



## The Spanish-American War's Impact on Cuba and Puerto Rico Featuring Bad Bunny

### OVERVIEW

#### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What was the impact of the Spanish-American War on Cuba and Puerto Rico and how is that impact still present in the 21st Century?

#### OVERVIEW

*In this lesson, students will participate in a press conference scenario and examine newspaper headlines to identify why the Spanish-American War started. Students will then analyze amendments and Bad Bunny's "El Apagón" music video to identify the impact of American imperialism after the Spanish-American War. Students will complete the lesson with an activity investigating the reliability of internet resources.*



New York evening journal. (New York, NY), Mar. 25 1898.  
<https://www.loc.gov/item/sn86071545/1898-03-25/ed-6/>.

Fake news and clickbait are not new to the digital age and the 21st Century. In the late-19th Century, newspapers like the *New York World* and *New York Journal* used exaggerated and eye-catching headlines to sell newspapers. Publishers Joseph Pulitzer (*New York World*) and William Randolph Hearst (*New York Journal*) included stories with melodrama, romance, and hyperbole in their publications in order to attract more customers. During the 1890s, these newspapers included articles about the Cuban revolution and atrocities against the Cubans by colonial Spain to pull at the heart strings of their readers. When the USS Maine exploded in Havana Harbor in February 1898, the *New York Journal* printed multiple daily editions blaming Spain, even though the paper had little evidence. Headlines like "Spain Guilty!", which took up one third of the Journal's front page, and "Torpedo Hole Discovered by Government Divers in the Maine" worked to influence public opinion that the United States must intervene in the region.

Ultimately, the U.S. intervened and the Spanish-American War began. The war was a brief conflict of less than 8 months, but the results for the United States were transformative. The Treaty of Paris of 1898 passed control of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines from Spain to the United States. Before the United States declared war on Spain, the Teller Amendment stated that the United States had no intention to "exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction, or control over said Island" (Cuba) and the U.S. would "leave the government and control of the island to its people". However by 1902, the U.S. military was not leaving the island until Cuba agreed to add the Platt Amendment to their new constitution.

The Platt Amendment included several stipulations about the future of Cuban and U.S. relations. The amendment limited Cuba's right to enter into treaties with other countries, permitted the U.S.

to lease or buy lands for the purpose of establishing naval bases, and the U.S. would intervene in Cuban affairs for the “preservation of Cuban independence”. The Platt Amendment was reversed in 1934, although the U.S. still maintains the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba.

Unlike Cuba, the island of Puerto Rico became a U.S territory in 1917 as a result of the Treaty of Paris, and the island is still entwined with the United States in the 21st Century as an unincorporated territory. While Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens, they cannot vote in U.S. presidential elections and they do not have a voting representative in Congress. Puerto Rico has some benefits of U.S. statehood, including federal funds like Medicare and Social Security, but they don't qualify for federal bankruptcy assistance like states do. The precarious state of the island has become especially relevant in the 21st Century as Puerto Ricans deal with economic depression, shrinking population, a debt crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and various natural disasters.

The lasting impact of U.S. imperialism in Puerto Rico can be seen in Bad Bunny's music video “El Apagón”. The music video begins as a celebration of Puerto Rican culture and then becomes a mini documentary where the people of Puerto Rico speak out about being removed from their homes, the privatization of beaches, and other issues impacting the territory today.

## OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, students will:

### 1. KNOW (KNOWLEDGE):

- The role of yellow journalism in the Spanish-American War
- Why the U.S. wanted to spread their sphere of influence to Cuba and Puerto Rico at the turn of the 20th Century
- The outcome of the Spanish-American War and its impact on Cuba and Puerto Rico
- How the effects of American imperialism are still present in Puerto Rico in the 21st Century

### 2. MASTERY OBJECTIVE:

- Students will be able to identify and analyze the impact of the Spanish-American War on Cuba and Puerto Rico through the examination of newspaper headlines, amendments, and a music video.

## ACTIVITIES

### PREPARATION

1. Display **Gallery Walk - Newspaper Headlines** around the classroom.

### MOTIVATIONAL ACTIVITY

1. Ask students:
  - What is fake news? What might be its purpose?

- What is clickbait? What might be its purpose?
2. Display **Image 1, Fake News and Clickbait Definitions**
    - What are some ways a person might identify fake news?
    - What are some ways a person might identify clickbait?
    - What might be the origins of fake news and clickbait?
  3. Display **Image 2, New York Evening Journal from January 26, 1898** and explain to students that fake news and clickbait are not new types of journalism in American History. Then ask students:
    - What do you notice about the headlines?
    - What do you think the purpose of the headlines were?
    - Are these headlines similar to something you might read today in the news?
  4. Display **Image 3, Yellow Journalism** and inform students that they will be examining the role yellow journalism played in the Spanish-American War in 1898.
    - What do the terms melodrama, romance, and hyperbole mean?

## PROCEDURE

### PART 1: SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

1. Distribute one copy of **Handout - Press Conference Packet (President McKinley)** to a student volunteer. Distribute **Handout - Press Conference Packet (The Press)** to the remaining students. Then ask students to read the scenario directions at the top of their packet and the background information.
  - Read some of the headlines you saw and explain if they are reflective of what you said in the press conference or not.
2. Ask the student representing President McKinley to come to the front of the class and ask members of the press to begin asking their questions to President McKinley. They should record his answers on their press packet.
3. Ask “the press” students to read the directions, then write a headline and subheadline about the explosion on their packet under “Newspaper Headline”. Ask the student who represented President McKinley to follow the directions under “After the Press Conference” on their handout. Then ask that student to:
  - Read some of the headlines you saw and explain if they are reflective of what you said in the press conference or not.
4. Ask students to walk around the classroom to view the **Gallery Walk - Newspaper Headlines**. Then ask students:
  - How do the *New York Journal* headlines compare to the headline you wrote?

- What do you think the purpose of the *New York Journal's* headlines were?
  - How do you think the American public might have responded to these headlines?
  - What would have been a more objective headline based on what President McKinley said in the press conference?
5. Inform students that after two months of pressure from some of the press and the American public, President McKinley officially requested a declaration of war and on April 25, 1898 Congress declared war on Spain. The true cause of the explosion of the USS Maine has never been fully proven and remains unknown. Then ask students:
    - Based on what you have read, what were the long term and short term reasons the U.S. declared war on Spain?
  6. Display **Image 4, Treaty of Paris of 1898** and inform students that the war was short, only lasting about 10 weeks. Ask students:
    - How does the U.S. territory possessions gained from the Treaty of Paris relate to imperialism?
    - What impact might territory expansion have had on the United States in 1898?
    - What impact might territory expansion have had on Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines?
  7. Divide the class into eight groups and distribute the **Handout - Did the U.S. Keep Its Promise?** (Teacher's Guide) to each student. Model the activity for students by completing Step 1 as a class. Next, assign one of the eight stipulations of the

Platt Amendment to the eight student groups and ask them to repeat the process for Step 2 for their assigned stipulation. Then ask student groups to share their summaries with the class.

8. Ask students to complete Step 3 independently and then ask students to share their arguments with the class citing evidence from the two amendments. Ask students:
  - What might be the possible impact of the Platt Amendment on Cuba in the years after it was passed?

## PART 2: IMPACT ON PUERTO RICO

1. Display **Image 5, The Caribbean** and ask students:
  - Where is Puerto Rico?
  - What do you know about Puerto Rico?
2. Distribute **Handout - Puerto Rico: A U.S. Territory** and ask students to read the information on the infographic. Then ask students:
  - What might be the impact for Puerto Ricans when they can not vote in Presidential elections?
  - What might be the impact for Puerto Ricans when they have no voting representative in Congress?
3. Ask students:
  - Who is Bad Bunny?
  - What do you know about Bad Bunny?
4. Distribute **Handout - Bad Bunny and Puerto Rico in the 21st Century** and ask students to read the vocabulary, background

information, and the questions for the video:

5. Play the YouTube video, “**Bad Bunny - El Apagón - Aquí Vive Gente (Official Video)**” ([https://youtu.be/1TCX\\_Aqzoo4?feature=shared&t=647](https://youtu.be/1TCX_Aqzoo4?feature=shared&t=647) ) starting at minute 11:00. ( *Teacher note: turn on English subtitles and adjust the playback speed to .75.*) Then ask students:

- According to the video, why are wealthy Americans moving and/or buying property in Puerto Rico? (11:00 - 12:00) (*tax breaks and tax incentives*)
- What are the repercussions for Puerto Ricans from this influx of wealthy Americans? (12:00 - 13:20) (*displaced from their homes*)
- What is happening to the properties that are being bought? (13:00) (*turned into vacation properties*)
- What is happening to the public beaches in Puerto Rico? (16:00) (*access to public beaches is being taken away from Puerto Ricans*)
- Why do you think the title of the video is “*Aquí Vive Gente*”?
- How do you think Puerto Rico’s status as a territory might have impacted the events in this video?
- Why do you think Bad Bunny included this documentary segment in his music video?

6. Optional: If you cannot access the video, have students read and discuss **Handout - “El Apagón” Article**.

## SUMMARY ACTIVITY

1. Display the **PBS Learning Media**, “**Investigate: What IS a Reliable Source Anyway?**” and present the slides to students.
2. Distribute **Handout - Investigation: What is a Reliable Source?** and ask students to follow the steps on the handout.

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Explore Puerto Rican migration and Latin Music in New York in the TeachRock lesson Latin Music and Puerto Rican Migration to New York City. <https://teachrock.org/lesson/latin-music-and-puerto-rican-migration-to-new-york-city/>
2. Complete this handout to explore more about Puerto Rican artists Bad Bunny and Rafael Hernández from the TeachRock lesson Contemporary Latin Artists and Activism. <https://teachrock.org/lesson/contemporary-latin-artists-and-activism/>
3. Using the **Handout - Investigation: What is a Reliable Source?** to guide research, research the following:
  - What is Guantanamo Bay?



- What is the history of Guantanamo Bay?
- What is the current status of Guantanamo Bay?

## STANDARDS

### COLLEGE, CAREER, AND CIVIC LIFE (C3) SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS

#### *History*

D 2.His.1.9-12. Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

D2.His.3.9-12. Use questions generated about individuals and groups to assess how the significance of their actions changes over time and is shaped by the historical context.

D2.His.4.9-12. Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

D2.His.14.9-12. Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

D2.His.15.9-12. Distinguish between long-term causes and triggering events in developing a historical argument.

D2.His.16.9-12. Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.

### CALIFORNIA HISTORY—SOCIAL SCIENCE CONTENT STANDARDS

*11.4 Students trace the rise of the United States to its role as a world power in the twentieth century.*

2. Describe the Spanish-American War and U.S. expansion in the South Pacific.

### MASSACHUSETTS HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCE FRAMEWORK STANDARDS

*5. Analyze the causes and course of growing role of the United States in world affairs from the Civil War to World War I, researching and reporting on one of the following ideas, policies, or events, and, where appropriate, including maps, timelines, and other visual resources to clarify connections among nations and events:*

the Spanish-American War (1898) and resulting changes in sovereignty for Cuba, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Philippines; the Philippine-American War (1899–1902)

The Platt Amendment describing the role of the United States in Cuba (1901) and the subsequent occupation of Cuba (1903, 1906–1909)

### DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS

US2.30 Analyze the history, culture and government structure of at least two countries prior to American intervention (e.g., Hawaii, the Philippines, Puerto Rico).



US2.31 Analyze the domestic debates and decisions regarding foreign intervention and the United States' emergence as an imperial power (e.g., the Spanish-American War, Philippine-American War, intervention in Latin America, the annexation of Hawaii).

US2.32 Analyze reasons for and efforts of different nations to maintain or regain economic and political freedoms following American intervention using primary sources from the perspective of native communities (e.g., Hawaiians, Filipinos)

US2.34 Assess the modern political, social and economic impacts of American imperialism on different territories and governments (e.g., the Philippines, Marshall Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa).

## CONNECTICUT SECONDARY SOCIAL STUDIES FRAMEWORK

### *US-3. Imperialism and World War I*

US.His.1.b. Evaluate the role of the media in shaping public opinions and debates about America's emergence as an imperial power (e.g., muckrakers, yellow journalism, propaganda).

US.His.4.b. Analyze how economic and cultural hegemony influenced American perspectives of imperialism at the end of the 19th century (e.g., Cuba, Puerto Rico, Spanish-American War, Annexation of Hawaii and Philippines, dispossession of Latino American lands in the American West).

## NEW JERSEY STUDENT LEARNING STANDARDS - SOCIAL STUDIES

### *Era 6. The Emergence of Modern America: Progressive Reforms (1890–1930)*

US.His.4.b. Analyze how economic and cultural hegemony influenced American perspectives of imperialism at the end of the 19th century (e.g., Cuba, Puerto Rico, Spanish-American War, Annexation of Hawaii and Philippines, dispossession of Latino American lands in the American West).

## SOCIAL STUDIES – NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES (NCSS)

Theme 1: Culture

Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change

Theme 3: People, Place, and Environments

Theme 4: Individual Development and Identity

Theme 5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions

Theme 6: Power, Authority, and Governance



## Theme 9: Global Connections

### COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

#### *College and Career Readiness Reading Literature Standards for Grades 9-12*

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.5 Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

#### *College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing for Grades 9-12*

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.8 Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience;

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

### *College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening for Grades 9-12*

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

## LEARNING FOR JUSTICE SOCIAL JUSTICE STANDARDS

JU.9-12.13 I can explain the short and long-term impact of biased words and behaviors and unjust practices, laws and institutions that limit the rights and freedoms of people based on their identity groups.

## RESOURCES

### HANDOUTS

- Gallery Walk - Newspaper Headlines
- Handout - Press Conference Packet (President McKinley)
- Handout – Press Conference Packet (The Press)
- Handout – Did the U.S. Keep Its Promise?
- Handout – Did the U.S. Keep Its Promise? (Teacher's Guide)
- Handout - Puerto Rico: A U.S. Territory
- Handout - Bad Bunny and Puerto Rico in the 21st Century
- (Optional) Handout - “El Apagón” Article.
- Handout - Investigation: What is a Reliable Source?