Should the United States Become an Imperialist Power?
What is the United States’ role in the world? Should our country continue its isolationist policies? Should we expand into new territories? Does the United States have a responsibility to “civilize” other nations? Do we have a responsibility to broker peace between other nations?

The period between 1890 and 1920 saw a huge shift in the way Americans viewed their role in the world. As always, Americans had many different opinions on how the United States should engage with the world.

Description
For this project, you will explore this shift by imagining a conversation between two famous Americans with different opinions on the United States’ role in the world. What would they talk about? How would they express their opinions? What would they say about the other person’s ideas? You will write a dialogue between two famous Americans who lived during the period 1890–1920 in which they discuss their thoughts on American foreign policy and the differences between their beliefs.

Your portfolio assignment has 5 steps:
- Researching American foreign policy 1890–1920
- Choosing two people who lived during the period 1890–1920 with differing opinions on American imperialism
- Doing further research on the opinions of the two people you chose
- Analyzing your research
- Writing a dialogue between the two famous Americans

Step 1: Research American Foreign Policy
Review what you know about American foreign policy between 1890 and 1920 and the debate over imperialism. You will need to know the following information in order to complete your dialogue.
- The countries that the United States occupied or acquired
- The reasons some Americans supported imperialism
- The reasons other Americans opposed imperialism

You can use note cards, type your notes on the computer, or use some other method of note taking.
There are many sources of information about this time period, including your textbook, Discovery Education™, and Grolier Online® (linked from your LMS home page). Below is a list of other resources:

- America 1900
- The Crucible of Empire
- The Age of Imperialism

**Step 2: Choosing two people with opposing viewpoints**

Choose two people with opposing views on America’s role in the world during the period between 1890 and 1920. Here are some possible people to choose from:

- Jane Addams
- Eugene Debs
- Samuel Gompers
- Minor C. Keith
- Alfred Thayer Mahan
- William McKinley
- Jeannette Rankin
- Theodore Roosevelt
- Josiah Strong
- Mark Twain
- Booker T. Washington
- Ida B. Wells
- Woodrow Wilson

**Step 3: Research the Two People**

Research both people’s side of the issue. You will need to find all of the following information to complete your dialogue:

- What are the basic facts that both sides can agree on?
- What did each person believe about imperialism?
- How did they work in support or in opposition to imperialism?
- Were there any key events in their lives that affected their beliefs about imperialism?

You can use note cards, type your notes on the computer, or use some other method of note taking.

**Step 4: Research Analysis**

Before you write your dialogue, reflect on the information you learned while researching your issue. Write down your thoughts on the following questions; you will need the answers to complete your dialogue.

- What is each person’s opinion on the issue?
- What facts or reasoning back up their opinion?
- What would person A say about person B’s opinion and vice versa?
Step 5: Writing a Dialogue

Now, write your dialogue between two people on different sides of the issue. Make sure to address the following issues in your final product:

- Start out your dialogue with each person stating their opinion on the issue. This opinion should be about a paragraph long.
- Spend the rest of the conversation with the two people responding to each other about their dreams.
- Use the following format to write your dialogue

Person 1: I believe that . . .

Person 2: Nonsense. Your . . .

Person 1: That is not true. I . . .

- You may wish to have the people ask one another questions.
- Focus the dialogue on the specific issues. Although they may criticize or challenge each other’s beliefs, the conversation should not become a name-calling session. Have each person comment on the other person’s opinions.
- Your dialogue should be based on both historical fact and imaginative details derived from historical fact.
- Your dialogue should be at least 3 pages long, single spaced, typed in size 12 font.