

Conquest in Context:  
America and Spain  
in Henri's Day



- Grade level 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> grade
- Subject area/s Social Studies, Language Arts
- GPS/Common Core Standards **Georgia Performance Standards for Social Studies**  
SS4H6  
SS5H3  
**English Language Arts Common Core Georgia Performance Standards**  
RI.4.3  
RI.4.9
- Objective The student will create newspaper headlines that demonstrate their understanding of America's view of Spain in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The student will make an image they believe represents America and Spain at the time and compare it to the work of Robert Henri.
- Materials
  - ✓ paper
  - ✓ pencil
  - ✓ handouts (below)
  - ✓ sample newspaper articles (optional)
- Instructions
  - As part of a discussion of Spanish influence in America, ask students first what they think they know about Spain and its relationship to America in 1900. As a class, complete the 'K' and 'W' of a KWL chart with things they already know and what they'd like to know.
  - As a class (or in pairs or small groups) ask students to read the adapted articles in the handouts (below).
  - After discussing vocabulary words (bolded) and the questions in the margins (if desired) have students create headlines and brief articles that they feel represent what Americans felt about Spain at the time.
  - Have students create an image to accompany their article – it could be a political cartoon or a drawing representing a photograph, sketch or painting.
  - Ask students to share their headlines and images, explaining what information their article was based on.
  - Compare students' images to the paintings of Robert Henri or other American artists who painted images of Spain at the time.
  - As a class, complete the last section ('L') of the KWL chart to see what they have learned in completing this activity.
- Evaluation
  - The newspaper article and image can serve as an informal assessment,

to gauge what students gleaned from the articles and what they know of the subject matter at this point in the unit.

- As students complete the last section of the KWL chart, you can get a sense of what they, as a group, understand about the subject.
- Accommodations
  - If students are having difficulty with the article, pair up stronger and struggling readers or read the article as a class.
  - Adjust the minimum length of the article for students who may have difficulty.
  - Provide assistance to those who need help with writing- offering a computer, if available.
- Extensions
  - Create an entire newspaper comprised of students' articles. There could be different sections – such as culture or arts – in addition to the typical international and domestic affairs

- Resources

<http://amhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/printable/section.asp?id=7>

The Smithsonian Museum of American History website provides wonderful resources for educators and students regarding the Spanish American war, including primary sources such as photographs and newspapers.

<http://www.roberthenri.org>

This website includes a short biography of Robert Henri as well as an extensive collection of images from his body of work, including several that are featured in the Spanish Sojourns exhibition.

# SPANISH AMERICAN WAR

Adapted from a Smithsonian article. Full text available at: <http://amhistory.si.edu/military/history/printable/section.asp?id=7>



New York Journal, Library of Congress.

## READ AND DISCUSS

•How do you think Presidents McKinley and Roosevelt affected America's role in the world?

•Think about: military power, modernization, and controlling territories around the world.

•What do you think President Roosevelt meant by "Speak softly but carry a big stick"?

•How did the war impact Spain both positively and negatively?

After the Civil War, the United States neglected its navy, which ranked twelfth in the world by 1880. Although the United States had no overseas **colonies** to protect, business and government leaders realized that a strong navy was essential to defend trade and growing international interests. Beginning in 1881, Congress supported a program to **modernize** (improve) the American Navy. By the 1890s, the U.S. Navy had converted to all-steel and -steam, and ranked among the top five navies in the world.

In 1898, a mysterious explosion sank the battleship USS *Maine* in Havana Harbor, in Spain-controlled Cuba, triggering a war between the United States and Spain. The *Maine* had come to Cuba to protect American citizens while Cuban **revolutionaries** were fighting to win independence from Spain. President McKinley and the United States supported their cause, and after the *Maine* exploded, demanded that Spain give Cuba freedom. Instead, Spain declared war, and America quickly did the same, preparing to fight.

The opening battle of the Spanish American War took place in the Philippines. In May of 1898, Dewey defeated the Spanish squadron in Manila Bay, sinking or capturing every Spanish ship with no loss of American life. It seemed like dramatic proof that the United States was now a major naval power.

Shortly after, in 1901, Theodore Roosevelt became president. Roosevelt strongly supported American **expansionism**, and increased the size of the military to implement it. He summed up his policy with the phrase, "Speak softly, but carry a big stick." Following the fall of Cuba, the Spanish **territories** of Puerto Rico, Samoa, Guam, and Wake Island became American-controlled.

## AFTERMATH

Adapted from a Library of Congress article. Full text available at: <http://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/ojeda.html>

The war had completely **transformed** the United States, which became seen as a world power. Other powerful countries began to see the US as an important political power that would have an impact in the Pacific and later in Europe as well.

But the outcome of the war also transformed Spain. The end of the war became known as the "disaster" in Spain. It seemed disastrous at the time because it meant Spain had lost the last of its overseas territories. But this loss of land and power also encouraged Spain to focus on itself—developing the politics, society, and the arts and sciences of Spain. Instead of being concerned with its territories in the rest of the world, Spain could now look into the future for the first time and consider its development in the modern world. (Spain in this era was a very poor country that hadn't developed many factories and industries, like many other countries in Europe.)

So in some ways, the war of 1898 (or the Spanish-American War) freed Spain as well.

# AMERICANS AND SPAIN

Adapted from Elizabeth Boone's essay in the catalogue, entitled "Books, Canvases, and the Built Environment: The Allure of Spain in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries"

When Robert Henri made his first trip to Spain in 1900, Americans had been painting, writing, and thinking about Spain for almost 100 years. Writers, artists, musicians and architects all across the country drew **inspiration** from Spain or their idea of it. Because the Spanish, as well as the English and various other European powers, had helped colonize America, many people had personal opinions about the Spanish people – some positive and others negative.

Washington Irving, the author of famous American stories like *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, played a big role in launching the mania for all things Spanish. In his most famous Spanish work, *The Alhambra*, the author used his journey to an ancient fortress as the setting for magical legends from the past. The stories portrayed **romanticized** view of Spain's glorious history and later decline. Irving thought that Spain could provide Americans with what they felt was missing from life in the United States. So Irving's view of Spain, and the view of others who came after him, combines the reality of Spain with elements left to the imagination.

In the 1800s many American artists began traveling to Spain. Mary Cassatt painted women chatting with men in the streets and bullfighters relaxing. Another popular Spanish subject was the Spanish dancer. The same artists who painted dancers were likely influenced by the romantic story of *Carmen*, a very popular opera. It tells the story of a bold gypsy girl who works at a tobacco factory in Seville. The plot includes various common myths about Spain: love, violence, and an escape from the realities of everyday life. Another *Carmen*, a Spanish dancer who came to America, was becoming popular in the 1890s. Music including variations of the name *Carmen* or *Carmencita* began to appear in all different kinds of songs and dances.

The Spanish **colonization** of land that became part of the continental United States even earlier also contributed to the American attraction to Spain. Areas of Florida, Texas, land to the West had all been originally controlled by the Spanish. Even though Spain no longer controlled these lands by 1900, there were still strong ties to the Spanish people and architecture. There were even sizable Spanish-speaking communities (*colonias*) and Spanish-language newspapers began opening in New York. States like Florida, Texas and California had many theaters, hotels and homes that were built in the Spanish style. There were even buildings in Georgia that were made to look Spanish, although they did not fit in with other architecture that was made to look English or **classical**.



*Spanish Dancer, the Cigarette*, 1904, oil on canvas.

## READ AND DISCUSS

- How would most Americans have heard about Spain in the early 1900s?
- Do you think there are other cultures or countries today that have a similar influence on American popular culture?