

Study Guide: Research and Reflect on Guam’s Quest for Self-Determination 1

Early Civil Rights and Non-US Citizenship (1898-1944)
1 of 6 Study guides for individuals and/or small groups

Subjects: Political Science, Civics, Government, World History, Guam History, CHamoru Studies

Grade-level: High [9-12], College

Time required: Research/inquiry 20 - 40 minutes, reflection 60 - 120 minutes

Materials required: Access to guampedia.com, computer

Note: Reflection papers can be emailed to instructor to remain paperless

Objective

Research and Reflect on Guam’s Quest for Self-Determination.

Inquiry statement

The United States began its [colonial administration](#) of Guam in 1898. Today, more than 120 years later, Guam remains a colony of the US as an [unincorporated territory](#). Because of this colonial status, the island and its people lack full self-government and guaranteed civil rights afforded to other US citizens.

Early Civil Rights and Non-US Citizenship (1898-1944)

When the US began its occupation of Guam at the close of the 19th century, CHamorus were not consulted as to whether they wished for Guam to become an American colony. They had already endured 240 years of Spanish colonialism forced upon them by soldiers and [missionaries](#). From 1898, when Guam was ceded to the US after the [Spanish-American War](#) and up to [World War II](#), more than 30 different [naval officers](#) were assigned to rule Guam with autocratic authority.

[Japan’s occupation](#) of Guam during World War II from 1941 to 1944 interrupted US authority on the island, but after the war, Guam returned to its previous role as a US military outpost—and the military governors returned.

I. Documentary

Independent or group viewing of Lazaro Quinata’s documentary on [Guam’s Quest for Self-determination](#) on Guampedia.com (run time: 8:00 minutes).

- [Self-Determination on Guam](#)

II. Entries

Read aloud designated entries on Guampedia.com

- [Civic Rights and US Citizenship \(1898-1950\)](#)
- [US Naval Era Governors: Contributions and Controversies](#)
- [Guam’s Strategic Value](#)

III. Reflection Questions

Students assigned to write a 2-3 page paper based on the reflection questions posed. Encourage students to think critically, to *hasso*, and use their imaginations and share their voices. Questions can be specific to the particular exercise or general to the project.

Suggested reflection

- Do you think these efforts made by the people of Guam during the early Naval Era were important? Why or why not?
- Is this effort important today? Why or why not?
- What should be our next step to move forward?

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Post War Reconstruction and Guam Congress Walkout
2 of 6 Study guides for individuals and/or small groups

Post War Reconstruction and Guam Congress Walkout (1944-1949)

As the island entered into a postwar reconstruction period, the two leading causes of conflict between CHamorus and the Navy were [land](#) and employment. Many CHamorus found themselves losing land as the US military seized roughly two-thirds of the island's landmass for military use. Additionally, CHamoru laborers were subject to discrimination in the workplace as they earned only one-fourth the pay rate of American laborers performing identical jobs. US citizenship and self-government were seen as a way CHamorus could prevent further land alienation, job discrimination, and other inequities.

I. Documentary

Independent or group viewing of Lázaro Quinata's documentary on [Guam's Quest for Self-determination](#) on Guampedia.com (run time: 8:00 minutes).

- [Self-Determination on Guam](#)

II. Entries

Read aloud designated entries on Guampedia.com

- [Land Ownership on Guam](#)
- [National Attention on Guam's Postwar Campaign for Citizenship](#)
- [Guam Congress Walkout](#)

III. Reflection Questions

Students assigned to write a 2-3 page paper based on the reflection questions posed. Encourage students to think critically, to *hasso*, and use their imaginations and share their voices. Questions can be specific to the particular exercise or general to the project.

Suggested reflection

- Do you think the people of Guam's rights were taken into consideration by the US government during this historic time in Guam's history?
- How did what happened after the war impact the CHamoru people?

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Organic Act of Guam (1950)

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Organic Act of Guam (1950)

The passage of the [Organic Act of Guam](#) created a civil, or non-military, government for the island, thus ending the Naval and Post War Eras. With the establishment of a civilian government and congressional US citizenship for the people of Guam through the Organic Act, the President of the United States selected the individuals, usually along party lines, who would serve as the territorial governor.

I. Documentary

Independent or group viewing of Lázaro Quinata's documentary on [Guam's Quest for Self-determination](#) on Guampedia.com (run time: 8:00 minutes).

- [Self-Determination on Guam](#)

II. Entries

Read aloud designated entries on Guampedia.com

- [Organic Act of Guam](#)
- [Speaker Francisco B. Leon Guerrero](#)
- [Speaker Carlos P. Taitano](#)
- [Congressman Antonio B. Won Pat](#)

III. Reflection Questions

Students assigned to write a 2-3 page paper based on the reflection questions posed. Encourage students to think critically, to *hasso*, and use their imaginations and share their voices. Questions can be specific to the particular exercise or general to the project.

Suggested reflection

- What did the Organic Act do for the people of Guam?
- Discuss the positive and negatives effects of the Organic Act for the CHamoru people.

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Guamanian Era (1960s – 1970s)

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Guamanian Era (1960s-1970s)

For many CHamorus, the 1950 passage of the Organic Act seemed a welcome reward after a long drive for self-government and US citizenship. But doubts about the rights and powers afforded by the Organic Act arose very soon after its passage. Although the island received civil government, some Guam leaders argue that the island continues to lack self-government due to the complete oversight powers that the US Congress maintains over Guam. The US citizenship granted by the Organic Act has also been questioned, as residents of Guam cannot vote in US national elections as other citizens do, and the US Constitution that defines and guarantees civil rights does not necessarily apply to Guam.

I. Documentary

Independent or group viewing of Lázaro Quinata's documentary on [Guam's Quest for Self-determination](#) on Guampedia.com (run time: 8:00 minutes).

- [Self-Determination on Guam](#)

II. Entries

Read aloud designated entries on Guampedia.com

- [Elective Governor Act 1968](#)
- [Guam Congressional Representation Act 1972](#)
- [Guam Constitutional Conventions \(ConCon\)](#)

III. Reflection Questions

Students assigned to write a 2-3 page paper based on the reflection questions posed. Encourage students to think critically, to *hasso*, and use their imaginations and share their voices. Questions can be specific to the particular exercise or general to the project.

Suggested reflection

- After the Guam Organic Act was put into effect in 1950, Guam's leaders were still dissatisfied with the working relationship Guam had with the federal government.
- What were some of the dissatisfaction and how did they attempt to address them?
 - What worked?
 - What still needs to be fixed?

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Contemporary Era (1980s – Present)

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Contemporary Era (1980s - Present)

The Commission on Self-Determination (CSD) was created in 1980 to pick up where the Political Status Commission had left off, and began an educational campaign to teach the public about the different available

political status options, as well as to conduct a plebiscite. The question of CHamoru self-determination became a major issue, especially regarding who should participate in a plebiscite that would ultimately determine Guam's political status. As with the draft constitution, activist groups such as OPI-R advocated for the recognition of CHamoru rights to self-determination, often in opposition to non-CHamoru residents and CHamoru politicians who were uncomfortable discussing the issue of indigenous CHamoru rights. When a plebiscite in 1982 determined that commonwealth status was the preferred political status the CSD drafted a Commonwealth Act for Guam. After years of negotiation and revisions and trying to get Congress to approve it, the Commonwealth Act failed, the major reasons having to do with disagreements over immigration and the US military. Nevertheless, Guam leaders organized the Commission on Decolonization to address the issue of Guam's political status. The struggle continues to this day.

I. Documentary

Independent or group viewing of Lazaro Quinata's Guam's Quest for Self-determination (run time: 8:00 minutes) and the Cabazon Band Of Mission Indians' Let Freedom Ring: The CHamoru Search for Sovereignty (8 clips of varying lengths).

- [Self-Determination on Guam](#)
- [Let Freedom Ring](#)

II. Entries

Read aloud designated entries on Guampedia.com

- [Political Status Commissions](#)
- [Commission on Self-Determination](#)
- [OPI-R: Organization of People for Indigenous Rights](#)
- [Guam Commonwealth Act](#)
- [Commission on Decolonization](#)

III. Reflection Questions

Students assigned to write a 2-3 page paper based on the reflection questions posed. Encourage students to think critically, to *hasso*, and use their imaginations and share their voices. Questions can be specific to the particular exercise or general to the project.

Suggested reflection

- A lot of work has been put into improving Guam's political status over the years. Discuss the many efforts that were made during this period. What have been the successes and failures?
- What should the people of Guam do next?

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CHamoru Efforts

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CHamoru Efforts

CHamorus have fought numerous battles over many decades toward the attainment of self-government and citizenship with significant success. Yet ongoing debates in the 21st century over whether Guam truly is self-governing and its people equal citizens suggest that the drive for self-government and full US citizenship has not come to an end. The petitions of the early 20th century, with their rhetoric of loyalty to the United States and their call for political rights, would find parallels in the activism and struggle for [self-determination](#) and decolonization from the federal government prominent at the end of the century and that continues today.

I. Documentary

Independent or group viewing of Lazaro Quinata's Guam's Quest for Self-determination (run time: 8:00 minutes) and the Cabazon Band Of Mission Indians' Let Freedom Ring: The Chamorro Search for Sovereignty (8 clips of varying lengths).

- [Self-Determination on Guam](#)
- [Let Freedom Ring](#)

II. Entries

Read aloud designated entries on Guampedia.com

- [OPI-R: Organization of People for Indigenous Rights](#)
- [PARA-PADA](#)
- [Sen. Angel Leon Guerrero Santos](#)
- [Nasion CHamoru](#)

III. Reflection Questions

Students assigned to write a 2-3 page paper based on the reflection questions posed. Encourage students to think critically, to *hasso*, and use their imaginations and share their voices. Questions can be specific to the particular exercise or general to the project.

Suggested reflection

- What are the issues behind the intense desire for self-determination by the people of Guam?
- What are your thoughts about the actions taken to achieve self-determination in the past?
- Have they inspired you or opened your eyes about these issues?
- Do you hope to see people keep fighting for self-determination for the CHamoru people? Why or why not?