

presidents of the *United States of America*



"I was the 25th President of the United States and led America to victory in the Spanish-American War."

William McKinley



PragerU is redefining how people think about media and education. Watched millions of times every day, PragerU is the world's leading nonprofit with educational, entertaining, pro-American videos for every age. From intellectual, fact-based 5-Minute Videos and powerful personal storytelling to animated shows made just for kids—PragerU helps people of all ages think and live better.

PragerU Kids teaches history, civics, financial literacy, and American values to children across the K-12th grade spectrum. With kids shows, books, and educational resources for every grade, PragerU Kids offers content that parents and teachers trust and children love. Watch for free and learn more at PragerUkids.com.

All text and illustrations Copyright © 2024 Prager University Foundation.

All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction in whole or in part in any form.

PragerU is a registered trademark of Prager University Foundation.

Published by PragerU

15021 Ventura Boulevard #552

Sherman Oaks, CA 91403



Become a Presidential Historian By Solving This Puzzle

In this book, you'll learn all sorts of facts about William McKinley's amazing life and accomplishments. But there's still one last thing we need to know about him.

McKinley had a pet but we need to find out its name and what kind of animal it was. You can help us uncover the answer! Hidden in the text are bolded letters. Read this book carefully to find them and fill the letters into the blanks below in the order they appear.

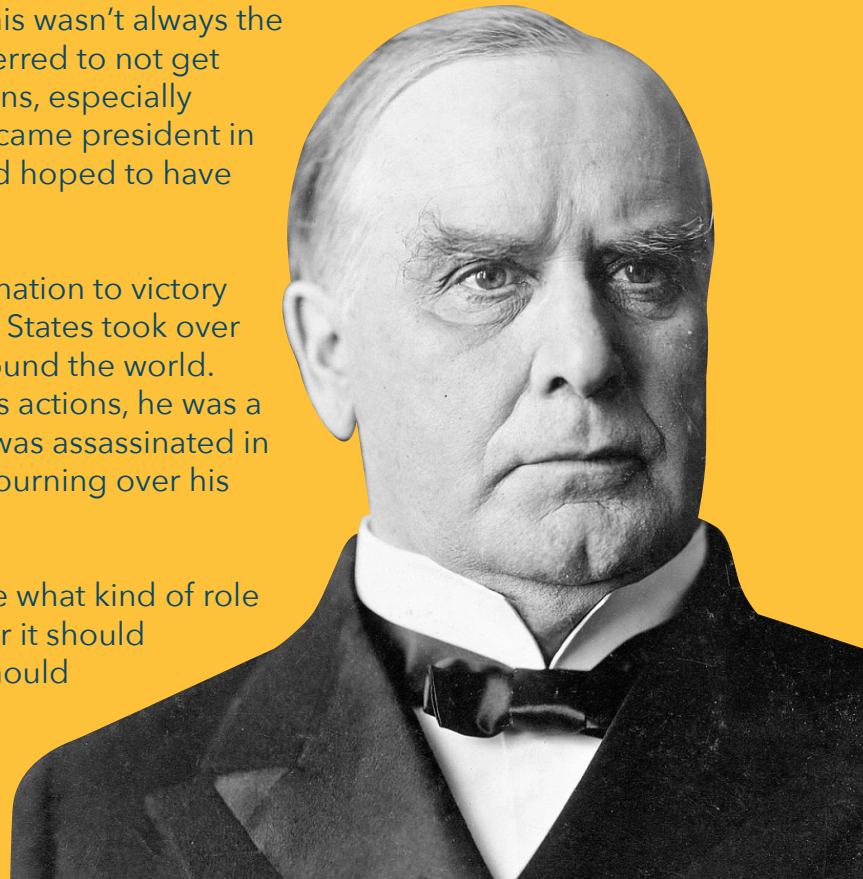
Once you've solved this puzzle, you'll be a true PragerU Kids presidential historian!

Meet William McKinley

Today, the United States plays a very important role in the world and has many relationships with other countries, but this wasn't always the case. Before the 20th century, Americans preferred to not get involved in what was happening in other nations, especially foreign wars. By the time William McKinley became president in 1897, the United States was a rising power and hoped to have more influence beyond its own borders.

McKinley fulfilled those hopes by leading the nation to victory during the Spanish-American War. The United States took over Spain's colonies and had control over land around the world. Although not everyone agreed with McKinley's actions, he was a very popular and respected leader. When he was assassinated in 1901, the American people went into deep mourning over his death.

To this day, people in the United States debate what kind of role their country should play in the world—whether it should be involved with **foreign affairs** or, instead, should avoid them and focus on its own problems. Through his actions, McKinley helped ensure that America made its presence felt around the globe for decades to come.



Young William

William McKinley was born on January 29, 1843 as the seventh of nine children in Niles, Ohio to William Sr. and Nancy Allison McKinley. William Sr. owned a small workshop for casting iron and raised his children to have a strong work ethic. Nancy instilled in them a strong religious faith, which William would carry with him for the rest of his life.

In the 1840s and 50s, America's southern states had millions of slaves, but the McKinley's religious beliefs led them to oppose slavery. Young William, however, was focused on other things—he spent much of his childhood fishing, hunting, swimming, and horseback riding. He also attended a Methodist school in Poland, Ohio, where he was a hardworking student. William developed a love for reading, public speaking, and debating. He even became president of the school's debate club. When he was 16, William traveled to Meadville, Pennsylvania, where he enrolled in Allegheny College. However, he eventually left college because he couldn't afford the tuition. Instead, he went back to Poland and worked as a postal clerk and as a teacher.



Interesting Facts

- He was the first to be inaugurated in the 20th century.
- He was a member of the Republican Party.
- He was the first president whose inauguration was filmed.
- He was the first president to ride in an automobile.
- He was the only president serving from 1869 to 1913 that didn't have a mustache or a beard.
- He was the third president to be assassinated.
- He was featured on the \$500 bill.
- Denali, the highest mountain peak in North America, was known as Mount McKinley (named after President McKinley) from 1917 to 2015.



Civil War

The **A**merican Civil War began on April 12, 1861. McKinley joined the war effort and enlisted as a private in the 23rd regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Commanding his regiment was another Ohioan, Major Rutherford B. Hayes. Hayes became a personal mentor to McKinley and they worked closely together during the war.

McKinley fought courageously several times under enemy fire during his **m**military service. He participated in the Battle of Antietam, one of the deadliest of the war. At the Battle of Berryville in Virginia, he kept fighting even though his horse was shot under him. The U.S. Army promoted McKinley to brevet major for "**g**allant and meritorious services."

Quote

*"Let us keep always in mind that the foundation of our Government is liberty."
- December 1900*



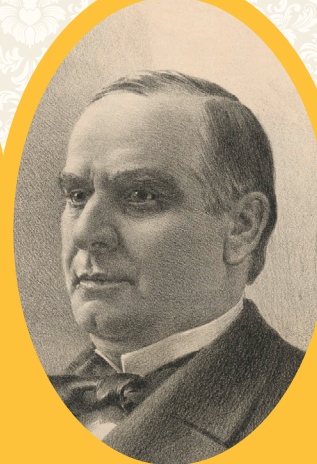
Rise to Power

When the war ended, McKinley decided to become an attorney. He studied at Albany Law School and passed the bar in 1867. He settled in Canton, Ohio and began a law practice. At a picnic in 1869, he met a lovely young woman named Ida Saxton and married her two years later. They had two daughters, Katherine and Ida, but tragically, both died in their childhood. Ida (McKinley's wife) was so heartbroken by their deaths that her health declined and she began having regular **seizures**. McKinley spent the rest of his life caring for her needs, which won the admiration of everyone who **knew** them.

During the war, McKinley voted for President Abraham Lincoln and became a strong supporter of his Republican Party. In 1876, McKinley's close friend Rutherford B. Hayes was elected President of the United States. That same year, McKinley decided to get involved in politics and won his election to the U.S. Congress. McKinley rose to become the chair of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, which handles taxes and the federal

budget issues, where he supported tariffs to boost **A**merican businesses. In 1890, he helped pass a law called the McKinley **Tariff**. Unfortunately, the tariff angered voters when it made consumer goods more expensive. They voted McKinley out of office that **s**ame year.

McKinley, however, wasn't through with politics. He ran for Governor of Ohio in 1891 and won. As Governor, McKinley worked to resolve issues between business owners and workers and to protect children from unfair labor practices. At the time, Ohio was a very important state and its governors were often considered potential presidential candidates. In June 1896, William McKinley won **the** Republican nomination for president and defeated Democratic candidate William Jennings Bryan in the general election that November.



Quote

*"The American flag has not been planted on foreign soil to acquire more territory but for humanity's sake."
- as quoted in a 1900 campaign poster*



Quote

“War should never be entered upon until every agency of peace has failed; peace is preferable to war in almost every contingency.”
- March 1897

President

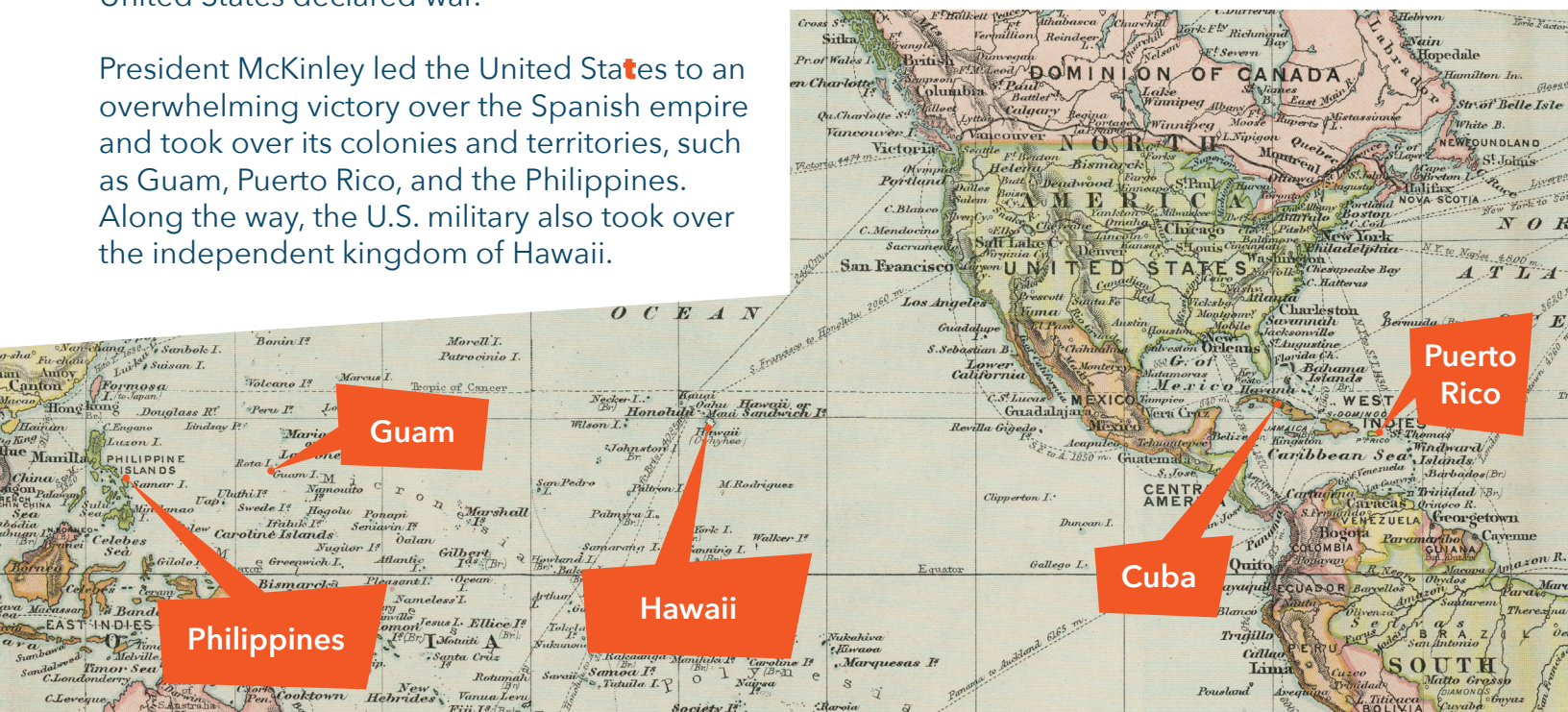
When William McKinley became president in 1897, European countries were conquering land in Asia and Africa and building **empires** in what was called **colonization**. Many Europeans argued that through colonization, the people of these colonized territories could be lifted up to be more **civilized**. At the time, America had been a rising power in the world, but did not have colonies like the European countries. This changed under President McKinley.

Cuba is an island near the United States, and was once a colony under Spain. For many years, the Spanish had oppressed the people of Cuba, and in 1895, the Cubans revolted against the Spanish and violence broke out on the island. McKinley hoped that the situation could be solved peacefully, especially since many Americans had business ties and property in Cuba. He sent the U.S. battleship *Maine* to a Cuban harbor to protect U.S. citizens and property. In February 1898, a mysterious explosion destroyed the *Maine*, killing 266 Americans. When a report came out blaming the Spanish for the explosion, the United States declared war.

President McKinley led the United States to an overwhelming victory over the Spanish empire and took over its colonies and territories, such as Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. Along the way, the U.S. military also took over the independent kingdom of Hawaii.

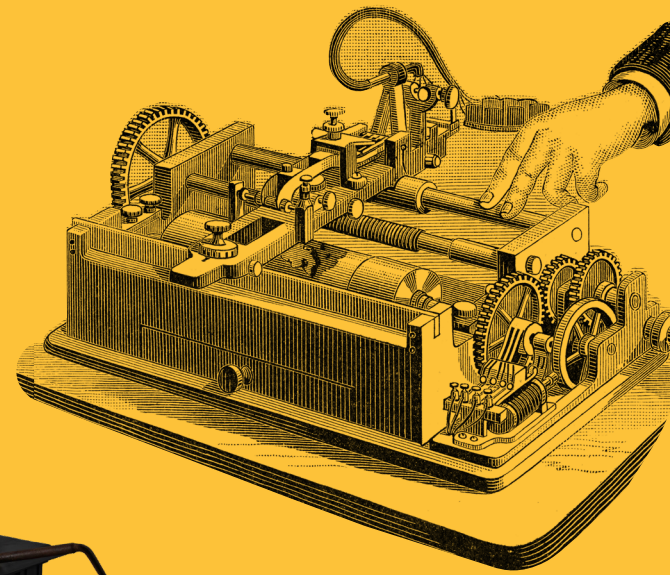
With its victory, America was now a major world power. Like the Europeans, McKinley also hoped to civilize people in America's colonies. Not everyone, however, was happy about these decisions. They felt that, since the United States had fought against British colonialism during the Revolutionary War, it shouldn't act like Europe and have colonies.

Americans argued passionately about the war. These arguments got even more heated when the people of the Philippines rebelled against U.S. control of their country. This sparked the Philippine-American War, which featured brutal fighting and lasted from 1899 to 1902. Many people in the United States felt that their country should stop trying to control the Philippines and the other colonies.

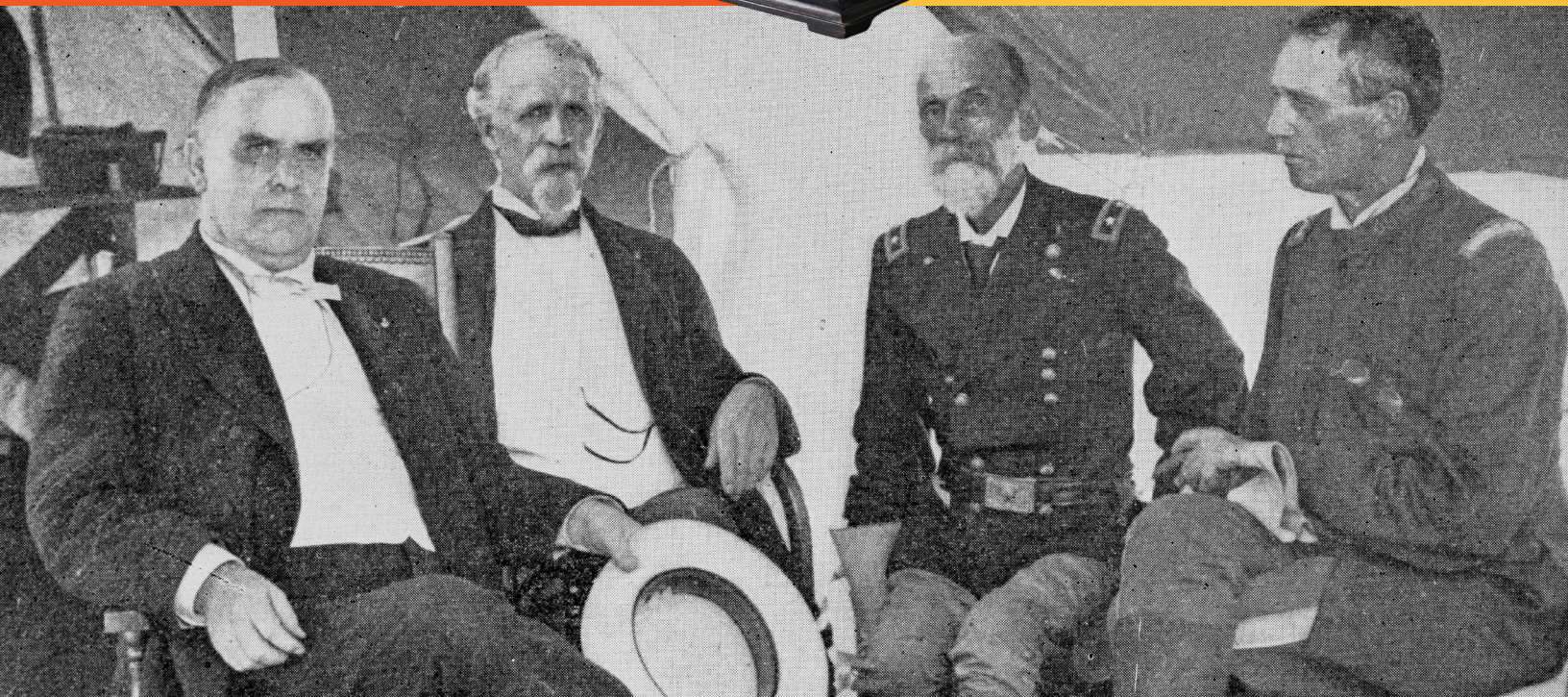


A Modern Commander-in-Chief

Prior to the Spanish-American War, the United States hadn't fought a major war in over 30 years (the Civil War). Since then, warfare had advanced technologically and allowed McKinley to lead as no other president had led before. He ran the military effort out of a war room in the White House, where he had 20 telegraph lines and 15 telephone lines to send out messages to American generals in Cuba and to the leaders of European countries. McKinley also used a **gramophone** to send messages to his aides. In previous wars, it took days, if not weeks, for world leaders to communicate with their generals; by 1898, McKinley's messages could travel thousands of miles in less than half an hour.



Left: Gramophone
Right: Telegram machine



Quote

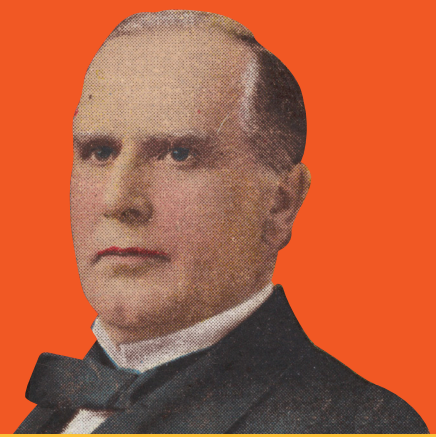
*"Our growing power brings with it temptations and perils requiring constant vigilance to avoid."
- December 1900*

Assassination

Despite the controversy of the wars, most Americans loved President McKinley for defeating the Spanish and also because of his devotion to his wife. The voters re-elected McKinley to a second term in 1900.

Unfortunately, one troubled young man, Leon Czolgosz, who had radical **anarchist** beliefs, blamed McKinley for his own problems. On September 6, 1901, during an event called the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York, Czolgosz approached President McKinley and shot him. When the crowd began to beat Czolgosz down, McKinley had compassion on him and told them to stop.

For a few days, many hoped that the president would recover. Unfortunately, McKinley's wound became infected and he died on September 14, 1901 at the age of 58. The nation was shocked at his assassination and lamented losing such a popular leader. McKinley's vice president, Theodore Roosevelt, took the oath of office to become the 26th president.



Legacy

In the 20th century, the United States dominated the world stage. During World War II and the Cold War, it saved millions of lives around the world by defeating fascism and communism. By increasing America's influence abroad, President McKinley laid the foundation for it to take on new, global responsibilities.

These decisions were controversial. Many during McKinley's time and since believe that the United States acted hypocritically during the Spanish-American War because it claimed to support freedom but ruled over colonies. These critics, however, fail to take into account that other European countries such as Germany and a rising Asian power, Japan—countries that did not support freedom—could have easily taken over Guam, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Hawaii. McKinley's supporters argued that the people in those territories were better off under American rule and would eventually be free.

Although the Philippine-American War remains a bloody and tragic moment in history, McKinley did hope U.S. **occupation** would benefit the inhabitants of the new colonies. McKinley's presidency shows that powerful countries often have to make very difficult choices that smaller countries rarely face.

Fun Facts

How much do you know about Guam, Cuba, Hawaii, Puerto Rico and the Philippines?

Hawaii

Language: Olelo Hawai'i and English

Population: 1.42 million

Nickname: The Aloha State

Fun Facts:

- Hawaii was the 50th state to join the United States.
- The state of Hawaii is made up of about 136 islands.
- There are only 12 letters in the Hawaiian alphabet: A, E, I, O, U, H, K, L, M, N, P, W.



Puerto Rico

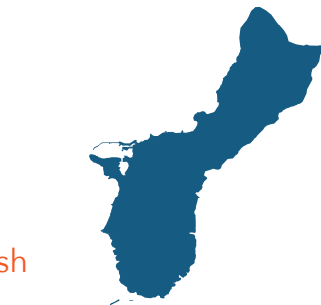
Language: Spanish and English

Population: 3 million

Nickname: Island of Enchantment

Fun Facts:

- Puerto Rico's Arecibo Observatory housed the world's largest telescope from 1963 to 2016.
- Puerto Ricans use the U.S. Dollar.
- Puerto Rican food is influenced by the mix of Taíno Indian, African, and Spanish heritage.



Cuba

Language: Spanish

Population: 11.33 million

Nickname: Pearl of the Antilles

Fun Facts:

- On New Year's Eve, people burn human-sized dolls for good luck in the coming year.
- Salsa, a common type of music and dance in Latin America, originated in Cuba.



Guam

Language: Chamorro and English

Population: 169,000

Nickname: Island of Warriors

Fun Facts:

- Guam is nicknamed the place "Where America's day begins."
- Since Guam is located on the other side of the International Dateline, it is the first place where the sun rises on U.S. soil.
- Guam is often said to be shaped like a footprint.

Philippines

Language: Filipino and English (Filipino is based on Tagalog)

Population: 109.6 million

Nickname: Pearl of the Orient

Fun Facts:

- Ube ice cream, a common dessert, gets its purple color from Ube, a purple sweet yam.
- Over 100 languages are spoken in the Philippines.

Glossary

Foreign Affairs: Anything having to do with a country's relationships with other countries.

Gallant: Brave or heroic.

Seizure: Brain activity that often causes the body to shake uncontrollably.

Tariff: A tax on something being bought or sold to a customer in another country.

Empire: A group of territories or countries ruled by a single authority, often an emperor or empress.

Colonization: The act of taking over and controlling a territory and the people in that territory.

Civilize: To help a society become more advanced, educated, and sophisticated.

Anarchist: A person who believes there should be no government authority anywhere in the world.

Occupation: To take possession of an area, country, or territory, often by force.

Gramophone: A device from the late 19th and early 20th centuries that could record and play sounds and music.

Sources

Armstrong, William H. *Major McKinley: William McKinley and the Civil War*. Kent State University Press, 2000.

"Biography." *McKinley Memorial Library*, <https://www.mcklib.org/content/biography/>. Accessed 3 February 2022.

Gould, Lewis L. *The Spanish-American War and President McKinley*. University Press of Kansas, 1982.

Gould, Lewis L. "William McKinley." *Miller Center, University of Virginia*, <https://millercenter.org/president/mckinley/>. Accessed 3 February 2022.

"The Life of William McKinley." *William McKinley Presidential Library and Museum*, <https://mckinleymuseum.org/william-mckinley/>. Accessed 3 February 2022.

"Obituary: President M'Kinley's Illustrious Career." *The New York Times*, 7 September 1901, <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/learning/general/onthisday/bday/0129.html/>. Accessed 3 February 2022.

"William McKinley." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-McKinley/>. Accessed 3 February 2022.

"Cool Kid Facts." *Cool Kid Facts*, 26 Jan. 2022, <https://www.coolkid-facts.com/>. Accessed 10 July 2022.

"Philippines Facts for Kids: Geography." *Travel*, <https://www.kids-world-travel-guide.com/philippines-facts.html>. Accessed 10 July 2022.

Images: Getty Images, WikiCommons, FreePix

Answers

MCKINLEY'S PET:
A PARROT NAMED WASHINGTON POST

William McKinley's tomb in
Canton, Ohio



READY FOR MORE?

Experience all the **FREE CONTENT** PragerU Kids has to offer!



STREAM FREE SHOWS ON YOUR TV OR TABLET

Download our FREE mobile or TV app to stream every PragerU Kids show! Or, watch any time at PragerUkids.com.



ENJOY HOURS OF FREE SHOWS

Browse over 300 educational videos for K-12, including game shows, cartoons, and inspiring reality shows.



EXPLORE WHOLESOME STORIES & AMAZING HISTORY

Download free e-books at PragerUkids.com or purchase printed copies on Amazon.



FREE RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS & PARENTS

Supplement your child's viewing experience with lesson plans & worksheets that meet educational standards.

GUESS OR MESS

A PragerU Kids Game Show



WATCH NOW!



Test Your Knowledge of Our PragerU Kids Biography Books with This Fun and Messy Trivia Game Show for Kids!



Experience Fun, Interactive,
and Educational Content at
PRAGERUKIDS.COM