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The Spanish-American War

Directions: Read Documents A and B, which are both newspaper stories written about the sinking of the battleship *USS Maine*. Then, in the chart on the next page, compare the two stories.

Document A: New York Journal

Purchased by William Randolph Hearst in 1895, the Journal published investigative and human interest stories that used a highly emotional writing style and included banner headlines and graphic images.

DESTRUCTION OF THE WAR SHIP MAINE WAS THE WORK OF AN ENEMY

Assistant Secretary Roosevelt Convinced the Explosion of the War Ship Was Not an Accident.

The Journal Offers \$50,000 Reward for the Conviction of the Criminals Who Sent 258 American Sailors to Their Death.

Naval Officers All Agree That the Ship Was Destroyed on Purpose.

NAVAL OFFICERS THINK THE MAINE WAS DESTROYED BY A SPANISH MINE.

George Bryson, the Journal’s special reporter at Havana, writes that it is the secret opinion of many people in Havana that the war ship Maine was destroyed by a mine and 258 men were killed on purpose by the Spanish. This is the opinion of several American naval authorities. The Spaniards, it is believed, arranged to have the Maine drop anchor over a harbor mine. Wires connected the mine to the magazine of the ship. If this is true, the brutal nature of the Spaniards will be shown by the fact that they waited to explode the mine until all the men had gone to sleep.	Spanish officials are protesting too much that they did not do it. Our government has ordered an investigation. This newspaper has sent divers to Havana to report on the condition of the wreck. This newspaper is also offering a \$50,000 reward for exclusive evidence that will convict whoever is responsible. Assistant Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt says he is convinced that the destruction of the Maine in Havana Harbor was not an accident. The suspicion that the Maine was purposely blown up grows stronger every hour. Not a single fact to the contrary has been produced.
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Source: Excerpt from New York Journal and Advertiser, February 17, 1898.

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Document B: New York Times

Established in 1851, the New York Times provided investigative coverage of local New York issues and events, as well as national and international news.

MAINE'S HULL WILL DECIDE

Divers to Find Whether the Force of the Explosion Was from the Exterior or Interior. SHE WAS AFLOAT FOR AN HOUR

Spontaneous Combustion in Coal Bunkers a Frequent Peril to the Magazines of Warships – Hard to Blow Up the Magazine.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 16 – After a day of intense excitement at the Navy Department and elsewhere, growing out of the destruction of the battleship Maine in Havana Harbor last night, the situation at sundown, after the exchange of a number of cablegrams between Washington and Havana, can be summed up in the words of Secretary Long, who when asked as he was about to depart for the day whether he had reason to suspect that the disaster was the work of the enemy, replied: "I do not. In that I am influenced by the fact that Capt. Sigsbee has not yet reported to the Navy Department on the cause. He is evidently waiting to write a full report. So long as he does not express himself, I certainly cannot. I should think from the indications, however, that there was an accident – that the magazine exploded. How that came about I do not know. For the present, at least, no other warship will be sent to Havana."

Capt. Schuley, who has had experience with such large and complicated machines of war as the New York, did not entertain the idea that the ship had been destroyed by design. He had found that with frequent and very careful inspection fire would sometimes be generated in the coal bunkers, and he told of such a fire on board of the New York close to the magazine, and so hot that the heat had blistered the steel partition between the fire and the ammunition before the bunkers and magazine were flooded. He was not prepared to believe that the Spanish or Cubans in Havana were supplied with either the information or the appliances necessary to enable them to make so complete a work of demolition, while the Maine was under guard...

Source: Excerpt from New York Times, February 17, 1898.

Opener: Compare the newspaper accounts of the sinking of the *Maine* (documents A & B).

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What Differences Do you notice?	What kinds of evidence do they use?	What might account for or explain these differences?
	<i>The Journal:</i> <i>The Times:</i>	

Use the Close Reading Questions to help you analyze the documents. Explain how the documents help you answer the **inquiry question: why did the Spanish-American War begin?**

Document	Close Reading Questions
The De Lome Letter Controversy	What was the effect of the De Lome letter and why? Why do you think Hearst chose to publish the letter?
McKinley's Message to Congress	McKinley lists four reasons that justify U.S. intervention in Cuba. What are these reasons? Why might McKinley have arranged them in this particular order?

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Document	Why did the US invade Cuba?
Reconcentration Camps	Notice the graphic descriptions. Why might these descriptions be so detailed? What was Lee's purpose in writing these descriptions? How do you think people would have reacted to reading about these camps?
March of the Flag	What do the following phrases suggest about Beveridge's view of Americans as compared with people of other nations? a) "noble land that God has given us" b) "applies only to those who are capable of self-government" c) "civilization is dawning, at last, for them" According to Beveridge, what else was going on in the U.S. and the rest of the world that made expansion a good idea?

Conclusion: In your opinion, why did the US go to war with Spain in 1898? In your answer, provide evidence from at least 2 documents.