

# THE MONROE DOCTRINE: DEBATING AMERICA'S DEFENSE OF INDEPENDENCE ABROAD

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## GUIDING QUESTION:

How has U.S. involvement in foreign affairs shaped a “more perfect union?”

## OVERVIEW

After analyzing secondary and primary sources, students will determine how the Monroe Doctrine reflects projected American identity abroad. By participating in a debate, students will examine a variety of perspectives and support an argument.

## OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this activity, students will be able to

- > Describe the arguments for and against U.S. involvement in foreign conflicts;
- > Analyze the debates surrounding the Monroe Doctrine; and
- > Evaluate the short- and long-term effects of the Monroe Doctrine on American identity and its contribution toward building a more perfect union.

## STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

### CONNECTIONS TO COMMON CORE

- > CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6 Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.
- > CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9 Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

## CONNECTIONS TO C3 FRAMEWORK

- > D2.His.1.6-8. Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.
- > D2.His.8.9-12. Analyze how current interpretations of the past are limited by the extent to which available historical sources represent perspectives of people at the time.

## DOCUMENTS USED

### PRIMARY SOURCES

Caesar Augustus Rodney, Letter from Caesar Augustus Rodney to President James Monroe, 1824 (excerpt)  
Stanislaus Murray Hamilton, Editor, *The writings of James Monroe...*  
HathiTrust Digital Library  
<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112005125403&view=1up&seq=456>

Francisco José de Paula Santander y Omaña, Mensaje del Vicepresidente de Columbia Encargado del Gobierno, Al Congreso de 1824. Conciudadanos del Senado y de la cámara de representantes, 27 de abril de 1824  
*Gazeta de Columbia* (excerpt)  
Banco de la República, Biblioteca Virtual Columbia  
<http://babel.banrepcultural.org/cdm/ref/collection/p17054coll26/id/411>

Francisco José de Paula Santander y Omaña, *Message of the Vice President of Columbia, charged with the Government, on the Opening of Congress*, April 6, 1824  
British Foreign and State Papers, Volume 12, 1846 (excerpt)  
HathiTrust Digital Library  
<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015035798514&view=1up&seq=836>

Map, Henry S. Tanner, *South America and West Indies*, 1823  
David Rumsey Map Collection, Stanford University (2589019)  
<https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/s/bh8029>

Monroe Doctrine, 1823 (excerpt)  
National Archives and Records Administration (Record Group 46)  
<https://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=false&doc=23#>

Political Cartoon, *Keep Off! The Monroe Doctrine Must be Respected*, 1896  
Library of Congress (2002697703)  
<https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002697703/>

Theodore Roosevelt, Address of President Roosevelt at Chicago, Illinois, April 2, 1903 (excerpt)  
Theodore Roosevelt Center at Dickinson State University  
<https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record.aspx?libID=o289667>

Thomas Jefferson, Letter from Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, October 24, 1823 (excerpt)  
National Archives and Records Administration  
<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-3827>

Simón Bolívar, Address at the Congress of Angostura, 1819 (excerpt)  
Brown University Library  
<https://library.brown.edu/create/modernlatinamerica/chapters/chapter-2-the-colonial-foundations/primary-documents-with-accompanying-discussion-questions/document-3-simon-bolivar-address-at-the-congress-of-angostura-1819/>

Simón Bolívar, Address at the Congress of Angostura, 1819 (original translation, excerpt)  
Università di Bologna, Dipartimento di Storia Culture Civiltà  
[https://storicamente.org/sites/default/images/articles/media/1880/Bolivar\\_Discorso\\_de\\_Angostura.pdf](https://storicamente.org/sites/default/images/articles/media/1880/Bolivar_Discorso_de_Angostura.pdf)

Simón Bolívar, Carta de Jamaica, 1815 (excerpt)  
Colección Unidad Nuestraamericana  
<https://albaciudad.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/08072015-Carta-de-Jamaica-WEB.pdf>

Simón Bolívar, Letter from Jamaica, 1815 (excerpt)  
Brown University Library  
<https://library.brown.edu/create/modernlatinamerica/chapters/chapter-2-the-colonial-foundations/primary-documents-with-accompanying-discussion-questions/document-2-simon-bolivar-letter-from-jamaica-september-6-1815/>

Simón Bolívar, Letter from Simón Bolívar to Daniel Florencio O'Leary, 1824 (excerpt)  
Reprinted in *Memorias de General O'Leary*, New York Public Library  
<https://archive.org/details/memoriasdelgene01vilagoog/page/n500/mode/2up>

## SECONDARY SOURCE

"The Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny"  
Stanford University Press  
[http://www.americanyawp.com/text/12-manifest-destiny/#VI\\_The\\_Monroe\\_Doctrine\\_and\\_Manifest\\_Destiny](http://www.americanyawp.com/text/12-manifest-destiny/#VI_The_Monroe_Doctrine_and_Manifest_Destiny)

## TEACHER-CREATED MATERIALS

- > Student Activity Worksheet
- > Student Reflection

## ACTIVITY PREPARATION

- > Read the secondary source, "The Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny," for teacher background.
- > Make one copy of the Student Activity Worksheet for each student.
- > Project the map, *South America and West Indies*.
- > Gather two sticky notes of different colors and create a color code on the board with one color labeled "must switch" and the other "may switch."
- > Consider how students will vote after the debate activity. Have slips of paper ready or an online poll populated.

## CONNECTIONS

The concept of a more perfect union is not limited to domestic affairs. The United States' role in world affairs became even more crucial as the U.S. emerged as a more active player on the world stage in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To explore this idea further, review the lesson on the impact of the Cold War on immigration patterns.

## PROCEDURE

### ACTIVITY ONE (20 MINUTES)

- > Project the map *South America and West Indies*.
  - » Help students identify Haiti, Cuba, and Bolivia on the map.
  - » Ask students to identify the territories held by Spain.
  - » **Teacher Tip:** This map was produced in 1823 and some of the names might not align with the names of places we use today, i.e., the Caribbean is more often referred to as the West Indies, etc.
- > Assign students to read the article, “The Monroe Doctrine and Manifest Destiny.” Lead a discussion about the Monroe Doctrine.
  - » *What is the Monroe Doctrine?*
  - » *When was the doctrine created?*
  - » *Who was involved in the creating the Monroe Doctrine?*
  - » *What does the Monroe Doctrine do?*
  - » *Why was the creation of this doctrine necessary for the protection of liberty and freedom?*
- > Project the political cartoon, *Keep Off! The Monroe Doctrine Must be Respected*, on the board for analysis. Possible guiding prompts:
  - » *Describe the clothing of the people on either side of the divide.*
  - » *What individual countries are labeled in this cartoon?*
  - » *What are individuals holding in the image?*
  - » *What adjectives would you use to describe the divide? What does this say about the author’s opinion of the Monroe Doctrine?*
  - » *How are the countries standing behind Uncle Sam depicted? Would they have agreed with this depiction? Why or why not?*
  - » *What benefits might these countries have by standing in the shadow of the U.S.? What are the negative consequences of standing in the shadow?*
  - » *Does the artist depict the Monroe Doctrine as something that made the United States a better country, or “a more perfect union?” Do you agree or disagree with the artist?*

### ACTIVITY TWO (20 MINUTES)

- > Organize the room into two equal groups for a class debate. Break down the larger group into smaller groups of three to four students each. Assign half of the groups in support of and half in opposition to U.S. involvement in foreign conflicts.
- > Assign students to analyze the Monroe Doctrine quotations to find support for their position.
  - » **Teacher Tip:** Some of the materials are quoted in the original Spanish. This will give some English language learners an opportunity to take on a leadership role. Keep in mind these are the original translations from the 1800s. They might not align completely with modern-day Spanish or specific regional dialects.
- > Explain to the class that for this activity all students will be individual members of Congress, some who support the Monroe Doctrine, and others who oppose it. Allow groups time to discuss why they might support or oppose the doctrine. What questions might they ask from this perspective?
- > Ask the teams of students to form two statements defending or critiquing U.S. involvement in foreign conflicts. One will be used as an opening argument and the other to form a rebuttal. As students develop their arguments, prompt student thinking with questions like:
  - » *How much will this doctrine cost?*
  - » *Where will the government find the money for this?*
  - » *How will citizens feel about the sacrifice of American lives?*
  - » *What does America stand for?*
  - » *Would America exist without the help of other countries, such as France?*
  - » *What circumstances would warrant U.S. intervention in another country?*
- > Allow each side two minutes for an opening argument. Ask students, *Based on the arguments presented thus far, was the United States forming “a more perfect union”?*
  - » **Teacher Tip:** Teachers could opt for one larger debate or choose to run two or three smaller debates simultaneously.
- > Drop sticky notes of two different colors colors on both sides of the room.
  - » One color represents students who must now switch sides to the other team. Tell these students, *Your constituents have changed their minds about the Monroe Doctrine and you now must switch sides to be reelected. This is not optional.*
  - » The other color sticky note provides students with the opportunity to switch to the other side of the argument if they choose. Tell students, *Your constituents are expressing mixed and unclear thoughts on the Monroe Doctrine and they are trusting in your leadership. You may switch sides if you like.*

- > Explain to students that this symbolizes that political positions often change over time, but some people experience the freedom to change their mind publicly while others must maintain loyalty to a political party or public image.
- > Lead two more rounds of the debate in which one team will state an argument and the other will have a chance to issue a rebuttal.
- > Lead students to a vote on whether the United States should pass the Monroe Doctrine. Teachers may consider having students use devices to provide a live poll or voting on slips of paper to be passed in and counted. Teachers may select one of the following voting options:
  - » An anonymous vote: this would provide an opportunity to explain the importance of the Australian ballot.
  - » A roll-call vote: this would provide an opportunity to explain the importance of the public voting process used by the U.S. Congress.

#### ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

- > Provide students with a choice between a visual or written interpretation of the assessment prompt below. Students can complete the reflection on the Student Activity Sheet.
  - » Summarize the Monroe Doctrine including its advantages and disadvantages.
  - » Consider the themes discussed in the sources from this lesson and the debate. How has the U.S. involvement in foreign affairs shaped its identity?
  - » Have these involvements created a “more perfect union”? Support your opinion with evidence from the primary sources and the debate.

### STUDENTS INTERESTED IN THIS TOPIC MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN RESEARCHING THE FOLLOWING FOR AN NHD PROJECT

- > Latin American Revolutions
- > The Haitian Revolution (1791–1804)
- > Mexican–American War (1846–1848)
- > Spanish–American War (1898)
- > Colonization of African nations
- > Cuban–American Relations and the Platt Amendment of 1901
- > Philippine–American War (1899–1902)

To access a PDF containing all of the sources and materials to complete this lesson plan, go to:

**[WWW.NHD.ORG/250](http://WWW.NHD.ORG/250)**

## EDSITEment!

### RELATED RESOURCES

Lesson Plan: The Origins of “Wilsonianism”

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plans/lesson-1-origins-wilsonianism>

Closer Readings Commentary: 50 Core Documents That Tell America’s Story

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/closer-readings/50-core-documents-tell-americas-story>

Curriculum: The Monroe Doctrine: Origin and Early American Foreign Policy

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/curricula/monroe-doctrine-origin-and-early-american-foreign-policy>

Student Activity: The Spanish–American War

<https://edsitement.neh.gov/student-activities/spanish-american-war-webquest>

# SOUTH AMERICA AND WEST INDIES

Map, Henry S. Tanner, *South America and West Indies*, 1823  
David Rumsey Map Collection, Stanford University (2589019)  
<https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/s/bh8029>



# KEEP OFF! THE MONROE DOCTRINE MUST BE RESPECTED

Political Cartoon, *Keep Off! The Monroe Doctrine Must be Respected*, 1896  
Library of Congress (2006297703)  
<https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2002697703/>



# STUDENT ACTIVITY WORKSHEET

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*Keep Off! The Monroe Doctrine Must be Respected, 1896, Library of Congress (2006297703)*

**Surface Level  
Notes and Observations**

**Deeper Level  
Notes and Observations**

# STUDENT ACTIVITY WORKSHEET (CON'T)

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Simón Bolívar, Address at the Congress of Angostura, 1819 (original translation, excerpt)

Università di Bologna, Dipartimento di Storia Culture Civiltà

[https://storicamente.org/sites/default/images/articles/media/1880/Bolivar\\_Discorso\\_de\\_Angostura.pdf](https://storicamente.org/sites/default/images/articles/media/1880/Bolivar_Discorso_de_Angostura.pdf)

Hemos dividido como los Americanos la Representación Nacional en dos Cámaras: la de Representantes y el Senado. La primera está compuesta muy sabiamente, goza de todas las atribuciones que le corresponde, y no es susceptible de una reforma esencial, porque la Constitución le ha dado el origen, la forma, y las facultades que requiere la voluntad del Pueblo para ser legítima y competentemente representada.

Un Magistrado Republicano, es un individuo aislado en medio de una sociedad encargado de contener el ímpetu del Pueblo hacia la licencia, la propensión de los Jueces y Administradores hacia el abuso de las Leyes.

Like the North Americans, we have divided national representation into two chambers: that of Representatives and the Senate. The first is very wisely constituted. It enjoys all its proper functions, and it requires no essential revision, because the Constitution, in creating it, gave it the form and powers which the people deemed necessary in order that they might be legally and properly represented.

A republican magistrate is an individual set apart from society, charged with checking the impulse of the people toward license and the propensity of judges and administrators toward abuse of the laws.

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Theodore Roosevelt, Address of President Roosevelt at Chicago, Illinois, April 2, 1903 (excerpt)

Theodore Roosevelt Center at Dickinson State University

<https://www.theodorerooseveltcenter.org/Research/Digital-Library/Record.aspx?libID=o289667>

“There is a homely old adage which runs: “Speak softly and carry a big stick; you will go far.” If the American nation will speak softly, and yet build and keep at a pitch of the highest training a thoroughly efficient navy, the Monroe Doctrine will go far.”

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Thomas Jefferson, Letter from Thomas Jefferson to James Monroe, October 24, 1823 (excerpt)

National Archives and Records Administration

<https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-3827>

“Our endeavor should surely be, to make our hemisphere that of freedom. One nation, most of all, could disturb us in this pursuit; she now offers to lead, aid, and accompany us in it and emancipate a continent at one stroke, which might otherwise linger long in doubt and difficulty. Great Britain is the nation which can do us the most harm of any one, or all on earth; and with her on our side we need not fear the whole world.”



# STUDENT ACTIVITY WORKSHEET (CON'T)

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Caesar Augustus Rodney, Letter from Caesar Augustus Rodney to President James Monroe, 1824 (excerpt)  
Stanislaus Murray Hamilton, Editor, *The writings of James Monroe...*

HathiTrust Digital Library

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uiug.30112005125403&view=1up&seq=456>

“C. A. Rodney to the President:

BUENOS AYRES [*sic*], Feby 10, 1824. Your admirable message was received the day before yesterday. It has inspired us here. The state of the world required this frank and manly avowal of your patriotic sentiments. You breathe a spirit worthy of the purest and the proudest days of the Revolution. This masterly State Paper will have a most extensive influence. The weight of our moral character as a nation in the scale of Europe, is equal to armies in the field. I hope you will meet with the undivided support of Congress, and I am certain the people of the United States will rally round your standard, even if it were a forlorn hope. I regret that neither my health nor circumstances would permit me to remain in the Senate of the United States. No public situation would gratify me more than a seat in Congress, where with renovated health, I could raise my voice in support of you and your administration. The present state of the world has made me think of publishing the substance of what I intended to deliver on the South American question, had my health enabled me. I should now make the attempt if any person had spoken against the recognition. Your message will have the happiest effect throughout the whole Spanish Provinces.”

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Simón Bolívar, Carta de Jamaica, 1815 (original translation, excerpt)

Colección Unidad Nuestraamericana

<https://albaciudad.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/08072015-Carta-de-Jamaica-WEB.pdf>

Al presente sucede lo contrario: la muerte, el deshonor, cuanto es nocivo nos amenaza y tememos, todo lo sufrimos de ésa desnaturalizada Madrastra...En consecuencia, nosotros esperabamos, con razon, que todas las naciones cultas se apresurarian á auciliarnos, para que adquiriesemos un bien cuyas ventajas son recíprocas á entrambos hemisferios.

Simón Bolívar, Letter from Jamaica, 1815 (excerpt)

Brown University Library

<https://library.brown.edu/create/modernlatinamerica/chapters/chapter-2-the-colonial-foundations/primary-documents-with-accompanying-discussion-questions/document-2-simon-bolivar-letter-from-jamaica-september-6-1815/>

“At present the contrary attitude persists: we are threatened with the fear of death, dishonor, and every harm; there is nothing we have not suffered at the hands of that unnatural stepmother–Spain...

Consequently, we have had reason to hope that the civilized nations would hasten to our aid in order that we might achieve that which must prove to be advantageous to both hemispheres.”

# STUDENT ACTIVITY WORKSHEET (CON'T)

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Simón Bolívar, Letter from Simón Bolívar to Daniel Florencio O’Leary, 1824 (excerpt)  
Reprinted in Memorias de General O’Leary, New York Public Library  
<https://archive.org/details/memoriasdelgene01vilagoog/page/n500/mode/2up>

“La Inglaterra y los Estados Unidos nos protejeu, y US. debe saber que estas dos naciones son las únicas marítimas en la día, y que á los españoles nada les puede venir siuo por mar.”

“England and the United States protect us. You should know that these two nations are the only maritime ones in the day, and that nothing can come to the Spanish if they are by sea.”

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James Monroe, The Monroe Doctrine, 1823 (excerpt)  
National Archives and Records Administration  
[https://www.ourdocuments.gov/print\\_friendly.php?flash=false&page=transcript&doc=23&title=Transcript+of+Monroe+Doctrine+%281823%29](https://www.ourdocuments.gov/print_friendly.php?flash=false&page=transcript&doc=23&title=Transcript+of+Monroe+Doctrine+%281823%29)

“The American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are...not to be considered...subjects for future colonization by any European powers.”

# STUDENT ACTIVITY WORKSHEET (CON'T)

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Francisco José de Paula Santander y Omaña, Mensaje del Vicepresidente de Columbia Encargado del Gobierno, Al Congreso de 1824. Conciudadanos del Senado y de la cámara de representantes, 27 de abril de 1824

*Gazeta de Colombia*

Banco de la República, Biblioteca Virtual Columbia

<http://babel.banrepcultural.org/cdm/ref/collection/p17054coll26/id/411>

“El presidente de los Estados - Unidos acaba de señalar su administration con un acto eminentemente justo, y digno de la tierra clásica de la libertad: en su último mensaje al congreso ha declarado que mira cualquiera intervencion de [alguna] potencia europe dirigida á oprimir ó violentar los destinos de los gobiernos independientes de AmErica como una manifestacion de disposiciones enemigas hAcia los Estados --Unidoes. Aquel gobierno considera cualquiera intento de parte de las potencias aliadas para estender su sistema á cualquiera procion del hemisferio americano, como peligroso a la paz y seguridad de dichos estados. Semejante pol i ca consoladora del jénero humano pudiera valer á Columbia un aliado poderoso en el caso de que su independencia y libertad fuesen amenazadas por las potencias aliadas. El ejecutivo no pudiendo ser indiferente á la marcha que ha domado la política de los Estados Unidos se ocupa eficazmente en reducir la cuestion á puntos terminantes y decisivos.”

Francisco José de Paula Santander y Omaña, *Message of the Vice President of Columbia, charged with the Government, on the Opening of Congress, April 6, 1824*

British Foreign and State Papers, Volume 12, 1846

HathiTrust Digital Library

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015035798514&view=1up&seq=836>

“The president of the United States has lately made his administration memorable by an act eminently just-an act worthy of the classic land of liberty. In his last message to congress he has declared that he will consider every act of intervention of any European power which aims to interfere with the destinies of the independent governments of America as a manifestation of a hostile disposition towards the United States. That government will consider any attempt on the part of the Holy Alliance to extend its system to any portion of the American hemisphere as perilous to the peace and safety of the new states. Such a policy, consolatory to the human race, might secure to Colombia a powerful ally in case her independence and liberty should be menaced by the allied powers. The executive of Colombia cannot remain indifferent to the advance thus made in the policy of the United States: he is actively engaged in determining the scope and intent of this policy.”

# STUDENT REFLECTION

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**Directions:** In written or visual form, address the following:

- > Summarize the Monroe Doctrine including its advantages and disadvantages.
- > Consider the themes discussed in the sources from this lesson and the debate. How has the U.S. involvement in foreign affairs shaped its identity?
- > Have these involvements created a “more perfect union”? Support your opinion with evidence from the primary sources and the debate.



# BUILDING A MORE PERFECT UNION



NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE  
HUMANITIES

EDSITEment!

THE BEST OF THE HUMANITIES ON THE WEB

NHD  
NATIONAL  
HISTORY DAY

Help us to  
win the vote

FREEDOM  
WE ARE  
BORN-  
IN  
FREEDOM  
JUST LIVE

END  
SEGREGATED  
RULES  
IN  
PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS

WE  
DEMAND  
AN  
END  
TO  
POLICE  
BRUTALITY  
NO