

INTERACTIVE MAP LESSON:

IMPERIALISM IN LATIN AMERICA

RECOMMENDED TIME

90 minutes

OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, students should be able to:

- Identify factors that encouraged American imperialism in Mexico, Panama, and Cuba.
- Discuss how the United States protected its economic interests in Latin America.
- Analyze the impact of American imperialism on Latin America.

LEARNING CONNECTIONS

- **Learning Styles:** linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial
- **Skills Mastery:** determining the strength of an argument, judging information, recognizing point of view

RESOURCE

- **Interactive Map:** [Imperialism in Latin America](#)

CONTEXT

In the late 1800s the United States became one of the world's leading industrial producers and agricultural exporters. Because of this, the United States began to seek new lands that would provide raw materials for production as well as new markets for trade. Despite great controversy over whether it was ethical to establish colonies, the U.S. government and large U.S. businesses began to extend American influence throughout the world—particularly in Latin America. Three Latin American countries that drew American interest were Mexico, Panama, and Cuba. The U.S. government intervened in the internal political affairs of each of these countries to protect American economic interests there.

Developing Economic, Ethical, Geographic, and Sociopolitical Literacy. In this lesson, students will learn about factors that encouraged American imperialism in Mexico, Panama, and Cuba; how the United States protected its economic interests in these countries; and the impact of American imperialism on Latin America.

OPEN

1. **Vocabulary.** Before beginning the lesson and interactive map activity, be sure that students understand the meaning of the terms *imperialism* (expanding the power of a nation by controlling other countries or acquiring colonial territory) and *isolationism* (policy of avoiding international political or economic alliances).
2. **Recognizing Point of View.** Present the information from the Context section to students in the form of a brief lecture. Emphasize to students that many U.S. citizens felt that the United States should pursue a policy of isolationism during the late 1800s and early 1900s, but more

U.S. citizens felt that expansion in the form of imperialism was the more beneficial course for the nation as an emerging world power. Tell students that they will be learning more about U.S. interests and involvement in Latin America—particularly in Mexico, Panama, and Cuba.

TEACH

3. Have students explore the Imperialism in Latin America Interactive Map on a computer. Students may work individually or in small groups, depending on the number of computers available.
4. Have students complete the online review at the end of the interactive map. Check their scores to confirm their overall understanding of the material presented in the interactive map activity. If time permits, allow students who received low scores on the review to explore the interactive map further. Encourage them to take notes on the electronic notepad that is available to them throughout the activity.

If more students in the class experience difficulty with the interactive map activity and review, you may wish to have them complete one or more of the optional activities below to ensure mastery of the learning objectives.

CLOSE

5. **Determining the Strength of an Argument and Judging Information.** Ask volunteers to summarize U.S. interests and involvement in each Latin American country covered in the interactive map activity (Mexico, Panama, and Cuba). Then ask the class to consider whether the United States was justified in its reasons for and methods of intervening in the affairs of these countries. Encourage students to engage in a brief class discussion about this topic.

OPTIONS

- **Synthesizing Information.** Organize the class into three groups and assign each group one of the following Latin American countries: Mexico, Panama, or Cuba. Have students refer to the Imperialism in Latin America Interactive Map, the library, and the Internet to create an oral or multimedia presentation about U.S. involvement in each of these countries during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Have each group give its presentation in front of the class. To assess students' work or to guide students, use the [Oral Presentations](#) or the [Multimedia Presentations Rubric](#).
- **Judging Information and Presenting Data Graphically.** Have students create a T-chart representing the pros and cons of U.S. involvement in Latin America during the late 1800s and early 1900s. One column of the T-chart should represent the positive aspects and the other column should list the negative aspects of U.S. involvement in Latin America. Students' charts should be based on their opinions of the events and motivations covered in the Imperialism in Latin America Interactive Map. To assess students' work or to guide students, use the [Creating a Chart](#) and the [Judging Information Rubrics](#).