The Price of Empire

Weigh the motives and costs of U.S. expansion

9-12.US2.3 "Evaluate the impact of racial, economic, moral, political, and strategic motives for the United States becoming an imperialist power."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline evidence of each of the five motives for annexation: economic, strategic, moral, racial, and political. Circle two consequences that help you judge those motives.

Why Keep the Philippines?

1. In 1898, U.S. forces defeated Spain at Manila Bay, where Filipino revolutionaries had also been fighting Spanish rule. The Treaty of Paris later transferred the Philippines to the United States for $20 million, without Filipino consent. Some Americans argued that controlling the islands would open trade with Asian markets and give U.S. ships a naval base across the Pacific. These economic and strategic goals made the islands seem valuable, but they did not explain why Americans believed they had the right to govern Filipinos.

2. Supporters also presented annexation as a moral duty. They said Americans should bring Christianity and schools to Filipinos, although many Filipinos were already Christian and had their own schools. Racial claims reinforced that argument. Some U.S. leaders described Filipinos as unfit to govern themselves, even as Filipino leaders sought independence. Political motives mattered too. President William McKinley and other expansionists feared that refusing the islands would weaken U.S. standing among world powers. Their arguments made foreign control sound like a public service, not a choice with costs.

3. When the United States kept the islands, Filipino forces fought U.S. troops in a war that began in 1899. The war killed many combatants and civilians, and the United States ruled the Philippines for decades. Critics argued that ruling people without their consent violated American ideals of self-government. Trade and naval access help explain why U.S. leaders wanted the islands; claims of uplift and racial superiority helped defend their decision. Yet Filipino resistance shows how these motives could override the independence Americans said they valued.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did economic and strategic motives each make the Philippines valuable to expansionists?

2. How did racial claims support the moral argument for annexation, and what fact in the passage weakens that argument?

3. How did concern about world standing favor annexation despite a cost to Filipino self-government?

4. Which consequence most challenges a motive for annexation? Name the consequence and explain the conflict.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence editorial to Americans in 1900 arguing whether the United States should continue ruling the Philippines. Weigh two different motives against Filipino self-government, and cite two facts from the passage.

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PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline evidence of each of the five motives for annexation: economic, strategic, moral, racial, and political. Circle two consequences that help you judge those motives. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did economic and strategic motives each make the Philippines valuable to expansionists?	**Expansionists expected trade with Asian markets and a Pacific naval base for U.S. ships.**
2	How did racial claims support the moral argument for annexation, and what fact in the passage weakens that argument?	**Claims that Filipinos could not govern themselves made U.S. control seem helpful. The passage notes that many Filipinos were already Christian and had schools, despite claims that Americans needed to bring them Christianity and education.**
3	How did concern about world standing favor annexation despite a cost to Filipino self-government?	**Expansionists feared that refusing the islands would weaken U.S. standing among world powers, so they favored control even though Filipinos had not consented to it.**
4	Which consequence most challenges a motive for annexation? Name the consequence and explain the conflict.	**The war killed many people, which challenges the claim that U.S. rule was a moral service to Filipinos. Other passage-supported pairings are acceptable.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Americans should end U.S. rule in the Philippines. Trade with Asian markets and a Pacific naval base may benefit the United States, but those gains do not justify denying Filipinos self-government. Spain transferred the islands without Filipino consent, and Filipino forces have fought U.S. troops since 1899. A nation that praises self-government should not keep control over people seeking independence.

Accept different judgments when students accurately connect motives to consequences in the passage. For the editorial, check for four sentences, two distinct motives, two passage facts, and a clear position on Filipino self-government.