

## **SUGGESTED ACTIVITY**

### **CIVICS UNIT**

From *The Monroe Doctrine: Teaching American Democracy Using Primary Sources*.  
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The purpose of this activity is to help students understand the powers the Constitution gives to the President and Congress in foreign affairs and how those powers have been used in relation to the Monroe Doctrine, both in the creation of the policy and through its influence on later policy. This activity should only be conducted after students are familiar with the doctrine itself and the factors which influenced its creation.

Students will work in groups for this activity. Begin by assigning each group a historical event in US – Latin American relations. Each group will be responsible for finding out the basic information surrounding their historical events and describing the United States' role and reaction to the situation. Depending upon time availability, this activity could be expanded by making this a research project in the library, or it can be done in less time by using a history textbook or an encyclopedia. Each group will present their findings to the class regarding their event and discuss how the Monroe Doctrine may have played a role in the US policy in the event.

Possible events to assign include the following:

- The Spanish American War
- The Cuban Missile Crisis
- The US involvement in the overthrow of the Arbenz regime Guatemala in 1954
- The Bay of Pigs Incident
- The military coup and overthrow of the Allende Government in Chile in 1973
- The invasion of Grenada in 1982

Many more could be added to this list, depending on class size.

Debate: The second part of this activity is a debate. Students will use their knowledge of the Monroe Doctrine, US Foreign Policy towards Latin America, and the Constitution to debate the following resolution:

The Monroe Doctrine and past executive actions resulting from the doctrine were unconstitutional.

Give students the debate resolution prior to the day of the debate. Tell students that they must come to class prepared to debate both the Pro and Con sides of the resolution. Students should prepare for the debate by preparing the Debate Preparation Sheet (Handout 2). Tell students that they must prepare three arguments supporting each side of the resolution.

On the day of the debate, split the class into two groups. Depending on class size, you could have two debates and split the class into four groups. Each group is assigned either Pro or Con.

The Debate should be organized as follows:

Introduction: Each group should begin by presenting their arguments and summarizing their main points

Rebuttal: The debate is opened up as either side may ask questions of the other team and provide responses

Conclusion: Each group restates their arguments and their strongest points

Encourage students to write down their questions for the other side during the introductions of the arguments. After ten to fifteen minutes of the debate, have each group adopt the opposite side they had been arguing and repeat the process.