

Study Guide: Research and Reflect on Guam's Quest for Self-Determination 5

5 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.

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?

Guampedia study guides in this series

1. [Early Civil Rights and Non-US Citizenship \(1898-1944\)](#)
2. [Post War Reconstruction and Guam Congress Walkout](#)
3. [Organic Act of Guam \(1950\)](#)
4. [Guamanian Era \(1960s – 1970s\)](#)
5. [Contemporary Era \(1980s – Present\)](#)
6. [CHamoru Efforts](#)