

The Spanish American War
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“Would the U.S. have become involved in the Cuban Revolution if the U.S.S. Maine had not exploded in Havana harbor in February of 1898?”

Name _____ Period _____

American Involvement in the Cuban Revolution of 1898

Directions: The DBQ question is based on the accompanying documents (A-F). Some of these documents have been edited for the purposes of these exercises. This question is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the sources of the document and the author's point of view. You are expected to use notes that you have taken during our class in order to bring further detail to your answers. After answering each of the short response questions in Part 1, please advance to Part 2 and write a 5 – 7 paragraph essay in response to the following document-based question:

DBQ Question: Would the U.S. have become involved in the Cuban Revolution if the U.S.S. Maine had not exploded in Havana harbor in February of 1898? Provide evidence to support your position.

Summary of the Spanish-American War:

The Spanish-American War was an armed military conflict between Spain and the United States that took place from April to August 1898.

The war began due to American demands that Spain peacefully resolve the Cuban fight for independence—which had gone on for 30 years. A strong expansionist sentiment in the United States may have also motivated the government to target Spain's other remaining overseas territories: Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Guam and the Caroline Islands.

Riots in Havana by pro-Spanish "Voluntarios" gave the United States a reason to send in the warship USS Maine to indicate high national interest. Tension among the American people was raised because of the explosion of the USS Maine in Havana harbor on February 15, 1898, and "yellow journalism" that accused Spain of extensive atrocities. The war ended after quick, decisive naval and military victories for the United States in the Philippines and Cuba.

Only 109 days after the outbreak of war, the Treaty of Paris, which ended the conflict, gave the United States ownership of the former Spanish colonies of Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Guam. The United States occupied Cuba, ending the insurrection and expelling the Spanish colonial authorities.¹

Part 1

Document A

On December 2, 1823, President James Monroe issued his seventh State of the Union Address to Congress. In that address he emphasized that from that date forward, the United States would no longer accept further European colonization in or interference with the newly independent nations of the Americas. He also pointed out that the United States

planned to stay neutral in wars between European nations and their colonies. In this speech, he outlined how the United States would view any such actions by a European power.

Source: President James Monroe's seventh State of the Union Address
December 2, 1823

*"...as a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers... We owe it, therefore, to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those powers (European nations) to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety... It is only when our rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we resent injuries or make preparation for our defense."*²

1. How would America view a European nation's attempt to further colonize any area in the Western Hemisphere?

2. What action would the United States take if we thought that another nation invaded our rights or seriously menaced our national security?

Document B

Manifest Destiny was a phrase that originally stated the United States was destined to expand from the Atlantic seaboard to the Pacific Ocean; it has also been used to advocate for or justify other territorial acquisitions. As time progressed, the phrase came to represent a theoretical justification for U.S. expansion outside of North America.

Source: John L. O'Sullivan
"The Great Nation of Futurity" – 1839 speech

*"The far-reaching, the boundless future will be the era of American greatness. In its magnificent domain of space and time, the nation of many nations is destined to manifest to mankind the excellence of divine principles; to establish on earth the noblest temple ever dedicated to the worship of the Most High -- the Sacred and the True. Its floor shall be a hemisphere -- its roof the firmament of the star-studded heavens, and its congregation an Union of many Republics, comprising hundreds of happy millions, calling, owning no man master, but governed by God's natural and moral law of equality, the law of brotherhood -- of peace and good will amongst men... We must onward to the fulfillment of our mission -- to the entire development of the principle of our organization -- freedom of conscience, freedom of person, freedom of trade and business pursuits, universality of freedom and equality... Who, then, can doubt that our country is destined to be the great nation of futurity?"*³

3. According to John O’Sullivan, what was God’s mission for the United States?

4. What did O’Sullivan cite as proof that God was on the side of America?

5. What was America destined to spread to new lands?

Document C

In his final presidential message to Congress on December 7, 1896, Grover Cleveland reviewed the history of Spanish-Cuban relations and outlined what he felt were the alternatives open to the United States. Below is an excerpt from that speech.

Source: *State of the Union Address by President Grover Cleveland*
December 7, 1896

“It is now also suggested that the United States should buy the island (of Cuba)—a suggestion possibly worthy of consideration if there were any evidence of a desire or willingness on the part of Spain to entertain such a proposal. It is urged, finally, that, all other methods failing, the existence of internecine strife in Cuba (rebellion by Cubans) should be terminated by our intervention, even at the cost of a war between the United States and Spain—a war which it advocates confidently prophesy could be neither large in its proportions nor doubtful in its issue.”⁴

6. What group of people did President Cleveland **not** consider when he said that the United States should entertain the possibility of purchasing the island nation of Cuba?

7. What course of action did President Cleveland advocate for the United States if the internal rebellion continued for much longer?

Document D

Published in "Puck" magazine, January 13, 1897. Title: "Patient Waiters are No Losers"
Description: Uncle Sam is standing under a fruit tree, fruits hanging from tree are labeled "Hawaii, Canada, Cuba, Florida, Texas, California, and Louisiana"



8. In this political cartoon countries are represented as what?

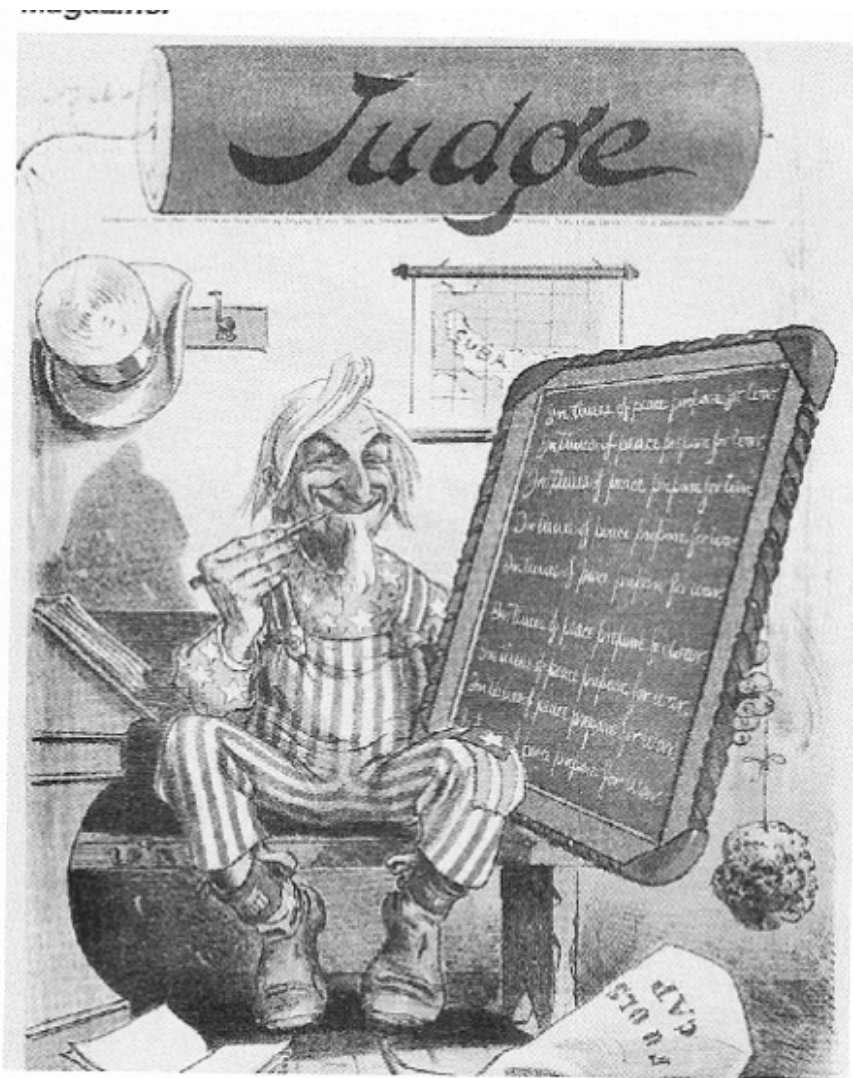
9. What is symbolized by the pieces of fruit in the basket being larger than those on the tree?

10. What is the overall message of this political cartoon?

Document E

Published in "Judge" magazine in 1898.

Description: Uncle Sam is sitting in school. On his chalkboard he is repeated writing the sentence, "In times of peace prepare for war."



11. What does the symbol of a schoolboy "Uncle Sam" represent?

12. On Uncle Sam's left knee is a patch of the flag of Cuba. What is the symbolism of including the Cuban flag on Uncle Sam's school clothing that is made up of the "stars & stripes"?

13. Why is it important for Uncle Sam to learn the lesson "In times of peace prepare for war"?

Document F

Starting in 1896, William Randolph Hearst, publisher of the New York Journal and several other newspapers., openly declared his support for the Cuban rebels. He refused to publish stories that were favorable to the Spanish. The two stories below were published in other papers owned by Hearst, several days before the explosion of the U.S.S. Maine.

"Washington, Feb. 9 -- Oratory in behalf of the Cuban insurgents occupied three hours time of the Senate to-day. Elaborate speeches were delivered by Cannon, of Utah, and Mason, of Illinois, in advocacy of the resolution they introduced yesterday calling upon the President to bring the Cuban war to a close."⁷

As if to further illustrate the rising tensions, on Feb. 10 the Examiner ran a brief front page story headlined, "Porto Rico the point of attack." The article said "It is understood that in case of war with Spain the Administration's military and naval programme includes the immediate seizure of Porto (sic) Rico, as well as the investment of Cuba. Believing the war would be an extremely short one, it would be advisable that Porto Rico should be held ... in order to completely dispose of Spanish title possessions in the Western Hemisphere."⁸

14. In the first article, why do you think Hearst found it necessary to say that the oratory (speeches) were given on behalf of the Cuban insurgents (rebels)?

15. Why do you think Hearst was in favor of the United States completely disposing of Spanish title possessions in the Western Hemisphere?

16. What is Hearst's overall opinion of the Spanish?

Document G:

Enrique Dupuy De Lôme was the Spanish diplomat in charge of Cuban Affairs at the Spanish Embassy in Washington, D.C. in 1898, De Lôme wrote a letter to a Spanish official in Havana that was intended to be private. The letter was intercepted by Cuban rebels, and released to William Randolph Hearst's newspaper, The New York Journal. In the letter, De Lôme was critical of U.S. President, William McKinley. The letter was published just 6 days before the explosion of the U.S.S. Maine. Below are excerpts from this letter.

*Eximo Señor Don Jose Canalejas:
My Distinguished and Dear Friend...*

"The situation here (in Washington, D.C.), remains unchanged. Everything depends on the political and military success in Cuba... it relieves us in the eyes of this country of a part of the responsibility for what happens there (Cuba), and they must cast the responsibility on the Cubans, whom they believe to be so immaculate."

"(President) McKinley is weak and catering to the rabble, and besides (he is) a low politician who desires to leave a door open to me and to stand well with the (members of his political) party... it will only depend on ourselves whether he proves bad and adverse to us."

"It would be most important that you should agitate the question of commercial relations, even though it would only be for effect... make propaganda among the senators and others in opposition to the Junta (Cuban rebels) and win over exiles (Cubans who fled the violence in their country for safety in America)."

*"Always your attentive friend and servant, who kisses your hands,
Enrique Dupuy De Lôme"⁹*

17. What does Enrique Dupuy De Lôme think will happen in America once Spain achieves political and military success in Cuba?

18. William Randolph Hearst's New York Journal called De Lôme's statements about President McKinley the "Worst Insult To The United States In Its History". What conclusions can you draw from De Lôme's statements to his friend?

19. What do you think De Lôme trying to achieve by asking Canalejas to stir up politics on the issue of American-Spanish business relations?

Part 2

For Part 2, use your answers from Part 1, information from the documents, and your prior knowledge related to these issues to write a well organized 5 - 7 paragraph essay. In that essay please address the following DBQ question:

DBQ Question: Would the U.S. have become involved in the Cuban Revolution if the U.S.S. Maine had not exploded in Havana harbor in February of 1898? Provide evidence to support your position.

Criteria	20	17	15	10	5	0	Score
Thesis / answers question	Strong thesis – responds directly to the question.	Thesis stated – answers the question.	Addresses the question but has weak structure & focus.	Poor focus; fails to answer the question adequately.	Fails to address the question; confusing & unfocused.	No Thesis; no attempt to address the question.	
Use of documents / evidence	Uses documents completely & accurately; weighs the importance & validity of evidence.	Uses documents correctly; recognizes that all evidence is not equally valid.	Uses most documents correctly – simplistic analysis; does not always weigh the importance & validity of evidence.	Some documents used correctly; some only paraphrased or misunderstood; fails to recognize any difference in the validity of evidence.	Fails to use documents correctly; simply paraphrased or misunderstood.	Ignores or misuses the documents.	
Incorporates outside information	Cites considerable relevant information from outside learning.	Cites some relevant information from outside learning.	Includes little relevant information from outside learning.	Includes little information from outside learning – what is included is irrelevant.	Includes no relevant information from beyond the documents.	Includes no information from beyond the documents.	
Understanding of topic	Displays a thorough understanding of the topic & related issues.	Shows an understanding of the the topic & related issues.	Shows basic, though simplistic, understanding of the topic & related issues.	Shows little understanding of the topic & related issues.	Shows almost no understanding of the topic or related issues.	Shows no understanding of the topic or related issues.	
Use of language	Well structured, well written; proper spelling, grammar, mechanics.	Clearly written & coherent; some minor errors in writing.	Weaker organization; some errors in writing detract from essay's meaning.	Poorly organized; many errors in standard English.	Disorganized; littered with errors in standard English.	Lacks any organization; little attempt made; blank paper.	
Total Score:							

Student who wrote the essay: _____

Instructor: _____

Works Cited

1. Wikipedia: The Spanish-American War.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spanish-American_War
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<http://www.freedomshrine.com/documents/monroe.html>
3. The Great Nation of Fururity: John L. O'Sullivan
<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/osulliva.htm>
4. American Interests in the Cuban Revolution: Grover Cleveland
<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/gc26.htm>
5. Puck Magazine: "Patient Waiters Are No Losers" by Louis Dalrymple.
<http://library.kcc.hawaii.edu/~soma/cartoons/patient.html>
6. Judge Magazine: "In Times of Peace Prepare For War", retrieved from: A History of U.S. – Vol. 8: An Age of Extremes: 1880 – 1917 by Joy Hakim.
7. Defining "Yellow Journalism": Competition With Hearst.
<http://www.onlineconcepts.com/pulitzer/yellow.htm>
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9. The Spanish American War Centennial Website: The De Lome Letter.
<http://www.spanamwar.com/Delome.htm>