

DBQ: Spanish American War
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11th grade American History

Directions: Examine the following documents A-H. Answer the guided questions for each document. Using your background knowledge of the Spanish American War and your analysis of the following documents answer the essay question.

Essay question: What were the intentions of the United States when it declared war on Spain in Cuba?

Document A: British reaction to the Cuban Insurrection of 1868-1878

...Both Britain and the United States claimed that Spain had no right to interfere with their ships outside the territorial waters of Cuba...The situation became critical on March 29, 1868 when the captain general of Cuba, General Dulce, issued a decree declaring that all vessels captured in Spanish waters or on the high seas, and carrying men and arms to aid the Cuban rebels, would be treated as pirates and that their crews would be liable to execution. Lord Clarendon, the British foreign secretary, protested angrily against this "glaring violation" of the law of nations. The gravity of the situation was underlined by the approval of orders to British warships to recapture any British vessel thus seized, even if it had been conveyed into Spanish waters. The Foreign Office approved such orders with the utmost reluctance, but excused them by the need to meet extremes with extremes.

- 1. The British had warned Spain that they would lose British support if slavery did not end in Cuba and Puerto Rico. Spain feared that Cuban rebels were receiving ammunition and support from the US and Britain and thus issued the decree to take these ships and deem them pirates. How do the British feel about Spain taking vessels in the "high seas" outside of Spanish waters?**

- 2. To what extremes are the British willing to go to get these vessels back?**

Document B: Poem by Jose Marti, Cuban revolutionary

I Cultivate a White Rose
By Jose Marti

I Cultivate a White Rose
In July as in January
For the sincere friend
Who gives me his hand frankly.

And for the cruel person who tears out
The heart with which I live,
I cultivate neither nettles nor thorns:
I cultivate a white rose.

- 1. How does Marti view a friend that would give him his hand frankly?**

2. What attitude does he express towards his enemy?

Document C: Weyler's Reconcentration Policy and its Horrors, by Trumbull White

"As the country was stripped of its population by the order of concentration, it is easy to believe that 400,000 persons were gathered behind the forts without being given food, medicine, or means of any kind to earn a living, except where in the larger cities some few could find employment in menial offices. Judging by the orphans I was shown in Jacoba, Aidecoa and elsewhere, and from all I saw and heard, I believe that half of the 400,000 have died as the result of starvation. I know from the official register of the city of Santa Clara, which ordinarily has a population of about 14,000 that the deaths for November were over 1,000 and the number of deaths for December was over 900, and showed an increase, considering the loss of the former 1,000 from its total population. The exact figures for December are 971. At that city the government was distributing 500 single rations per day out of a total appropriation for the purpose of \$15,000. This was not relief, but a mere prolongation of the sufferings of a small part of the reconcentrados of the city. "

1. What does White blame for the death of the people in the camps?

2. How does he describe the attempt of relief by the Spanish Government for those people in the camp?

Document D: Cuba

What Senator Proctor Saw in



1. How does Senator Proctor portray the treatment of Cuban Children?

2. Why do you think he portrays them in such a manner?

Document E: Sinking of the USS Maine

The USS Maine, a second class battleship built between 1888 and 1895, was sent to Havana, Cuba in January 1898 to protect American interests during the long-standing revolt of the Cubans against the Spanish government. In the evening of February 15, 1898, Maine sank when her forward gunpowder magazines exploded. Nearly three quarters of the battleship's crew died as a result of the explosion. Many Americans blamed the Spanish for the explosion and war began a few months later.



1. Why would Americans have blamed the Spanish for the explosion?



Document F:
Sensational headlines
of the Spanish
American War

1. What forms of sensationalism are evident in this poster?
2. What role did sensationalism play in leading the US into the Spanish American War?

Document G: excerpt from the DeLome Letter (from Enrique DuPuy De Lome, Spanish Diplomat to Don Jose Canalejas)

...Besides the natural and inevitable coarseness with which he repeats all that the press and public of Spain has said of Weyler, it shows once more what McKinley is: weak and catering to the rabble, and, besides, a low politician, who desires to leave a door open to me and to stand well with the Jingo of his party...

- 1. According to this excerpt, why does De Lome think McKinley is a poor leader?**
- 2. This is a direct insult to the United States, do you think De Lome should be punished?**

Document H: Teller Amendment (the following resolutions were passed by both houses of Congress on April 20, 1898)

Resolved, First. That the people of the Island of Cuba are, of right ought to be, free and independent.
Second. That it is the duty of the United States to demand, and the Government of the United States does hereby demand, that the Government of Spain at once relinquish its authority and government in the Island of Cuba and withdraw its land and naval forces from Cuba and Cuban waters.
Third. That the President of the United States be, and he hereby is, directed and empowered to use the entire land and naval forces of the United States, and to call into the actual service of the United States the militia of the several States, to such extent as may be necessary to carry these resolutions into effect.
Fourth. That the United States hereby disclaim any disposition or intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction, or control over said Island except for the pacification thereof, and asserts its determination, when that is accomplished, to leave the government and control of the Island to its people.

- 1. What do these resolutions give the President of the United States the right to do?**
- 2. According to the 4th resolution, who will control the Island of Cuba once it is liberated?**