country of the Orient, but to all part. . . . Together with the islands of the Japanese Empire, the Philippines are the pickets of the Pacific, standing guard at the entrances to trade with the millions of China and Korea, French Indo-China, the Malay Peninsula, and the Islands of Indonesia to the South.


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 and the most it consumes. Where shall we turn for consumer of our surplus? Geography answers the question. China is our natural customer . . . the Philippines gives us a base at the door of all the East. . . . No land in America surpasses in fertility the plains and valleys of Luzon [major island in the Philippines].


The closing years of the century seem to be, in all lands save our own, not of war, but of a strenuous making ready for it. Alsace and Lorraine, the Eastern Question in its many varied phases, and the jealous rivalry as to colonies and dependencies, make Continental Europe but a camp, with more than three million men under arms.

The World of the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars

Adapted from world outline map <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/atlas> National Geographic Society, 2001
Since it is their desire, may the responsibility of the war and its consequences fall on the great nation of the United States of America. We have done our duty as patriots and human beings, showing the great powers of the world that the present cabinet has the diplomacy necessary to protect our cause as well as the arms required to defend our rights.


True, we might have thought it hopeless to attempt the improvement of conditions in the Philippines, had not fate placed the power in our hands. Granted, if you will, that we cannot right the wrongs of all oppressed nations, yet we cannot refuse to accept the responsibility which logic of events has thrust upon us.


Merritt’s most difficult problem will be how to deal with insurgents under Aquinaldo, who has become aggressive and even threatening toward our army.


In the war against Spain the United States forces came here to destroy the power of that nation, and to give the blessings of peace and individual freedom to the Philippine people, that we are here as friends of the Filipinos, to protect them in their homes, their employments, their individual and religious liberty; that all persons who either by active aid or honest endeavor cooperate with the government of the United States to give effect to these beneficent purposes, will receive the reward of its support and protection.

In my manifesto of January 8 [1899], first I published the grievances suffered by the Philippine forces at the hands of the army of occupation. The constant outrages and taunts, which have caused the misery of the people of Manila, and finally, the useless conferences and the contempt shown the Philippine government provide the premeditated transgression of justice and liberty.


When I realized the Philippines had dropped into our laps I confess I did not know what to do with them. . . . 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 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 do by them.

**Comparison Chart: Causes of the Conflict**

Instructions: Review the documents provided in Student Handouts 1 and 2. Place the authors’ names of those documents in the appropriate categories below, briefly explaining how their views relate to the category. Some documents may be placed in more than one category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geopolitical Influence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic Influence</td>
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<td>Racial Ideology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nationalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Militarism</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

After completing the chart above, write a paragraph explaining which factor, in your view, was most important in causing the conflict, and why.
To purchase the complete unit, see the National Center for History in the Schools catalog:

http://nchs.ucla.edu/catalog.html

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