

# Teaching American History For All

A series of lessons incorporating literacy strategies for  
Mt Diablo Unified School District  
5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade teachers,  
in partnership with  
University of California, Berkeley  
History-Social Science Project

**11<sup>th</sup> Grade Lesson:** US Imperialism and the Panama Canal

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**Teaching American History for All  
MDUSD/UCB H-SSP  
11<sup>th</sup> Grade Lesson: “The Panama Revolution and US imperialism”**

**Developed by:** Jenna Diestler

**Teaching American History Grant Focus Question:**

How did definitions of citizenship change from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> century?

**11<sup>th</sup> Grade Yearlong Focus Question:**

How have the powers of the United States federal government expanded or been limited since the Civil War?

**Unit Focus:**

US as a World Power

**Unit Focus Question:**

How and why did the US emerge as a world power?

**Unit Working Thesis:**

After the Spanish-American War, the United States emerged as a world power fueled by its desire for military strength, thirst for new markets, and belief in cultural superiority—the nation became imperialistic.

**Lesson Focus Question and / or Writing Prompt Question:**

What was the role of US expansionary policy in the Panamanian Revolution?

**Lesson Working Thesis:**

The expansionary policies of the U.S., and especially of Teddy Roosevelt, led to the need for the Panama Canal. When Colombia refused to give the United States permission to build the canal, the US backed the discontented Panamanian nationalists in a revolution against Colombia, thereby securing the Panama Canal for the United States.

**Reading Strategies:**

Sentence Level Deconstruction

Passage Level Strategy- Chronology

Passage Level Strategy- Thesis/Evidence

**Writing Strategy:**

Analytical Paragraph Outline answering the prompt: Was the United States role in the Panamanian Revolution justified?

**Suggested Amount of Time:**

2 days or class periods.

**Textbook:**

Danzer, Gerald et al. *The Americans: Reconstruction to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Evanston, Illinois: McDougal Littell Inc., 2006, Chapter 10, Section 4, pp359-365

## Other Resources:

- Excerpt of a speech by Theodore Roosevelt: March 23, 1911, UC Berkeley
- Political Cartoon #1: “Isthmus of Panama Railroad”
- Political Cartoon #2: “The News Reaches Bogota,” by W.A. Rogers. New York Herald, December 1903; (Credit: the Granger Collection, NY)

## Context of the lesson in the unit:

This lesson takes place in the context of American imperialism in Latin America. Students should be familiar with the Monroe Doctrine, the life/presidency of Teddy Roosevelt, the Spanish American War, and the beginnings of imperialism in Latin America. This lesson is the last lesson (or one of the last lessons) on imperialism before starting the unit on World War I.

## Concept of citizenship embedded in the lesson:

Citizenship poses an interesting dilemma in the context of US imperialism. The Monroe Doctrine delineates a clear distinction between “the Americas” and the rest of the world, with the United States emerging as the dominating power in the Western Hemisphere. Citizenry is eventually extended towards the residents of Hawaii and limited privileges are granted in Puerto Rico. Other Latin American countries are exploited for economic interests, but are protected from European and Asian expansionism. The United States entanglement in Latin America remains a contentious and relevant issue to U.S. foreign policy.

## Lesson Procedure:

### Day One:

#### 1. Introduction with Political Cartoon

- Make an overhead of the “Isthmus of Panama Railroad” political cartoon (Political Cartoon #1, p.5). Have students discuss, in partners or as a whole group, the various components of this cartoon. Suggested questions to ask:
  - Who is the Pan-American Policeman? What is the significance of his “stick?”
  - What is the Monroe Doctrine? Why is it significant?
  - Who are the people fighting in the distance? What is Uncle Sam’s relationship to these people?
- Direct students to write a few sentences in their notebooks explaining the significance of this cartoon and guessing at the story behind the gentlemen fighting in the background.

#### 2. Thesis & Evidence Passage Level Deconstruction

- Hand out the Thesis and Evidence form (p.6, teacher key p.7) based on page 366 of *The Americans*. Read the lesson question aloud: “What would the United States gain from building the Panama Canal?”
- Have students turn to page 366 and review the South American route and the route afforded by the Panama Canal on the various graphs. Guide students to infer the answer to the lesson question.
- Read the passage selected.
- Explain the given thesis (with advanced students, allow them to develop their own thesis).
- Direct students to read through passage again and underline/highlight relevant evidence that supports the thesis. Some evidence may be inferred from the text and from student background knowledge.

#### 3. Chronology Sequence

- Read the last paragraph on page 360 of *The Americans* that starts “Before beginning work...”
- Using the chronology handout (p.8), have students complete the sentences in their own words, being sure to only include the relevant detail to answer the content question.

- Using the chronology handout, answer the content question: “What was the role of US expansionary policy in the Panamanian Revolution?”

**HW:** Have students read Chapter 10, Section 4, pp359-367. Students may take Cornell notes on the section, or use the Reading Log/Discussion Guide (pages 9-12 of this packet).

## **Day Two:**

### **1. Introduction with Political Cartoon**

- Prompt: In journals, have students answer the question: “Do you believe the US role in the Panamanian Revolution was justified?” Review content with students as necessary.
- Display the political cartoon of Theodore Roosevelt, who is larger than life, digging the Panama Canal (Political Cartoon #2, p13 in color). This cartoon, titled “The News Reaches Bogota,” by W. A. Rogers was printed in the New York Herald in December 1903. According to sources, the cartoon depicts Theodore Roosevelt shoveling dirt from the Panama Canal onto Bogota, Colombia, after the U.S. supported Panama's revolution for independence from Colombia in exchange for control of the Panama Canal Zone

Suggested questions:

- How does this cartoon characterize Roosevelt?
- Where is the dirt being put? Why is this location (Bogota) significant?
- Explain the relevance of the boats to the Panamanian Revolution.
- What is the “New Treaty” in the background?

### **2. Sentence Level Deconstruction using TR Speech**

- Hand out the 1911 speech by Theodore Roosevelt (p.14), then read through speech with students.
- Hand out Sentence Deconstruction chart (p.15-16 for students; p17 teacher key). Students can work in pairs or groups to fill in the subjects and verbs of the Sentence Level Deconstruction.
- Discuss the content question: “How did President Roosevelt justify his actions in Panama?”

### **3. Writing Strategy: Analytical Paragraph Outline**

- Hand out the Analytical Paragraph Outline (p.18). Ask the prompt question: “Were the actions of Theodore Roosevelt in Panama justified?” Have students refer to their opinions in their notebooks in the beginning of the class.
- On the board, brainstorm relevant evidence for both sides.
- Have students complete outline and rewrite or type a final copy.
- For ELD students, provide a sentence starter
  - i.e. Theodore Roosevelt’s actions in Panama *were justified* due to...
  - OR Theodore Roosevelt’s actions in Panama *were not justified* because....

## **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.
3. Discuss America's role in the Panama Revolution and the building of the Panama Canal.

## **Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills:**

Historical Interpretation:

2. Students recognize the complexity of historical causes and effects, including the limitations on determining cause and effect.

## **Reading/Language Arts Content Standards:**

*Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text*

- 2.2 Analyze the way in which clarity of meaning is affected by the patterns of organization, hierarchical structures, repetition of the main ideas, syntax, and word choice in the text.

Political Cartoon #1



**Passage Level Deconstruction**

By the time Roosevelt became president, many Americans, including Roosevelt, felt that the United States needed a canal cutting across Central America. Such a canal would greatly reduce travel time for commercial and military ships by providing a shortcut between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. As early as 1850, the United States and Britain had agreed to share the rights to such a canal. In the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty of 1901, however, Britain gave the United States exclusive rights to build and control a canal through Central America.

*The Americans*, McDougal Littell Inc., 2006, pp.360.

**Lesson Question: What would the U.S. gain from building the Panama Canal?**

**THESIS/EVIDENCE****THESIS**

The United States would grow militarily, economically and politically through the building of the Panama Canal.

**EVIDENCE****EVIDENCE****EVIDENCE**

## TEACHER KEY

### Passage Level Deconstruction

By the time Roosevelt became president, many Americans, including Roosevelt, felt that the United States needed a canal cutting across Central America. Such a canal would greatly reduce travel time for commercial and military ships by providing a shortcut between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. As early as 1850, the United States and Britain had agreed to share the rights to such a canal. In the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty of 1901, however, Britain gave the United States exclusive rights to build and control a canal through Central America.

*The Americans*, McDougal Littell Inc., 2006, pp.360.

**Lesson Question: What would the U.S. gain from building the Panama Canal?**

#### THESIS/EVIDENCE

##### THESIS

The United States would grow militarily, economically and politically through the building of the Panama Canal.

##### EVIDENCE

*The Panama canal would reduce travel time for military ships.*

##### EVIDENCE

*The canal would produce a shortcut for commercial ships between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.*

##### EVIDENCE

*The canal would assert American dominance throughout the region of Central America.*

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

## Chronology Sequence

Before beginning work on the Panama Canal, the United States had to get permission from Colombia, which then ruled Panama. When these negotiations broke down, Bunau-Varilla helped organize a Panamanian rebellion against Colombia. On November 3, 1903, nearly a dozen U.S. warships were present as Panama declared its independence. Fifteen days later, Panama and the United States signed a treaty in which the United States agreed to pay Panama \$10 million plus an annual rent of \$250,000 for an acre of land across Panama, called the Canal Zone. The payments were to begin in 1913.

*The Americans*, McDougal Littell, 2006, pg. 360.

Before beginning work on the Panama Canal, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When these negotiations broke down \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

On November 3, 1903, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Fifteen days later \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

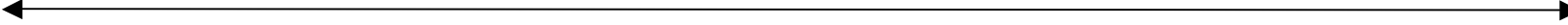
**Content Question: What was the role of US expansionary policy in the Panamanian Revolution?**

**Reading Log / Discussion Guide**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter _____, Section _____, Pages _____	Chapter Title:
Section Title:	In Your Own Words:
Main Idea from text:	In Your Own Words:

***TAKE CORNELL NOTES OR CREATE A ROUGH OUTLINE USING THE HEADINGS FROM THE BOOK***

People	Events
Terms / Vocabulary	
Timeline 	

Section Synopsis (What are the most significant events/people in this section?)

Why It Matters Now

Key Question (this is the last thing you'll do):

Answer:



Section Synopsis (What are the most significant events/people in this section?)

***AFTER READING THE SECTION, WRITE A SUMMARY OF THE ENTIRE SECTION IN 25 WORDS OR LESS***

Key Question (this is the last thing you'll do):

***AFTER READING, LOOK BACK AT THE MAIN IDEA, AND CREATE YOUR OWN KEY QUESTION FOR THE ENTIRE SECTION***

***THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU THINK IS THE MOST IMPORTANT IDEA FROM THE SECTION***

***AFTER A CLASS DISCUSSION, FINALIZE YOUR KEY QUESTION***

Answer:

***AFTER YOU HAVE FINALIZED YOUR KEY QUESTION, ANSWER IT IN COMPLETE SENTENCES***

Why It Matters Now

***AFTER READING THE SECTION, GO BACK TO THE "WHY IT MATTERS NOW" INFO FROM THE SECTION HEADING AND DESCRIBE IN YOUR OWN WORDS HOW THIS SECTION MIGHT RELATE TO THE UNITED STATES TODAY.***

Political Cartoon #2



By W.A. Rogers. New York Herald, December 1903; (Credit: the Granger Collection, NY)

## Sentence Level Deconstruction

### Context of the Excerpted Speech:

When Theodore Roosevelt gave this speech in 1911, it was 2 years after he ended his term as president and 3 years before the Panama Canal was opened for use. This speech was given at UC Berkeley as part of a celebration each year to commemorate the 1868 founding of the University of California.

... The Panama Canal I naturally take special interest in, because I started it. If I had acted strictly according to precedent, I should have turned the whole matter over to Congress; in which case, Congress would be ably debating it at this moment, and the canal would be fifty years in the future. Fortunately, the crisis came at a period when I could act unhampered. Accordingly I took the Isthmus, started the canal, and then left Congress - not to debate the canal, but to debate me. And in portions of the public press the debate still goes on as to whether or not I acted properly in taking the canal. But while the debate goes on the canal does too; and they are welcome to debate me as long as they wish, provided that we can go on with the canal.”

Theodore Roosevelt, March 23, 1911, Speech at the University of California;  
reprinted from 13 University of California Chronicle, No. 2, April 1911

**Lesson Question: How did President Theodore Roosevelt justify his actions in Panama?**

**Sentence Level Deconstruction:****Excerpted speech by Theodore Roosevelt**

<b>Time marker/ connector words</b>	<b>Who (subject) <i>Participants</i></b>	<b>Action words (verbs/ verb phrases)</b>	<b>Who, What, Where <i>Message</i></b>	<b>Questions or conclusions- What connections can you make from this information?</b>
	I	naturally take	special interest in [the Panama Canal]	
because			it.	
If			strictly according to precedent,	
			the whole matter over to Congress;	
in which case			it at this moment,	
and the			fifty years in the future.	
Fortunately,			at a period when	
			unhampered.	

<b>Time marker/ connector words</b>	<b>Who (subject) <i>Participants</i></b>	<b>Action words (verbs/ verb phrases)</b>	<b>Who, What, Where <i>Message</i></b>	<b>Questions or conclusions- What connections can you make from this information?</b>
Accordingly			the Isthmus,	
	[ I ]		the canal	
and then	[ I ]		Congress,- not to debate the canal, but to debate me.	
\ And in portions of the public press			as to whether or not I acted properly in taking the canal.	
But while				Who is the “we” according to Roosevelt?
			too;	
and			me as long as they wish,	
provided that			with the canal.	

**Lesson Question: How did President Theodore Roosevelt justify his actions in Panama?**

**KEY**

<b>Time marker/ connector words</b>	<b>Who (subject) <i>Participants</i></b>	<b>Action words (verbs/ verb phrases)</b>	<b>Who, What, Where <i>Message</i></b>	<b>Questions or conclusions- What connections can you make from this information?</b>
	I	naturally take	special interest in [the Panama Canal]	
because	<b><i>I</i></b>	<b><i>started</i></b>	it. [ <b>The Panama Canal</b> ]	
If	<b><i>I</i></b>	<b><i>had acted</i></b>	strictly according to precedent,	
	<b><i>I</i></b>	<b><i>should have turned</i></b>	the whole matter over to Congress;	
in which case	<b><i>Congress</i></b>	<b><i>would be ably debating</i></b>	it [the building of the canal] at this moment,	
and	<b><i>the canal</i></b>	<b><i>would be</i></b>	fifty years in the future.	
Fortunately,	<b><i>the crisis</i></b>	<b><i>came</i></b>	at a period when	
	<b><i>I</i></b>	<b><i>could act</i></b>	unhampered.	
Accordingly	<b><i>I</i></b>	<b><i>took</i></b>	the Isthmus,	
	[I]	<b><i>started</i></b>	the canal	
and then	[I]	<b><i>left</i></b>	Congress- not to debate the canal, but to debate me.	
And in portions of the public press	<b><i>the debate</i></b>	<b><i>still goes on</i></b>	as to whether or not I acted properly in taking the canal.	
But while	<b><i>the debate</i></b>	<b><i>goes on</i></b>		
	<b><i>the canal</i></b>	<b><i>does</i></b>	too;	
and	<b><i>they</i></b> ( <i>Congress, the public press, etc</i> )	<b><i>are welcome to debate</i></b>	me as long as they wish,	
provided that	<b><i>we</i></b> ( <i>TR &amp; supporters</i> )	<b><i>can go on</i></b>	with the canal.	

**Lesson Question: How did President Theodore Roosevelt justify his actions in Panama?**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

## Analytical Paragraph Outline

**Prompt question: Were the actions of Theodore Roosevelt in Panama justified?**

Thesis statement: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Spec. Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Spec. Evidence: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Analysis: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Concluding statement: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_