

Stark County Teaching American History Grant

Stark County Educational Service Center
2100 38th Street NW
Canton, Ohio 44709



Game Changer

Did the Spanish American War change American foreign policy?

Grade Level

9th/10th American History

Created by Jodi Rice

Orrville City Schools

Duration: 2 class periods

Overview

This lesson follows an in-depth study of the Spanish American War. Students will examine excerpts from several primary sources about imperialism and anti-imperialism in preparation for a class debate on the subject. In the class debate students will argue for or against imperialism. The students will conclude this lesson by writing an essay discussing to what extent was the United States government justified in embracing an American foreign policy of imperialism in the late 1800s.

Ohio Academic Content Standards

Topic: *Foreign Affairs from Imperialism to Post-World War I (1898-1930)*

The industrial and territorial growth of the United States fostered expansion overseas. Greater involvement in the world set the stage for American participation in World War I and attempts to preserve post-war peace.

Content Statements:

15. As a result of overseas expansion, the Spanish-American War and World War I, the United States emerged as a world power.

Historical Background

In the 1890s the United States emerged as an imperial power. A number of factors led to this, including growth in trade and desire to compete with the European powers as they gained greater territory around the world. But it was victory in the Spanish-American War that brought the United States its new global influence. The immediate causes of the war lay in Cuba. In the 1800's Cuba was a Spanish colony. The main source of income for Spain in Cuba was large sugarcane plantations. The United States had become closely tied to Cuba due to sugarcane. Cuba exported large amounts of sugar to the United States and the United States had invested in sugarcane plantations, mines and railroads in Cuba.

A ten-year guerilla war had erupted after a revolt in 1868. In the late 1880's native Cubans, who were enslaved until 1886, renewed their push for independence from Spain. Many American investors backed the rebels. The idea of a revolution also gained support from a majority of the American population as they heard the rebels discuss ideas like "freedom and independence". President Grover Cleveland announced that the United States was officially neutral.

One thing that was spurring the support from the public was the "yellow" journalism. Many newspapers were writing stories about largely exaggerated "atrocities" committed by the Spanish while not reporting on the same type of incidents committed by the rebels. This method of reporting sold papers and also created support for the rebellion.

President William McKinley became president in 1897. Publicly he announced he did not want to enter the conflict in Cuba. However, privately McKinley and his administration were seeking expansion for the United States. The conflict in Cuba provided a good opportunity. Spain was weak militarily, making their territories easy targets for takeover if the United States entered the war. McKinley sent the battleship *U.S.S. Maine* to Havana, Cuba's harbor to evacuate American citizens from Cuba if it became necessary. The presence of the battleship also put added pressure on Spain.

On the night of February 15, 1898 the *U.S.S. Maine* exploded in the Havana harbor killing 252 men. The press immediately blamed Spain. Instead of immediately going to war, McKinley waited. He pressed Spain to give the Cubans their independence and explained that the alternative was war. The American public became angry. The war slogan became "Remember the Maine". Congress unanimously voted to authorize the president to begin war preparations.

Initial studies indicated a naval mine caused the *Maine* to blow up; however, studies done in following years conclude that it was not a mine that blew up the *Maine*. The *Maine* probably had an internal explosion.

Upon entering the war, the United States fleet in the Pacific set out to defeat the Spanish fleet in the Philippines, a Spanish territory. The American fleet easily defeated the Spanish. The quick victory had not allowed for the ground troops to arrive in the Philippines. The troops were assembled and as they were travelling to the Philippines stopped to take over the island of Guam, another Spanish colony.

Meanwhile, in Cuba, 17,000 American troops landed on June 14, 1898. The fighting lasted about two months and on August 12, a cease fire was signed. After the cease fire, the Americans went on to take over the Spanish colony of Puerto Rico.

American and Spanish leaders met in Paris to discuss the terms for peace. Cuba was given its independence, however, with stipulations as outlined in the Platt Amendment to the new Cuban constitution. This amendment essentially made Cuba a protectorate of the United States. Guam and Puerto Rico were made territories of the United States. The United States paid \$20 million for the Philippines and they also became a territory of the United States.

At the conclusion of the war, conflict renewed in the Philippines. Rebels there had been fighting the Spanish since 1896, and once President McKinley decided to maintain control over the archipelago, the Filipinos turned against the United States. This war lasted far longer than the Spanish-American War, from 1899 to 1903, and cost the lives of 4,200 Americans and some 100,000 Filipinos. It led to a fierce public debate over the merits of empire, especially over whether the United States should maintain control over the Philippines. Many Americans supported the idea of the United States becoming an imperial power. Supporters said it was our duty to teach the “less civilized” people of the world. They also pointed out the military and economic benefits of having territories around the world. Not all Americans were in favor of becoming an imperial power. These Americans said that imperialism violated American principles. Anti-imperialists also said the cost of keeping up with territories may outweigh the benefits of having them.

In the end, the United States defeated the Filipino rebels and secured control over the territory. In 1946, the United States granted the Philippines its independence. Hawaii eventually became a state in 1959. Puerto Rico remains a territory in-between, not a state nor fully independent. But with these acquisitions and developments, the United States entered into the age of imperialism and laid the foundations as a global power.

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Enduring Understandings/ Essential Questions

- The process governments establish for adding new territories reflects the values and attitudes of the country.
- How does public opinion influence a government’s foreign policy?
- Why do some nations think they need to spread their influence?

Instructional Strategies

Day One

Start with a mini-lecture describing what the class has already learned about the Spanish American War. (3-5 minutes) In the lecture emphasize that the United States became and imperial power when it won the Spanish American War and acquired the Philippines and territory in the Caribbean. Also be sure to explain that while many Americans wanted the United

States to expand its military and economic power, others did not agree. This lesson works best at the end of a unit about the Spanish American War.

Ask the Students to hypothesize why the United States thought they needed to spread their influence by acquiring new territories after the Spanish American War. What issues might some have had about acquiring these new territories? Write their responses on the board.

Explain to the class that not all Americans at the time believed in imperialism. Many Americans opposed acquiring foreign territories.

Pass out the excerpts of the primary documents. (**Appendix A**) Instruct the students to read the documents in a small group. Give students Post-it notes and instruct them to write down words in which they struggle to understand. Travel around to each group and check on their progress, making sure to check for Post-it notes. (For higher level classes, students could read documents on their own or as homework.)

After the reading is completed, divide the class into two groups. Assign one group to be imperialist supporters and the other to be anti-imperialist. Instruct each group to fill out the graphic organizer for their group (**Appendices B and C**)

Explain to each group to be prepared the following day to debate their side of the issue. For homework, students should review their graphic organizers and be ready to make their case for either imperialism or anti-imperialism as well as rebuttal arguments. Emphasize that students should not only reference the reasons they are arguing for or against imperialism but should also reference the authors of the primary sources. These men were influential public figures in America.

Day Two

Prior to the students' arrival, arrange the desks so that half of the room is facing the other half. This works best if you can have two straight lines of desks. However, you can adjust for your class and room size.

Instruct the students to sit with their group from the previous day.

Explain that you are now going to debate the imperialism issue. Ask each student to get out their graphic organizer and primary documents from the previous day. Have students imagine they are American citizens living during the time period. Each side should talk for 3-5 minutes and try to influence others to have the same opinion. We will flip a coin to see who goes first. After each team presents their case, both sides will have 2 minutes to prepare a rebuttal and summary. The team that went last will start the second round. Each team will have an additional 2 minutes for rebuttal and summary. Allow time for questions at the end. This is not intended to be a debate in which everyone speaks. As teachers we know that some students will not speak in the debate. The point of the debate is for all students to hear the arguments so each student is prepared to write the final essay. Students will complete an exit ticket after the debate using **Appendix D**.

After the debate is over, pass out the assessment (**Appendix E**) Instruct the students to write a five paragraph essay discussing to what extent was the United States government was justified in embracing an American foreign policy of imperialism in the late 1800s. (**Appendix F**) For an

alternative assessment for students with special needs, the students could make a list of reasons instead of writing an essay or create a storyboard.

Classroom Materials and Resources

- Appendix A—Excerpts of Primary Source Documents
- Appendix B—Anti-Imperialist views graphic organizer
- Appendix C—Imperialist views graphic organizer
- Appendix D—Debate reflection exit ticket
- Appendix E—Summative assessment (essay)
- Appendix F—Essay rubric

Resources Cited

“Acquisition of Territory,” *Congressional Record*, 55th Congress, 3rd Session (January 9, 1899). Reprinted in "George Hoar on Expansionism." Brooklyn College, <http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/history/johnson/hoar.htm> (accessed February 16, 2013).

"Alfred Mahan on Sea Power, 1890," Mount Holyoke College, Dr. Vincent Ferraro Homepage, Documents Related to American Foreign Policy, <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/protected/alfred.htm> (accessed February 19, 2013).

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Josiah Strong. *Our County, Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis*, Revised Edition (New York: Baker and Taylor Company, 1891) 222-223.

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"Platform of the American Anti-Imperialist League," in *Speeches, Correspondence, and Political Papers of Carl Schurz*, vol. 6, ed. Frederick Bancroft (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1913) 77-79.

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"Mark Twain," Library of Congress, Hispanic Division, The World of 1898: The Spanish American War, Literature of the Spanish-American War, <http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/twain.html> (accessed March 21, 2013).

"Senator Albert J. Beveridge on Expansion," *Congressional Record* 56th Congress, 1st Session, Vol. XXXIII, 705-711 (January 9, 1900). Reprinted in "Albert J. Beveridge: In Support of an American Empire," Mount Holyoke College, Dr. Vincent Ferraro Homepage, Documents Related to American Foreign Policy, <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/ajb72.htm> (accessed March 21, 2013).

Summative Assessment

Students will be evaluated using the completion of the graphic organizers (**Appendices B and C**). As well as completion of the debate exit ticket (**Appendix D**). The final activity will be the essay that follows. (**Appendix E**)

Essay

Please respond to the following essay question. Your response should be 5 paragraphs. Your answers will be scored with the Essay Rubric.

To what extent was the United States government justified in embracing an American foreign policy of imperialism in the late 1800s?

Assessment

The scoring rubric is included. (Appendix F)

An essay supporting imperialism should include:

- The need to access foreign markets in order to avoid economic crises
- Social Darwinism or the idea that only the strongest countries would survive
- Americans needed to educate, Christianize and uplift the lesser people of the world.
- The need to develop a modern navy with overseas bases was believed to be critical to our nation's success

An essay supporting anti-imperialism should include:

- Imperialism goes against the fundamental American principles
- All men should have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness
- Imperialism is forcibly controlling unwilling people
- The United States is not freeing these countries, they are controlling them

Assessment Rubric

Essay Rubric (Appendix F)

Characteristic	Score 4	Score 3	Score 2	Score 1
Understanding of the Question 30%	Understands complexity of the question; deals with all parts of the question in depth 4 x .30=1.20	Limited or lack of understanding of complexity; may deal with one part of the question in some depth, or in a more general way 3 x .30=.90	Ignores complexity; may deal with one part of the question, or all elements of the question in a superficial way 2 x .30= .60	May simply paraphrase or restate the question 1 x .30= .30
Analysis 25%	Provides effective analysis of the question; some imbalance permissible 4 x .25= 1	Limited analysis, mostly describes 3 x .25= .75	Weak or inappropriate analysis 2 x .25= .50	No analysis 1 x .25= .25
Supportive Information 25%	Supports thesis with information from 3-4 primary sources 4 x .25= 1	Supports thesis with some factual information from 1-2 primary sources 3 x .25= .75	Lacks supporting information, or information given is minimal 2 x .25 = .50	Incompetent, inappropriate responses 1 x .25= .25
Grammar and Structure 10%	May contain insignificant errors 4 x .10= .40	May contain a few errors that do not detract from overall essay 3 x .10= .30	May contain major errors 2 x .10= .20	Contains many major or minor errors 1 x .10= .10
Organization and Writing Style 10%	Well organized and well written 4 x .10= .40	Clearly organized and written, but not exceptional 3 x .10 = .30	Weak organization and writing 2 x .10= .20	Disorganized and poorly written 1 x .10= .10

Appendix A

Excerpts of Primary Source Documents

Josiah Strong, a Protestant clergyman, is the author of *Our Country* published in 1885. This excerpt from Strong's book, discusses imperialism as a policy of the United States.

It seems to me that God, with infinite wisdom and skill, is training the Anglo-Saxon race [Strong meant Americans of British and German descent] for an hour sure to come in the world's future....this race of unequaled energy, with all the majesty of numbers and the might of wealth behind it--the representatives . . . of the largest liberty, the purest Christianity, the highest civilization will spread itself over the earth..., this powerful, race will move down upon Mexico, down upon Central and South America, out upon the islands of the sea, over upon Africa and beyond. And can anyone doubt that the result of this competition of races will be the "survival of the fittest?"

Alfred T. Mahan wrote a book titled *The Interest of America in Seas Power* in 1897. In his essay "The United States Looking Outward" he says he believes that America must look beyond its borders to expand.

Americans must begin to look outward. The growing production of the country demands it. An increasing volume of public sentiment demands it. The position of the United States, between the two Old Worlds and the two great oceans, makes the same claim.

President William McKinley made the decision to annex the Philippines. In a speech to a group of religious leaders he made the following statement as to why he made the decision to annex.

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....And one night late it came to me this way...

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 or 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 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 fellowmen for whom Christ also died.

U.S. Senator George F. Hoar (Massachusetts) opposed imperialism. This is a passage from a speech Hoar made in opposition to annexing the Philippines.

.... the question with which we now have to deal is whether Congress may conquer and may govern, without their consent and against their will, a foreign nation, a separate, distinct, and numerous people, a territory not hereafter to be populated by Americans.....under the Declaration of Independence you cannot govern a foreign territory, a foreign people, another people than your own.....you cannot subjugate them and govern them against their will, because you think it is for their good, when they do not; because you think you are going to give them the blessings of liberty. You have no right at the cannon's mouth to impose on an unwilling people your Declaration of Independence and your Constitution and your notions of freedom and notions of what is good.

Albert Beveridge, a Republican senator from Indiana supported imperialism. He made this speech to the U S. Senate in 1907.

The Philippines are ours forever... We will not retreat.... We will not repudiate [renounce] our duty... 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... with gratitude....Almighty God that He has marked us as His chosen people, henceforth to lead in the regeneration of the world the Pacific is the ocean of the commerce of the future. The power that rule the Pacific... is the power that rules the world.

Henry Cabot Lodge, a senator from Massachusetts, also supported imperialism.

The taking of the Philippines does not violate the principles of the Declaration of Independence, but will spread them among a people who have never known liberty, and who in a few years will be as unwilling to leave the shelter of the American flag...

Many Americans opposed imperialism some who were opposed created the American Anti-Imperialist League. This is an excerpt from the Anti-imperialist League's platform.

We hold that the policy known as imperialism is hostile to liberty and tends toward militarism, an evil from which it has been our glory to be free. We regret that it has become necessary in the land of Washington and Lincoln to reaffirm that all men, of whatever race or color, are entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We maintain that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. We insist that the subjugation of any people is "criminal aggression" ... We hold, with Abraham Lincoln, that "no man is good enough to govern another man without that other's consent."

Mark Twain, a famous author and an Anti-Imperialist, made these comments in the New York Herald in 1900.

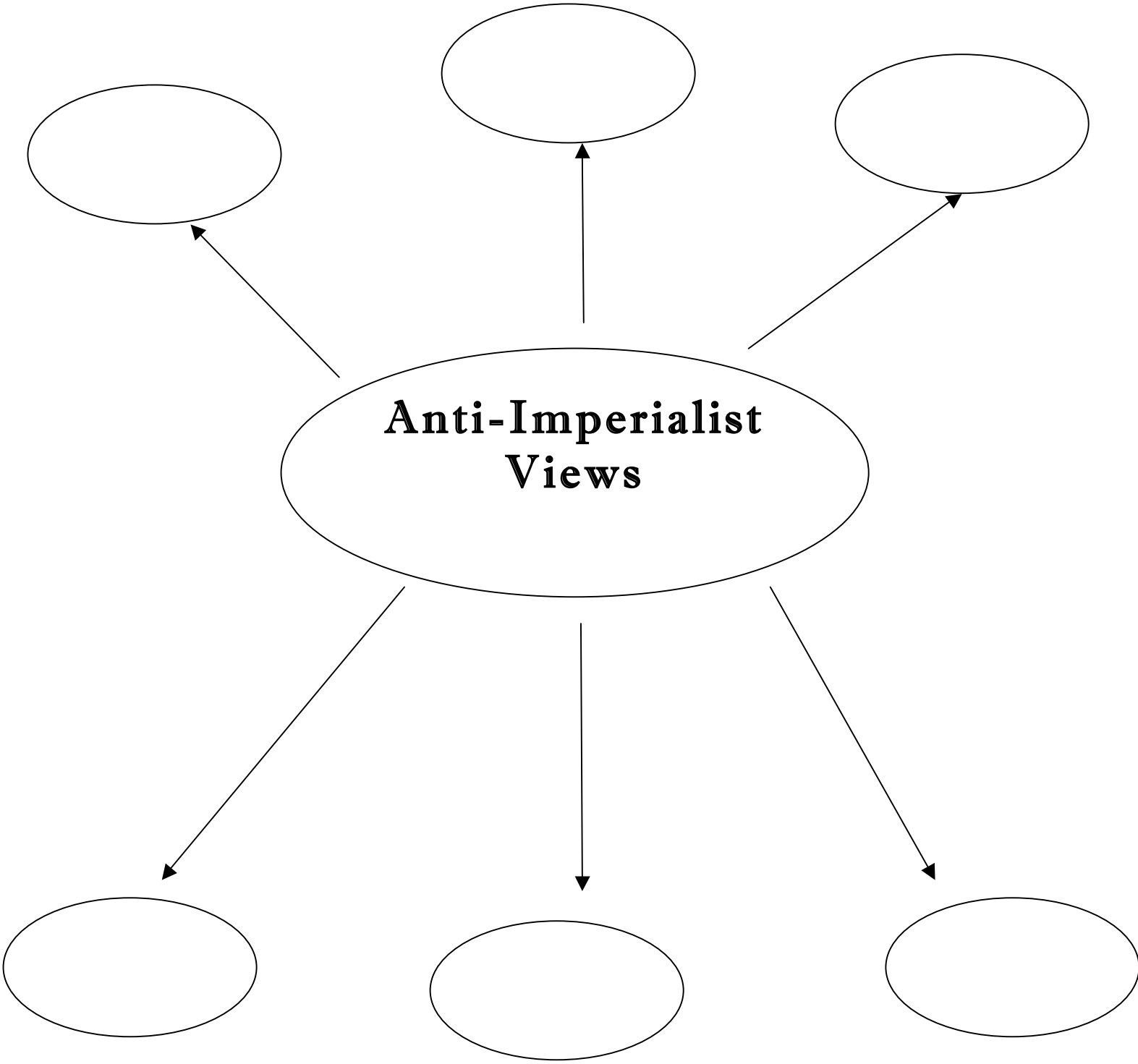
I left these shores, at Vancouver, a red-hot imperialist. I wanted the American eagle to go screaming into the Pacific. It seemed tiresome and tame for it to content itself with the Rockies. Why not spread its wings over the Philippines, I asked myself? And I thought it would be a real good thing to do.

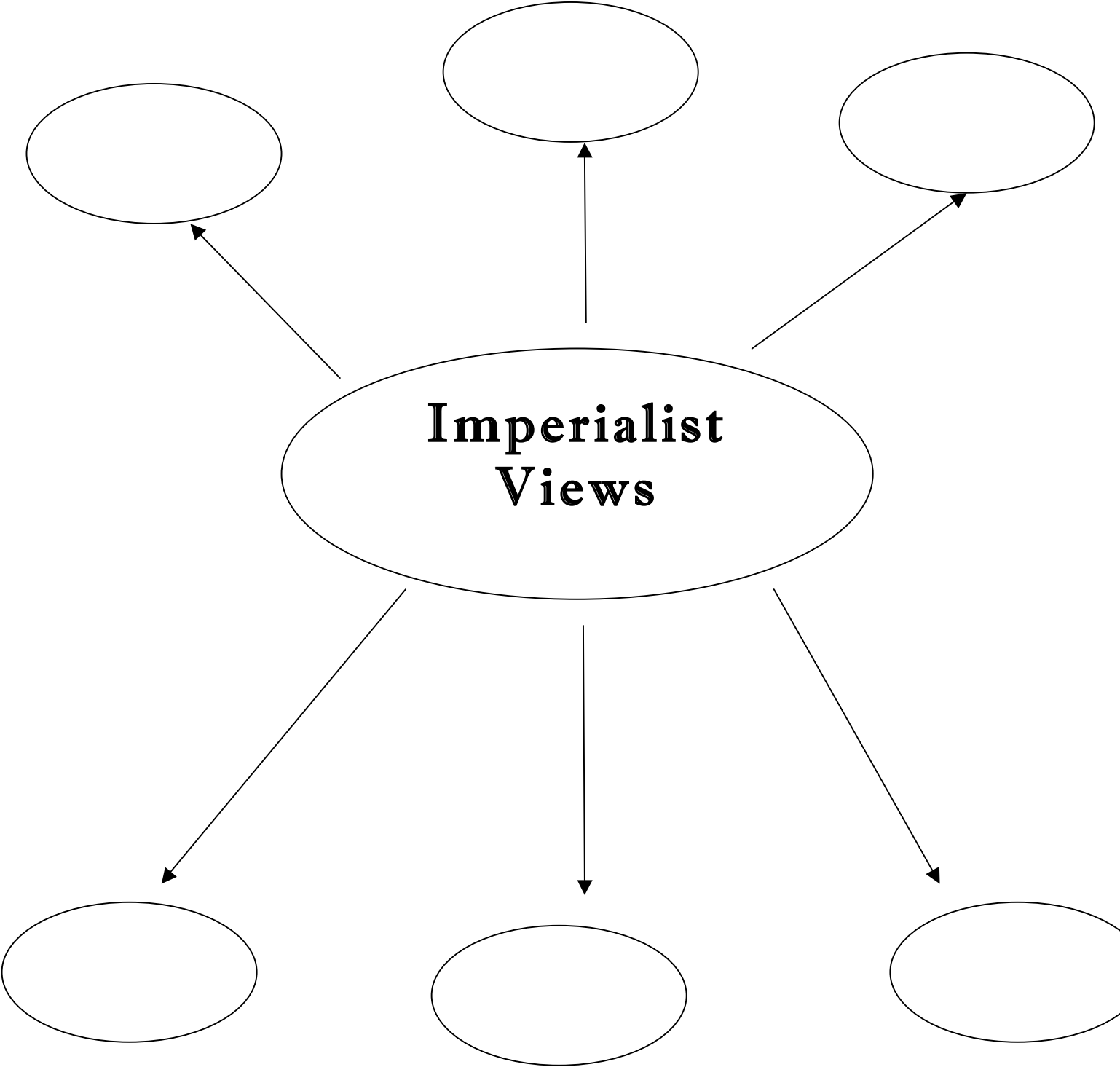
I said to myself, here are a people who have suffered for three centuries. We can make them as free as ourselves, give them a government and country of their own, put a miniature of the American constitution afloat in the Pacific, start a brand new republic to take its place among the free nations of the world. It seemed to me a great task to which we had addressed ourselves.

But I have thought some more, since then, and I have read carefully the treaty of Paris, and I have seen that we do not intend to free, but to subjugate the people of the Philippines. We have gone there to conquer, not to redeem.

We have also pledged the power of this country to maintain and protect the abominable system established in the Philippines by the Friars.

It should, it seems to me, be our pleasure and duty to make those people free, and let them deal with their own domestic questions in their own way. And so I am an anti-imperialist. I am opposed to having the eagle put its talons on any other land.





Appendix D

Debate Reflection Exit Ticket

1. What was the best argument made for imperialism? What was the worst?
2. What was the best argument made against imperialism? What was the worst?
3. Was there an argument you read about in your documents that was either not used in the debate or used incorrectly in the debate?
4. Rate your team and the other team using the following scale:

Imperialist Team

	Strongly Agree 4	Agree 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
Team worked well together				
Team addressed the issues				
Team supported issues with facts from primary sources				
Team was persuasive				

Anti-imperialist Team

	Strongly Agree 4	Agree 3	Disagree 2	Strongly Disagree 1
Team worked well together				
Team addressed the issues				
Team supported issues with facts from primary sources				
Team was persuasive				

Appendix E

Essay

Please respond to the following essay question. Your response should be 5 paragraphs. Your answers will be scored with the Essay Rubric.

To what extent was the United States government justified in embracing an American foreign policy of imperialism in the late 1800s?

Appendix F

Essay Rubric

Characteristic	Score 4	Score 3	Score 2	Score 1
Understanding of the Question 30%	Understands complexity of the question; deals with all parts of the question in depth 4 x .30=1.20	Limited or lack of understanding of complexity; may deal with one part of the question in some depth, or in a more general way 3 x .30=.90	Ignores complexity; may deal with one part of the question, or all elements of the question in a superficial way 2 x .30= .60	May simply paraphrase or restate the question 1 x .30= .30
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TOTAL _____