

**TITLE:** The Philippine American War

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**Course:** American History

**Additional Resources Used:** *Philippine Insurrection* reading; *Lies about the Philippine-American War*<sup>1</sup> sheets, no. 1-6; markers; flip chart paper; Sticky Notes

**Lesson Objective:** To analyze US motivations and conduct during the Philippine-American War.

**Method/Activities:** Students will come to class having completed a brief reading on US involvement in the Philippines. They will then work in groups to draw a picture of one misunderstanding of the war (excerpted from a Philippine revisionist history), jigsawed among the different groups, and then complete a gallery walk of the other groups' pictures. The lesson will conclude with students drawing a conclusion—written on an exit slip—of US motivations and conduct during the Philippine War.

**Assessment:** On the basis of student artwork for the gallery walk, and on the written exit slips to be handed in at the end of class.

**Procedures:**

Before the Lesson:	
What the teacher will be doing:	What the students will be doing:
Prepare copies of <i>Lies</i> shorts	Read <i>Treaty of Paris</i> Overview
Gather other supplies	-

During the Lesson:	
What the teacher will be doing:	What the students will be doing:
<b>Set Induction:</b> Put students into 6 groups, and ask them to review with one another the previous night's reading about the <i>Philippine Insurrection</i> .	<b>Set Induction:</b> Get into groups and review the <i>Philippine Insurrection</i> reading.
<b>Body of the lesson:</b>	<b>Body of the lesson:</b>
<b>Phase 1:</b> Split students into six groups and give each group a copy of one of the <i>Lies about the Philippine-American War</i> sheets.  Distribute flip chart paper and markers as students read, and instruct students to draw their <i>Lie</i> once	<b>Phase 1:</b> Work in group to read and graphically depict the group's <i>Lie about the Philippine American War</i>

<sup>1</sup> *Lies* are adapted by the present author from: Christine L. Diaz, *The Other Philippine History Textbook, Book 2: The American Period to the Present*. (Manila: Anvil Publishing, 2009), 5-25.

they've finished reading. As students draw, distribute 5 green and 5 yellow Post-It Note to each group.	
<b>Phase 2:</b> Gallery Walk: organize it in timed stations, probably, to keep things moving.	<b>Phase 2:</b> Gallery Walk: Once all groups are finished drawing, hang the pictures and have students walk among them in their groups—posting a green Post-It note for something they like about the picture, and a yellow one for something they don't understand.
<b>Phase 3:</b> Lead discussion reporting out on pictures and gallery walk—each group to only make one comment about the feedback they've received on their picture.	<b>Phase 3:</b> Contribute to discussion.
<b>Conclusion:</b> Ask students to draw a conclusion about the Philippine-American War based on what they read and pictures they've seen, and complete it as a 1-2 sentence exit slip. The question (to be written on the board) is: "What conclusion can you come to regarding the US's conduct or motivations during the Philippine-American War?"	<b>Conclusion:</b> Complete exit slip.

**Standards:**

<b>Common Core State Standards</b> <a href="http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/introduction">http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RH/introduction</a>
<b>Standard:</b> CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
<b>How This Lesson Meets the Standard:</b> The exit slip consists of a written argument based on the readings students will have completed and the pictures they will have seen.

## **The Philippine Insurrection (1898-1901)**

When the United States went to war with Spain, the US Pacific Fleet was dispatched to the Philippines to defeat the Spanish Pacific fleet. Under Commodore Dewey, the United States sank the entire Spanish fleet without losing a single ship (and suffering only one man wounded) in the Battle of Manila Bay.

After this, a strange 3-way negotiation developed between Commodore Dewey of the American Navy, the Spanish army in the Philippines, and Filipino rebels under General Emilio Aguinaldo. Although the Americans and the Filipinos had a common enemy in Spain, they were not formally allied, and the Spanish commander refused to surrender to his former colonists under Aguinaldo.

Eventually, as more American troops began to arrive in the Pacific, the Spanish garrison surrendered to the Americans, even though the Filipinos had a much larger force, and one that had been just outside of Manila since the naval battle there. The new American commander of Manila refused to let the Filipino Army into the city until he received instructions from President McKinley about what was planned for the Philippines.

When the Spanish-American War ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris, the United States included a payment of \$20 million to Spain for its colonial rights to the Philippines. U.S. President McKinley announced a policy of “benevolent assimilation”: U.S. colonial rule of the Philippines to help prepare the Filipinos for self-rule.

Before the US Senate ratified the treaty, on February 4, 1899, a member of the Filipino rebel force tried to enter U.S.-occupied Manila, and was killed by an American soldier. This began the Filipino insurrection, fighting between the U.S. Army and the Filipino rebels. The insurrection eventually ended in 1901, when Aguinaldo was captured by American troops in a daring raid.

The Philippines remained an American colony until 1942—when it was conquered by the Japanese in World War 2—and again beginning in 1945, until it was granted independence in 1946.

## **Lie #1: On Philippine Independence**

As early as May 24, 1898, a few days after the Americans' victory against the Spaniards in the Battle of Manila Bay and after the Philippine revolution against Spain, Aguinaldo established a government for the Filipinos. On June 12, 1898, he declared Philippine independence.

The Americans in the Philippines witnessed and were well aware of these acts of Aguinaldo; yet, in the midst of all these, they remained silent, neither showing support for Aguinaldo's pronouncements nor expressing objections. In the meantime, U.S. troop reinforcements kept arriving in the islands when there was clearly no need for them—Aguinaldo and his men had all but defeated the Spaniards, driving their top officials to hide within the walls of Manila. Stealthily, the U.S. government negotiated peace with Spain, the latter ceding the Philippines to the U.S. in exchange for money.

On December 21, 1898, a few days after Aguinaldo learned of the contents of the Treaty of Paris, President McKinley issued his Benevolent Assimilation Proclamation, where he explicitly announced that the U.S. was taking control of the Philippine islands. Then and only then was Aguinaldo able to confirm his suspicion: the Filipinos' allies were traitors after all. They had no intention of granting independence to the Filipinos when the Spaniards had been driven away, as they had either promised or led the Filipinos to believe. Rather, they fully intended to fill in the shoes of the Spaniards.

## **Lie #2: McKinley's "Benevolent Assimilation" Proclamation**

Americans have been taught that their great native land acquired the right to rule the Philippines on December 10, 1898, pursuant to the provisions of the Treaty of Paris. Being the champions of freedom that they were known to be, however, the Americans declared that their decision to exercise sovereignty over a people two oceans away from their own land was prompted by their desire to help organize these people so that they may enjoy the true blessings of democracy.

According to President McKinley, "the mission of the United States [in the Philippines] is one of benevolent assimilation, substituting the mild sway of justice and right for arbitrary rule." This "high mission" is to "[support] the temperate administration of affairs for the greatest good of the governed."

Yet only a few months earlier, McKinley had given instructions to the American peace commissioners in Paris which included the following statement: "Incidental to our tenure in the Philippines is the commercial opportunity to which American statesmanship cannot be indifferent. It is to use every legitimate means for the enlargement of American trade."

### **Lie #3: The “Philippine Insurrection”**

What the government of U.S. President William McKinley called the “Phillipine Insurrection (insurrection: a revolt against an established authority or government) of 1899” was in truth the Filipinos’ fight for their nation’s independence, which their leader then, Emilio Aguinaldo, declared on June 12, 1898, but which the American in these islands completely and deliberately ignored, prompting the Filipinos to attempt to realize it by way of force.

Coldly and objectively, it was the Philippine-American War—a war waged by a people who were about to taste their full freedoms, thanks to their own efforts at defending such freedoms and to the help of their “gallant protectors” from a distant land. Little did they know that their so-called “protectors” were really aggressors, or that the sheep were actually wolves.

### **Lie #4: “They Started It!”**

While the true intentions of the U.S. government in the Philippines were made known with President McKinley’s Benevolent Assimilation proclamation, Aguinaldo, hoping that the US Senate would not ratify the Treaty of Paris (which would render it null and void), tried diplomatic ways of convincing the American officials to grant the Philippines their independence. The Americans went along with Aguinaldo’s moves: they were buying time.

After the incident of February 4, 1899, word reached the U.S. that the Philippine-American War was triggered by a violent attack by the natives. This lie served its purpose—two days after the incident, the U.S. Senate ratified the Treaty of Paris.

To the American civilians and other foreigners in the islands, however, it was clear that the Philippine-American War was started by the American soldiers, not the Filipino rebels. How else could the following be explained? On February 2 and 3, 1899, the Filipinos employed in different capacities in the American ships were dismissed. On February 4, 1899, 200-300 American soldiers were sent to Sta. Ana, where the incident that triggered the Philippine-American War took place. All the foregoing point to one clear fact: the February 4, 1899 incident was premediated by the Americans to justify the start of hostilities.

### **Lie #5: The Ugly Truth about the Philippine-American War**

The American authorities hid from the American public the ugly truth about the Philippine-American War. As mentioned earlier, it was publicized as the Philippine Insurrection of 1899, when it was in fact a people’s heroic fight for their much desired freedom and independence. Not many Americans in their homeland came to know the extent of the human rights abuses that the Americans committed in that war.

The American soldiers employed some methods of torture during the Philippine-American War, aimed at extracting confessions from the Filipino rebels regarding the names of their fellow rebels, the site of their headquarters, or where they were hiding their arms and ammunition.

Sometimes, the same methods of torture were used as punishment for certain “crimes” of the natives—as when the latter failed to pay “taxes” to American soldiers. American soldiers described these incidents of torture (and said they were used hundreds of times) in their letters home.

The American soldiers described other human rights violations they committed. One officer wrote home, “We burned hundreds of houses and looted hundreds more. Some of the boys made good hauls of jewelry and clothing... Caloocan was supposed to contain seventeen thousand inhabitants. The Twentieth Kansas swept through it, and now Caloocan contains not one living native...”

### **Lie #6: The Philippine-American War Lasted for Three Years**

Perhaps the most successful lie perpetrated by the U.S. military and media was that the Philippine-American War ended in 1901 after Aguinaldo’s capture. While it is true that Aguinaldo was the recognized leader of the rebels and, as such, when he laid down his arms, his men followed suit, it is nonetheless true as well that many Filipino rebels held on to their weapons and continued the fight, though sporadically or in a fragmented way.

What is hardly known to the American public and Filipinos alike is that when the war in the northern part of the Philippines subsided with Aguinaldo’s capture, the American troops were pulled out of there and sent to the South—to the island of Mindinao—to commence the war against the Muslim Filipinos there. The Americans had succeeded in postponing the war until about 1903, because of the Bates Agreement they had signed with the leaders of the Muslims, which promised the latter self-rule in exchange for their recognition of U.S. rule in name. In 1903, when they were ready to fight the Muslims after pulling their men out of the north, the Americans cancelled the agreement and waged war against the Muslims, with the aim of establishing full U.S. control over Mindinao.

The war against the Muslims lasted until the end of 1913. Months before the war ended in 1913, the U.S. troops massacred about 500 Muslim Filipinos at Bud Bagsak.