

# **Communication In History: The Key To Understanding Yellow Journalism And The USS Maine Explosion**

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This year's NHD theme was, "Communication in History: The Key to Understanding." The topic that stood out to me was the USS Maine explosion. I came about my topic inspiration from various class lessons and textbook readings. A lesson I remember vividly was about the cause of the Spanish American War, and how one major cause was the sinking of the USS Maine battleship. This event was so crucial that it eventually conflicted with President McKinley to declare war on Spain. Every story is deeper than it seems, and I knew that the Maine explosion was no ordinary explosion and that there was more to the story as there are always two sides to every story. At the time, newspapers were a huge source of communication. I was curious about how big of a part yellow journalism had on the situation and the events that resulted because of it. My goal is to dive deeper into the communication aspect of the event alongside the impact on the events that lead because of the explosion. Through this topic, I plan to highlight the significance of understanding communication. Thus, I decided to find the answer to my curiosity further by making my teacher topic about the USS Maine Explosion.

I conducted my research for two days. In these two days, I investigated various primary and secondary sources to get various viewpoints on the potential cause of the explosion. Some of the sources I applied to my research were *The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History* and *the Library of Congress (primary sources)*, *History. State. Gov* and *History News Network (secondary sources)*. These sources along with the others. The more I surfed online the more articles I found related to my topic.

This year my NHD project will be in the format of a research paper. The year prior I did an exhibit board however, I decided to switch things up this year and showcase my writing and research skills by showing some of my capabilities through the format of a research paper. I

started the project by choosing a topic and creating a layout. Once that was done I started my research paper and then edited it until it was finalized to my liking.

The topic about the USS Maine explosion correlates to this year's theme, Communication in History: The Key to Understanding. In the situation of the USS Maine, it is made clear how the yellow journalists shaped the story or narrative of the explosion. This reason goes to show the importance of understanding the situation. The events that followed the explosion because of what the yellow journalists portrayed, exemplifies why it is important to understand what is being conveyed. Based on what the people knew depended on what was communicated to them. Based on this, their opinions/actions/biases differed as a result.