

# The Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine

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by Tim Bailey

## UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit is one of the Gilder Lehrman Institute’s Teaching Literacy through History™ resources, designed to align to the Common Core State Standards. These units were developed to enable students to understand, summarize, and evaluate original materials of historical significance. Through a step-by-step process, students will acquire the skills to analyze, assess, and develop knowledgeable and well-reasoned viewpoints on primary sources.

Over the course of five lessons the students will analyze and assess the text of the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, part of President Theodore Roosevelt’s Annual Message to Congress in 1904. Thee students will “read like a detective” to discover, explain, and evaluate the meaning and importance Theodore Roosevelt’s Corollary by acquiring a proficient understanding of what is explicitly stated, drawing logical inferences, and demonstrating these skills by writing succinct summaries and then restating the summaries in their own words. As a closure and summary activity, the students will also compose an analytical essay that assesses President Roosevelt’s arguments and conclusions supported by evidence from the text.

## UNIT OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Analyze primary source documents using close reading strategies
- Summarize the essential message of a written piece
- Demonstrate understanding of both literal and inferential aspects of text-based evidence
- Write an argumentative essay using text-based evidence
- Draw conclusions based on direct evidence found in the text

## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Did the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine fundamentally alter the intent and meaning of the original policy? Explain how the doctrine and corollary are compatible.

## NUMBER OF CLASS PERIODS: 3–5

While the unit is intended to flow over a five-day period, it is possible to complete the material in less time. For example, the first two days can be used to ensure understanding of the process by having Lessons 1 and 2 completed in class. You can then assign Lessons 3 and 4 as homework. The persuasive (argumentative) essay would then be written in class on the third day.

**GRADE LEVEL(S):** 7–12

## COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

“Although the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 was essentially passive (it asked that Europeans not increase their influence or recolonize any part of the Western Hemisphere), by the 20th century a more confident United States was willing to take on the role of regional policeman. In the early 1900s Roosevelt grew concerned that a crisis between Venezuela and its creditors could spark an invasion of that nation by European powers. The Roosevelt Corollary of December 1904 stated that the United States would intervene as a last resort to ensure that other nations in the Western Hemisphere fulfilled their obligations to international creditors, and did not violate the rights of the United States or invite ‘foreign aggression to the detriment of the entire body of American nations.’ As the corollary worked out in practice, the United States increasingly used military force to restore internal stability to nations in the region. Roosevelt declared that the United States might ‘exercise international police power in “flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence.”’ Over the long term the corollary had little to do with relations between the Western Hemisphere and Europe, but it did serve as justification for U.S. intervention in Cuba, Nicaragua, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic.”

Source: “Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, 1904,” Office of the Historian, US Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/roosevelt-and-monroe-doctrine>

## LESSON 1

### OVERVIEW

In this lesson the students will do a close reading of the first section of President Theodore Roosevelt’s Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, part of his annual message to Congress, in December 1904. The students will have the opportunity to draw conclusions about President Roosevelt’s words and ideas as expressed in this document. In Lesson 1 the learning activities will be facilitated as a whole-class lesson.

### OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Analyze primary source documents using close reading strategies
- Summarize the essential message of a written piece
- Demonstrate understanding of both literal and inferential aspects of text-based evidence

### MATERIALS

- Theodore Roosevelt’s Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine (excerpts), Annual Message to Congress, December 6, 1904. Source: Transcript of Theodore Roosevelt’s Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine from Theodore Roosevelt’s Annual Message to Congress, December 6, 1904, 100 Milestone Documents, ourdocuments.gov, <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=56&page=transcript>. You can read Roosevelt’s complete Annual Message to Congress, December 6, 1904, online at The American Presidency Project, John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters, University of California, Santa Barbara, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=29545&st=&st1=>
- Summary Organizer #1
- Overhead projector, Elmo projector, or similar device

### PROCEDURE

1. Distribute copies of the excerpts from the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, and ask the students to read it silently to themselves. Explain that the students will learn how to do in-depth analysis for themselves by reading, understanding, and summarizing President Theodore Roosevelt’s Annual Message from December 6, 1904 and his statements regarding American foreign policy. Resist providing extensive historical background at this point as the goal is for the students to develop ideas and draw conclusions based solely on Roosevelt’s words.
2. “Share read” the document with the students. This is done by having the students follow along silently while you begin to read aloud, modeling prosody, inflection, and punctuation. Then ask the class to join in with the reading after a few sentences while you continue to read aloud, still serving as the model for the class. This technique will support struggling readers as well as English language learners (ELL).

3. Distribute copies of Summary Organizer #1 and display it in a format large enough for the whole class to see. This worksheet contains the first section of President Roosevelt's Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine. Explain that today the whole class will be going through this process together.
4. Explain that the first objective is to select "Key Words" from the first section and then use those words to create a summary sentence that gets at the gist of the text.
5. Guidelines for Selecting the Key Words: Key Words are important contributors to understanding the text. They are usually nouns or verbs. Advise students not to pick "connector" words (*are, is, the, and, so*, etc.). The number of key words depends on the length of the paragraph. This selection is 199 words; therefore, students should select 7–8 key words from the reading. Since the students must know the meaning of the words they choose, you will have opportunities to teach students how to use context clues, word analysis, and dictionary skills to discover word meanings.
6. Students will now select 7–8 words from the text that they believe are key words and write them in the Key Words section of their organizer.
7. Survey the class to find out what the most popular choices were. You can write them down and have the class discuss the options and vote on the final choice, based on guidance from you. For example, the class could select the following words: *aim, nation, peace, tyrants, injustice, goal, and mankind*. (If the students want to include two words together, let's say an adjective and noun like *enlightened nations*, that express a clear single idea, you can occasionally allow it.) Now, no matter which words the students had previously selected, have the students write the words agreed upon by the class or chosen by you into the Key Word section in their organizer.
8. Explain to the class that they will use these key words to write a sentence that gets at the gist of what Roosevelt was saying. This summary sentence should be developed through a whole-class process of discussion and negotiation. For example, "The aim of our nation should be peace, and while tyrants may say some injustices bring peace, true justice should be the goal of mankind." The students might decide they don't need some of the words to make the sentence even more streamlined. This is part of the negotiation process. The students will copy the final negotiated sentence into their organizer.
9. Guide the students in restating the summary sentence in their own words, not having to use the key words from the text. Again, this is a class negotiation process. For example, "Everyone's goal should be real peace and justice for all." This new "in your own words" sentence should be copied into the appropriate section of the organizer.
10. Wrap-up: Discuss vocabulary that the students found confusing or difficult. The students can record these words and their meaning on the back of the organizer or on a separate vocabulary form.

## LESSON 2

### OVERVIEW

In this lesson the students will do a close reading of the second section of President Theodore Roosevelt’s Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, part of his annual message to Congress, in December 1904. The students will have the opportunity to draw conclusions about President Roosevelt’s words and ideas as expressed in this document. In Lesson 2 they will work with partners and small groups.

### OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Analyze primary source documents using close reading strategies
- Summarize the essential message of a written piece
- Demonstrate understanding of both literal and inferential aspects of text-based evidence

### MATERIALS

- Summary Organizer #2

### PROCEDURE

1. Lead a discussion of what the class learned in the previous lesson and what they decided was the gist of the first selection from President Roosevelt’s Corollary. Explain that they will be continuing with the second section of Roosevelt’s message with partners and in small groups.
2. Distribute Summary Organizer #2, with the second selection from Roosevelt’s Corollary, and share read the text with the class as described in Lesson 1.
3. Review the procedure from Lesson 1, reminding students that they will select key words from the text, use the Key Words to summarize the text, and then restate the summary in their own words. Because this paragraph is shorter (164 words) than the last one, they can pick 6–7 Key Words.
4. The students should now be placed with partners to negotiate the selection of key words. After the students in each pair have decided on their 6–7 key words, they should write those words in the Key Words section of the organizers.
5. Now put each pair of students into a group of four. Be strategic in how the groups are formed in order to ensure active participation by all group members. These groups should then repeat the same negotiation process to finalize their selection of 6–7 key words. Circulate to ensure that all groups are negotiating successfully and appropriately choosing words.
6. Each group will use the selected key words to build a sentence that summarizes Roosevelt’s message in this part of the text. Circulate among the groups to monitor their progress and to make sure that all students are contributing to this learning activity.

7. Ask the groups to share out the summary sentences that they have created. This should start a teacher-led discussion that points out the qualities of the various attempts. How successful were the groups at getting at this selection's main idea and were they careful to use their key words?
8. Each group will now restate the summary sentence in their own words. Again, this is a group negotiation process. After they have decided on a sentence, they should write the final version into their organizers.
9. Have the groups share out and discuss the clarity and quality of the restatements.
10. Wrap-up: Discuss vocabulary that the students found confusing or difficult. The students can record these words and their meaning on the back of the organizer or on a separate vocabulary form.

## LESSON 3

### OVERVIEW

In this lesson the students will do a close reading of the third section of President Theodore Roosevelt's Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, part of his annual message to Congress, in December 1904. The students will have the opportunity to draw conclusions about President Roosevelt's words and ideas as expressed in this document. In Lesson 3 the students will work individually unless you believe they need another day of support from a partner or small group.

### OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Analyze primary source documents using close reading strategies
- Summarize the essential message of a written piece
- Demonstrate understanding of both literal and inferential aspects of text-based evidence

### MATERIALS

- Summary Organizer #3

### PROCEDURE

1. Discuss the text summaries the students came up with for the first and second sections of the text in the previous lessons.
2. Hand out Summary Organizer #3, which contains the third selection from President Roosevelt's Corollary, and share read the text with the students as described in Lesson 1.
3. Review the process of selecting key words, writing a summary using those key words, and then restating the summary in their own words. Tell the students that they will be working independently on this part of the text.
4. Because this paragraph is 226 words, the students can pick 10 key words. After choosing their words, they will write them in the Key Words section of their organizer.
5. Using these key words, the students will build a sentence that summarizes the third selection from the text. They should write their summary sentences into their organizers.
6. The students will now restate the summary sentence in their own words and write it into their organizer.
7. Have the students share out their restated summaries and discuss the clarity and quality of the different interpretations of Roosevelt's views.
8. Wrap-up: Discuss vocabulary that the students found confusing or difficult; the students can record these words and their meaning on the back of the organizer or a separate vocabulary form.

## LESSON 4

### OVERVIEW

In this lesson the students will do a close reading of the fourth section of President Theodore Roosevelt's Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, part of his annual message to Congress, in December 1904. The students will have the opportunity to draw conclusions about President Roosevelt's words and ideas as expressed in this document. In Lesson 4 the students will work individually.

### OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Analyze primary source documents using close reading strategies
- Summarize the essential message of a written piece
- Demonstrate understanding of both literal and inferential aspects of text-based evidence

### MATERIALS

- Summary Organizer #4

### PROCEDURE

1. Discuss the text summaries the students came up with for the first, second, and third sections of the text in the previous lessons.
2. Hand out Summary Organizer #4, which contains the fourth selection from President Roosevelt's Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, and share read the text with the students as described in Lesson 1.
3. Review the process of selecting key words, writing a summary using those key words, and then restating the summary in their own words. Tell the students that they will be working on their own again to summarize this part of the text.
4. Because this paragraph is 144 words, the students can pick only 5–6 key words. After choosing their words, they will write them in the Key Words section of their organizers.
5. Using these key words, the students will build a sentence that summarizes the fourth selection from the text. They should write their summary sentences into their organizers.
6. The students will now restate the summary sentence in their own words and write it in their organizers.
7. Have the students share out their restated summaries and discuss the clarity and quality of the different interpretations of Roosevelt's views on American foreign policy.
8. Wrap-up: Discuss vocabulary that the students found confusing or difficult. The students can record these words and their meaning on the back of the organizer or a separate vocabulary form.



## LESSON 5

### OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Write an argumentative essay using text-based evidence
- Draw conclusions based on direct evidence found in the text

### OVERVIEW

This lesson has two objectives. First, the students will synthesize the work of the last four lessons and demonstrate that they understand what President Roosevelt’s Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine is about. Second, the students will answer a question in a short persuasive or argumentative essay that requires them to make inferences from the text and support their conclusions with explicit information from the text.

### MATERIALS

- Theodore Roosevelt’s Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine (excerpts), Annual Message to Congress, December 6, 1904
- Summary Organizers #1–#4 from the previous lessons
- Overhead projector, Elmo projector, or similar device

### PROCEDURE

1. Distribute the excerpts from President Theodore Roosevelt’s Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine and ask the students to read it silently to themselves.
2. Ask the students for their best summary of selection one. This is done as a class discussion. You may write this short sentence on the overhead or similar device. The same procedure is used for selections two, three, and four. When you are finished, the students should have a summary of the Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine in a few sentences to help them organize their essay.
3. Each student will write a short persuasive or argumentative essay addressing one of the prompts below. If the students are not familiar with writing an argumentative essay, you can lead a short lesson on the process, and then assign the essay for homework or for the next lesson. Remind the students that any arguments they make must be backed up with words taken directly from President Roosevelt’s Message to Congress. The first prompt is designed to be the easiest.

#### *Prompts*

1. According to Theodore Roosevelt’s Corollary under what circumstances would the United States get involved in another country’s affairs?
1. What arguments does President Roosevelt make to imply that this foreign policy is better than a more isolationist approach?
2. President Roosevelt states, “It is not true that the United States feels any land hunger.” What arguments could be made against this policy based on Roosevelt’s own words?

## Theodore Roosevelt's Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, Annual Message to Congress (excerpts), December 6, 1904

. . . The steady aim of this Nation, as of all enlightened nations, should be to strive to bring ever nearer the day when there shall prevail throughout the world the peace of justice. There are kinds of peace which are highly undesirable, which are in the long run as destructive as any war. Tyrants and oppressors have many times made a wilderness and called it peace. Many times peoples who were slothful or timid or shortsighted, who had been enervated by ease or by luxury, or misled by false teachings, have shrunk in unmanly fashion from doing duty that was stern and that needed self-sacrifice, and have sought to hide from their own minds their shortcomings, their ignoble motives, by calling them love of peace. The peace of tyrannous terror, the peace of craven weakness, the peace of injustice, all these should be shunned as we shun unrighteous war. The goal to set before us as a nation, the goal which should be set before all mankind, is the attainment of the peace of justice, of the peace which comes when each nation is not merely safe-guarded in its own rights, but scrupulously recognizes and performs its duty toward others. . . .

It is not true that the United States feels any land hunger or entertains any projects as regards the other nations of the Western Hemisphere save such as are for their welfare. All that this country desires is to see the neighboring countries stable, orderly, and prosperous. Any country whose people conduct themselves well can count upon our hearty friendship. If a nation shows that it knows how to act with reasonable efficiency and decency in social and political matters, if it keeps order and pays its obligations, it need fear no interference from the United States. Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power.

If every country washed by the Caribbean Sea would show the progress in stable and just civilization which with the aid of the Platt Amendment Cuba has shown since our troops left the island, and which so many of the republics in both Americas are constantly and brilliantly showing, all question of interference by this Nation with their affairs would be at an end. Our interests and those of our southern neighbors are in reality identical. They have great natural riches, and if within their borders the reign of law and justice obtains, prosperity is sure to come to them. While they thus obey the primary laws of civilized society they may rest assured that they will be treated by us in a spirit of cordial and helpful sympathy. We would interfere with them only in the last resort, and then only if it became evident that their inability or unwillingness to do justice at home and abroad had violated the rights of the United States or had invited foreign aggression to the detriment of the entire body of American nations. It is a mere truism to say that every nation, whether in America or anywhere else, which desires to maintain its freedom, its independence, must ultimately realize that the right of such independence cannot be separated from the responsibility of making good use of it.

In asserting the Monroe Doctrine, in taking such steps as we have taken in regard to Cuba, Venezuela, and Panama, and in endeavoring to circumscribe the theater of war in the Far East, and to secure the

open door in China, we have acted in our own interest as well as in the interest of humanity at large. There are, however, cases in which, while our own interests are not greatly involved, strong appeal is made to our sympathies.... In extreme cases action may be justifiable and proper. What form the action shall take must depend upon the circumstances of the case; that is, upon the degree of the atrocity and upon our power to remedy it. The cases in which we could interfere by force of arms as we interfered to put a stop to intolerable conditions in Cuba are necessarily very few.

### Summary Organizer #1

#### *Original Text:*

. . . The steady aim of this Nation, as of all enlightened nations, should be to strive to bring ever nearer the day when there shall prevail throughout the world the peace of justice. There are kinds of peace which are highly undesirable, which are in the long run as destructive as any war. Tyrants and oppressors have many times made a wilderness and called it peace. Many times peoples who were slothful or timid or shortsighted, who had been enervated by ease or by luxury, or misled by false teachings, have shrunk in unmanly fashion from doing duty that was stern and that needed self-sacrifice, and have sought to hide from their own minds their shortcomings, their ignoble motives, by calling them love of peace. The peace of tyrannous terror, the peace of craven weakness, the peace of injustice, all these should be shunned as we shun unrighteous war. The goal to set before us as a nation, the goal which should be set before all mankind, is the attainment of the peace of justice, of the peace which comes when each nation is not merely safe-guarded in its own rights, but scrupulously recognizes and performs its duty toward others. . . .

#### *Key Words:*

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#### *Summary:*

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#### *In Your Own Words:*

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**Summary Organizer #2**

*Original Text:*

It is not true that the United States feels any land hunger or entertains any projects as regards the other nations of the Western Hemisphere save such as are for their welfare. All that this country desires is to see the neighboring countries stable, orderly, and prosperous. Any country whose people conduct themselves well can count upon our hearty friendship. If a nation shows that it knows how to act with reasonable efficiency and decency in social and political matters, if it keeps order and pays its obligations, it need fear no interference from the United States. Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power.

*Key Words:*

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*Summary:*

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*In Your Own Words:*

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### Summary Organizer #3

#### *Original Text:*

If every country washed by the Caribbean Sea would show the progress in stable and just civilization which with the aid of the Platt Amendment Cuba has shown since our troops left the island, and which so many of the republics in both Americas are constantly and brilliantly showing, all question of interference by this Nation with their affairs would be at an end. Our interests and those of our southern neighbors are in reality identical. They have great natural riches, and if within their borders the reign of law and justice obtains, prosperity is sure to come to them. While they thus obey the primary laws of civilized society they may rest assured that they will be treated by us in a spirit of cordial and helpful sympathy. We would interfere with them only in the last resort, and then only if it became evident that their inability or unwillingness to do justice at home and abroad had violated the rights of the United States or had invited foreign aggression to the detriment of the entire body of American nations. It is a mere truism to say that every nation, whether in America or anywhere else, which desires to maintain its freedom, its independence, must ultimately realize that the right of such independence cannot be separated from the responsibility of making good use of it.

#### *Key Words:*

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#### *Summary:*

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#### *In Your Own Words:*

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**Summary Organizer #4**

*Original Text:*

In asserting the Monroe Doctrine, in taking such steps as we have taken in regard to Cuba, Venezuela, and Panama, and in endeavoring to circumscribe the theater of war in the Far East, and to secure the open door in China, we have acted in our own interest as well as in the interest of humanity at large. There are, however, cases in which, while our own interests are not greatly involved, strong appeal is made to our sympathies. . . . In extreme cases action may be justifiable and proper. What form the action shall take must depend upon the circumstances of the case; that is, upon the degree of the atrocity and upon our power to remedy it. The cases in which we could interfere by force of arms as we interfered to put a stop to intolerable conditions in Cuba are necessarily very few.

*Key Words:*

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*Summary:*

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*In Your Own Words:*

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