

## Northwest History Consortium

### To Be or Not To Be the Fifty-First State: Puerto Rico

Revised Version of “Fifty-First State? Puerto Rico” by Andrea B. Collins

Alyssa Vis and Susan Black  
10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

#### National Standard

#### **Era 7: The Emergence of Modern America (1890-1930) / Standard 2**

*Standard 2: The changing role of the United States in world affairs through World War I*

#### Washington State EALRs

*Civics-4: The student understands the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and the principles of democratic civic involvement.*

*Civics-4.1: Understand individual rights and their accompanying responsibilities including problem-solving and decision-making at the local, state, national, and international level*

*Civics-4.1.3B: Analyze why democracy requires citizens to deliberate on public problems and participate in collective decision making*

*Civics-4.2: Identify and demonstrate rights of United States citizenship related to school, local, state, national, and international issues*

*Civics-4.2.3A: Engage in oral and written civic discourse to analyze pressing controversial issues and evaluate competing solutions*

*Civics-4.2.3B: Evaluate campaign and voting materials and activities and explain the importance of responsible voting*

*History-1: The student examines and understands major ideas, eras, themes, developments, turning points, chronology, and cause-effect relationships in United States, world, and Washington State history.*

*History-1.2: Understand events, trends, individuals, and movements shaping United States, world, and Washington State history*

*World History-1.2.3: Identify and analyze major concepts, people, and events in world history from 1600 to the present including challenges to democracy and human rights (1900-present)*

#### **Inquiry and Information Skills**

*Inquiry and Information Skills-1.1: Understand and use inquiry and information skills required by citizens in a democratic society*

*Inquiry and Information Skills-1.1.3A: Formulate a thesis statement in the social studies that examines whys as well as hows*

*Inquiry and Information Skills-1.1.3B: Identify key words; use advanced search strategies; independently locate appropriate and varied information sources; evaluate primary/secondary sources*

*Inquiry and Information Skills-1.1.3D: Evaluate reliability, credibility, and validity of information from a variety of social studies sources*

#### **Critical Thinking Skills**

*Critical Thinking Skills-3.1: Understand and apply critical thinking and problem-solving skills to make informed and reasoned decisions*

*Critical Thinking Skills-3.1.4: Identify central issue; formulate appropriate questions; identify multiple perspectives; compare and contrast; validate data using multiple sources; determine relevant information paraphrase problem*

#### **BACKGROUND**

Puerto Rico has been populated for centuries by aboriginal peoples called the Taino.

The island was claimed by the Spanish Crown in 1493 following Columbus' second voyage to the Americas. In 1898, after 400 years of colonial rule that saw the indigenous population nearly exterminated and African slave labor introduced, Puerto Rico was ceded to the US as a result of the Spanish-American War.

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Puerto Ricans were granted US citizenship in 1917, and popularly-elected governors have served since 1948.

In 1952 a Puerto Rican Constitution was enacted providing for internal self-government.

#### Recent History

In 1998 the third referendum in 30 years asked Puerto Ricans to decide between becoming the USA’s 51<sup>st</sup> state, becoming independent, entering a compact of free association, or retaining the status quo. They narrowly voted for the status quo.

Independence remains a sensitive issue, however, and its advocates received a boost in 2003 when the US military ended its use of the island of Vieques for military exercises after 60 years.

At the end of 2004 Sila Maria Calderón of the Peoples Democratic Party of Puerto Rico (PPD) was opposed by Anibal Acevedo Vila. It was an extremely close race. After two months of wrangling and recounts, Acevedo Vila, leader of the pro-Commonwealth Popular Democratic Party, scraped through and was confirmed as the new head of government.

“Puerto Rico History and Government.” World Travel Guide. ©2010 Columbus Travel Media Ltd. Bromley, United Kingdom. 11 August 2010 <<http://www.worldtravelguide.net/country/229/history/Caribbean/Puerto-Rico.html>>.

#### PROBLEM

What big ideas support or refute the hypotheses—finding a rationale for Puerto Rico to become, or decline to become, the US’s fifty-first state? (student-directed)

#### SCENARIO

You and your colleagues have been appointed by the governor to an advisory group responsible for determining the advisability of becoming full citizens of the US.

It’s an election year, and the current governor of your small island region is feeling pressure from strong-willed constituents who contend that it is not only desirable, but necessary for Puerto Rico to join the US as its fifty-first state. This is no easy matter however, as the governor must also deal with an extremely vocal group of citizens who demand that Puerto Rico remain a Commonwealth. It is clear that her re-election is in peril, as each group has vowed to rally their followers to oppose her if she makes the “wrong decision.” She has also reminded you that if she loses her position it is unlikely that the new administration will have a position for you.

As a member of this committee you must consider all of the ramifications, both positive and negative, of your proposed actions. You have been instructed by the governor that it is of vital importance that you not only consider the impact that your recommendation and her actions will have on future generations, but also upon the various populations that currently populate the

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island: the Taino, those of pluralistic backgrounds, and the non-Boriquen residents.

Since your governor is extremely nervous about taking a stance on this position, she has wisely appointed additional advisory councils to research and mull over this issue. Additionally, she feels that the best way to get the word out about your findings and recommendations is to host a series of Town Hall Meetings.

#### TASK

Your task is to develop a strong argument for your recommendation in which you will be given 10 minutes to present at one of the Town Hall Meetings. It is vital that you know the facts of both positions so that you can defend your finding to those individuals who disagree with your stance and answer any questions that may be raised by the public. To prepare you to adequately answer audience questions, you need to develop and thoroughly answer 7 questions that you feel the opposition will most likely ask.

Effective collaboration with your fellow advisors is imperative, as there are many important issues to consider, including the cultural, political, economic, sociological, psychological, and geographic ramifications of your proposal.

#### RESOURCES

##### Internet

Baker, James N. “Will There Be a 51<sup>st</sup> Star?” 30 July 1990. Newsweek.Com. ©2010 Newsweek, Inc. New York, NY. 11 August 2010 <<http://www.newsweek.com/1990/07/29/will-there-be-a-51st-star.html>>.

Barrett, Laurence I. and Carney, James. “Puerto Rico, the 51<sup>st</sup> Estado.” 26 March 1990. Time.Com. ©2010 Time Inc. Tampa, FL. 11 August 2010 <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,969690,00.html>>.

Bryan, William Jennings. “Imperialism.” Speech given 8 August 1900 in Indianapolis, IN. American Rhetoric (University of Texas at Tyler). ©2001 – 2010 American Rhetoric. Tyler, TX. 11 August 2010 <<http://americanrhetoric.com/speeches/wjbryanimperialism.htm>>.

Garcia, Eddie. “Rigging the Route to a 51<sup>st</sup> State.” 28 September 2009. The New York Post. ©2010 New York Post Holdings, Inc. New York, NY. 12 August 2010 <[http://www.nypost.com/p/news/opinion/opedcolumnists/rigging\\_the\\_route\\_to\\_st\\_state\\_NUH2uCFoY02ILY7UTLEp5L](http://www.nypost.com/p/news/opinion/opedcolumnists/rigging_the_route_to_st_state_NUH2uCFoY02ILY7UTLEp5L)>.

Garcia, José R. Bas. “Puerto Rico is a Colony.” 9 October 2001. Magazine of Social Sciences of the UPR, Vol. X, March 1966. Independencia.Net. 2010. San Juan, Puerto Rico. 11 August 2010 <[http://www.independencia.net/ingles/pr\\_is\\_a\\_colony.html](http://www.independencia.net/ingles/pr_is_a_colony.html)>.

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Marchán, Rafael. “Such Cases of Outrageous Unspeakable Abuse . . .”: A Migrant Protests Labor Conditions During World War I.” 24 October 1918. Center for History and New Media (George Mason University). ©1998 – 2010. Fairfax, VA. 12 August 2010 <<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/120>>.

“News of Interest.” Puerto Rico Statehood.Com. ©2004 – 2010 The United States Council for Puerto Rico Statehood. Washington, DC. 13 August 2010 <<http://www.prstatehood.com/home/index.asp>>.

McAlpin, K. C. “Pushing the Statehood Issue.” 27 October 2009. The Washington Times. ©2010 The Washington Times, LLC. Washington, DC. 12 August 2010 <<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/oct/27/pushing-the-statehood-issue>>.

Pelligrini, Frank. “Puerto Ricans Say No.” 14 December 1998. Time.Com. ©2010 Time Inc. Tampa, FL. 11 August 2010 <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,16880,00.html>>.

“Puerto Rican Statehood: An Overview of the Pros and Cons.” Essortment.Com. ©2002 – 2010 Pagewise. Round Rock, TX. 11 August 2010. <[http://www.essortment.com/all/puertoricansta\\_rdla.htm](http://www.essortment.com/all/puertoricansta_rdla.htm)>.

“Puerto Rico: The 51<sup>st</sup> State?” 4 May 1959. Time.Com. ©2010 Time Inc. Tampa, FL. 12 August 2010 <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,892506,00.html>>.

“Puerto Rico: Plebiscite Postponed.” 30 November 1962. Time.Com. ©2010 Time Inc. Tampa, FL. 12 August 2010 <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,829549,00.html>>.

“Puerto Rico: Statehood Tree.” 28 September 1959. Time.Com. ©2010 Time Inc. Tampa, FL. 12 August 2010 <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,811282,00.html>>.

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“Puerto Rico’s Background.” Travel Blog. ©2001 – 2010 Travel Blog and Bloggers. [location unknown]. 12 August 2010 <<http://www.travelblog.org/Central-America-Caribbean/Puerto-Rico/fact-info-puerto-rico.html>>.

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Severo, Tulier. “Bitter Harvest: A Puerto Rican Farmer Laments U.S. Control of the Island.” 1899. Interview by Henry K. Carroll in the *Report On the Island of Puerto Rico, U.S. Treasury Department Document 2118*. [Center for History and New Media \(George Mason University\)](http://www.historyandnewmedia.org). ©1998 – 2010. Fairfax, VA. 13 August 2010 <<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/59>>.

“The Voice of Puerto Rico Self-Determination” Vol. 9, #33 & 34, Edition 400. [Puerto Rico Herald](http://www.puertorico-herald.org). 2010. [location unknown]. 12 August 2010 <<http://www.puertorico-herald.org/index-2.html>>.

#### ASSESSMENT

As a result of the public forum debates, our class will have a final closed ballot vote on the best direction for Puerto Rico in the next decade.

You will write to your local state representative stating your belief regarding the subject of Puerto Rico. Your letter is to be simple and reflect on what you have learned as an advisory support board member.

Additionally, as a final assessment for this course, you will write a three-page persuasive paper that documents your opinion and also documents why the politician should agree with you. You must utilize both primary and secondary resources that support your assertions in order to accurately convey your stance. It is imperative that you consider the ramification of your proposed action and think about the impact on future generations.

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### Town Meeting: Puerto Rico, 51st State?

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
<b>Respect for Other Team</b>	All statements, body language, and responses were respectful and were in appropriate language.	Statements and responses were respectful and used appropriate language, but once or twice body language was not.	Most statements and responses were respectful and in appropriate language, but there was one sarcastic remark.	Statements, responses and/or body language were consistently not respectful.
<b>Information</b>	All information presented in the debate was clear, accurate and thorough.	Most information presented in the debate was clear, accurate, and thorough.	Most information presented in the debate was clear and accurate, but it was not usually thorough.	Information had several inaccuracies OR was usually not clear.
<b>Rebuttal</b>	All counter-arguments were accurate, relevant and strong.	Most counter-arguments were accurate, relevant, and strong.	Most counter-arguments were accurate and relevant, but several were weak.	Counter-arguments were not accurate and/or relevant
<b>Use of Facts/Statistics</b>	Every major point was well supported with several relevant facts, statistics, and/or examples.	Every major point was adequately supported with relevant facts, statistics, and/or examples.	Every major point was supported with facts, statistics, and/or examples, but the relevance of some was questionable.	Every point was not supported.
<b>Organization</b>	All arguments were clearly tied to an idea (premise) and organized in a tight, logical fashion.	Most arguments were clearly tied to an idea (premise) and organized in a tight, logical fashion.	All arguments were clearly tied to an idea (premise), but the organization was sometimes not clear or logical.	Arguments were not clearly tied to an idea (premise).
<b>Understanding of Topic</b>	The team clearly understood the topic in-depth and presented their information forcefully and convincingly.	The team clearly understood the topic in-depth and presented their information with ease.	The team seemed to understand the main points of the topic and presented those with ease.	The team did not show an adequate understanding of the topic.

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#### Letter: Puerto Rico, 51st State?

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
<b>Salutation and Closing</b>	Salutation and closing have no errors in capitalization and punctuation.	Salutation and closing have 1-2 errors in capitalization and punctuation.	Salutation and closing have 3 or more errors in capitalization and punctuation.	Salutation and/or closing are missing.
<b>Grammar &amp; spelling (conventions)</b>	Writer makes no errors in grammar or spelling.	Writer makes 1-2 errors in grammar and/or spelling.	Writer makes 3-4 errors in grammar and/or spelling.	Writer makes more than 4 errors in grammar and/or spelling.
<b>Sentences &amp; Paragraphs</b>	Sentences and paragraphs are complete, well-constructed and of varied structure.	All sentences are complete and well-constructed (no fragments, no run-ons). Paragraphing is generally done well.	Most sentences are complete and well-constructed. Paragraphing needs some work.	Many sentence fragments or run-on sentences OR paragraphing needs lots of work.
<b>Ideas</b>	Ideas were expressed in a clear and organized fashion. It was easy to figure out what the letter was about. Clear evidence for position is outlined and explained.	Ideas were expressed in a pretty clear manner, but the organization could have been better. Evidence for position is outlined and explained.	Ideas were somewhat organized, but were not very clear. It took more than one reading to figure out what the letter was about. Little evidence for position outlined or explained.	The letter seemed to be a collection of unrelated sentences. It was very difficult to figure out what the letter was about. No evidence or explanation provided.
<b>Content Accuracy</b>	The letter contains at least 5 accurate facts about the topic.	The letter contains 3-4 accurate facts about the topic.	The letter contains 1-2 accurate facts about the topic.	The letter contains no accurate facts about the topic.
<b>Focus or Thesis Statement</b>	The thesis statement names the topic of the essay and outlines the main points to be discussed.	The thesis statement names the topic of the essay.	The thesis statement outlines some or all of the main points to be discussed, but it does not name the topic.	The thesis statement does not name the topic AND does not preview what will be discussed.
<b>Evidence and Examples</b>	All of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant, and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position.	Most of the evidence and examples are specific, relevant, and explanations are given that show how each piece of evidence supports the author's position.	At least one of the pieces of evidence and examples is relevant and has an explanation that shows how that piece of evidence supports the author's position.	Evidence and examples are NOT relevant AND/OR are not explained.

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#### Research Report: Position and Reflection Paper - Puerto Rico

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
<b>Organization</b>	Information is very organized with well-constructed paragraphs and subheadings.	Information is organized with well-constructed paragraphs.	Information is organized, but paragraphs are not well-constructed.	The information appears to be disorganized.
<b>Amount of Information</b>	All topics are addressed, and all questions answered with at least 2 sentences about each.	All topics are addressed, and most questions answered with at least 2 sentences about each.	All topics are addressed, and most questions answered with 1 sentence about each.	One or more topics were not addressed.
<b>Quality of Information</b>	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It includes several supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It provides 1-2 supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the main topic. No details and/or examples are given.	Information has little or nothing to do with the main topic.
<b>Commitment (Voice)</b>	The writer successfully uses several reasons/appeals to try to show why the reader should care or want to know more about the topic.	The writer successfully uses one or two reasons/appeals to try to show why the reader should care or want to know more about the topic.	The writer attempts to make the reader care about the topic, but it is not really successful.	The writer made no attempt to make the reader care about the topic.
<b>Adding Personality (Voice)</b>	The writer seems to be writing from knowledge or experience. The author has taken the ideas and made them "his own."	The writer seems to be drawing on knowledge or experience, but there is some lack of ownership of the topic.	The writer relates some of his own knowledge or experience, but it adds nothing to the discussion of the topic.	The writer has not tried to transform the information in a personal way. The ideas and the way they are expressed seem to belong to someone else.
<b>Support for Topic (Content)</b>	Relevant, telling, quality details give the reader important information that goes beyond the obvious or predictable.	Supporting details and information are relevant, but one key issue or portion of the storyline is unsupported.	Supporting details and information are relevant, but several key issues or portions of the storyline are unsupported.	Supporting details and information are typically unclear or not related to the topic.



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