**Imperialism Study Guide**

**Introduction**

The term ’empire’ refers to a group of nations or states brought under a single sovereign authority. For an earlier period it also stood for a state that was characterized by the dominion of a conquering nation over the conquered people. Thus were founded the empires of ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Asyria and Persia. The activity of empire building was also carried out by the Mongols, Muhammedans, Turks and Tartars in medieval Europe. The term "**imperial**" means ’of’ or ’belonging to’ an empire or emperor. It could also mean ’of’ or ’belonging or pertaining to’ a state that is supreme over colonies, dependencies or protectorates.

**Meaning**

Charles A. Beard defines imperialism as an "employment of the engines of government and diplomacy to acquire territories, protectorates, and/or spheres of influence occupied usually by other races or peoples and to promote industrial trade and investment opportunities.

Political and [economic http://konac.kontera.com/javascript/lib/imgs/grey_loader.gif](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010101.asp" \t "_top)

domination is also involved in modern imperialism.

**Political Imperialism**

Political imperialism refers to building of an empire under a powerful empire through conquest of other countries by military force. Thus a country, which is militarily, politically and economically powerful, conquers a less powerful, weaker country. This annexes the weaker one and makes it a colony. Political control is then established upon her colony by the mother country, which attempts to impose her political ideologies and institution upon it. An outstanding example of this kind of imperialism is of British imperialism in [India](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010101.asp).

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The Industrial Revolution led to economic imperialism or ’neo-imperialism.’ In this case, the industrially advanced countries economically exploit the [regions](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010101.asp) that were rich in raw materials. These regions are also used as markets for their finished products and for investment of surplus capital. This kind of economic imperialism was imposed by England, France, [Italy](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010101.asp), Germany, and the U.S.A. upon China. Though China was politically independent and sovereign under the Manchu rule, it was economically dominated by these European and American countries.

However, in the modern period, political and economic imperialism exists together.

**Causes**

Various factors contributed to the rise of Imperialism:

1. The **foremost** were the **economic factors**. The Industrial Revolution created a great need for raw materials. [Asia](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010201.asp) and Africa offered most of the raw materials such as rubber, tin, petroleum, cotton, silk, vegetable oils and rare minerals. Owing to the Industrial Revolution, Great [Britain](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010201.asp), Germany and other European nations, began to produce **surplus goods** for which they **required markets abroad**. Asia as well as [Africa](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010201.asp) served this purpose well.There was **excessive surplus capital in the industrialized countries**, which invested it in foreign lands. Political control over these lands would thus act as a guarantee of [security](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010201.asp) of their investments.The Industrial Revolution introduced great progress in the means of transport and [communication](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010201.asp). Ocean liners could carry heavy articles like manganese ore from any part of the world. The telegraph linked the whole world and reduced great distances. The [development](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010201.asp) of railways speeded the movement of goods between colonies and to the mother country.
2. The **activities of political groups and intellectuals**, who desired to ensure national security and self-sufficiency, instigated colonial imperialism. Often, Presidents or Prime Ministers worked towards colonial imperialism owing to the influence of business or other interest groups.
3. A strong motive for imperialism was the **spirit of national pride and prestige**. The British Empire had set the precedent that it was essential to have colonies in order to become a world power. Hence both Germany and [Italy](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010201.asp) entered the colonial race.

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1. Some parts of Africa and the [Far East](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010201.asp) served as **valuable naval bases and ports** of call, for trade, commerce and investment.
2. There was an inner **urge to spread Christianity** among Christian European nations. Both Catholic and Protestant missionaries went to the colonies to convert non-believers into Christians.
3. The activities of explorers and adventurers like **H.M. Stanley in the Congo**, the Frenchmen **Du Chaillu** and De **Brazza** in Equatorial Africa, and the German **Karl Peters** in East Africa, helped to promote the new wave of imperialism.
4. The **expansion of population** also contributed to the spread of imperialism. This was further aided by the periodical recurrence of unemployment, which compelled millions of Europeans to emigrate, in search of new homes and careers abroad.
5. There was **international anarchy**. Every nation was free to do what it pleased, because of the lack of any international machinery to enact laws for nations and force them to respect such laws. This state of affairs encouraged the colonial race.
6. Originating from Charles Darwin’s theories on evolution, **Social Darwinists** began to argue that nations must engage in a contest for “survival of the fittest.” The strongest nations would dominate the world by acquiring the most territory from the weaker ones. This is caused the racial stereotyping of Africans and Asians as somehow biologically inferior.
7. Finally, based upon the British writer Rudyard Kipling’s work, it was widely believed that it was the **“white men’s burden”** to “civilize” the more “savage” or “primitive” nations.

Thus various factors and forces were working towards the spread of imperialism in different countries.

**Forms and Techniques of Imperialism**

Several forms and techniques were adopted by modern imperialism in order to establish itself.

**1. Conquest and Annexation**

In the early modern times, the Spaniards, the Frenchmen and the British used to send soldiers to distant lands. They overpowered the native chiefs, annexed the conquered lands and made them a colony. Outright conquest and annexation proved to be expensive and burdensome.

**2. Concession or Franchise**

When a powerful, ambitious and aggressive agency, acquired an exclusive right to exploit some economic resources, in a "background" region, it was called a concession or [franchise](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010301.asp). A group of German bankers and engineers got a concession to build a long [railroad](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010301.asp), which later came to be known as the Bagdad Railway in Turkey.

**3. Leasehold**

When the exclusive right to exploit some economic resources was accompanied with the grant of lease of a stretch of territory and the actual exercise of political control over it, it was called a leasehold. The German Empire acquired such leasehold of ninety-nine years over a part of the Shantung [Peninsula](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010301.asp) in China.

**4. Sphere of Influence and Sphere of Interest**

When a state acquires an exclusive or even a preferential right to exploit and develop a backward region economically, and claims that other states have no right or claim to establish any form of control over it, it was called the Sphere of influence. Thus in 1907, Great Britain and Russia, divided Persia into three zones:

(i) British ([southern](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010301.asp)) sphere of influence

(ii) Russian (northern) sphere of influence,

(iii) Central or neutral sphere of influence.

In case the state only had the right to exploit a backward region, but did not exercise political control over it, it was called a Sphere of Interest.

**5. Protectorate**

This meant an indirect exercise of political control by a powerful nation, over a weak and backward region through a native puppet ruler, who remained only in nominal command. Thus in 1912, France established a protectorate over [Morocco](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010301.asp).

**6. Financial or Tariff Control**

Economic imperialism could assume the form of financial or tariff control. Thus, the powerful nation could take over the complete charge of the finances of a weak and backward region, or its tariff system. Before World War I, the [Turkish](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010301.asp) finances was actually run by the Ottoman Public Debt Administration, an organization composed of mainly European officials.

**7. Extra-territoriality**

The right of extra-territoriality was a privilege whereby the Europeans were subjected the Western law and Western courts of law, even if they committed crimes in non-European jurisdictions.

Thus if a Frenchman committed an offence in Constantinople, he was tried by a French or a European official under French law, and not by a Muslim court under the Mohammedan law.

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**8. The Mandate System**

This was the last form of the new imperialism. It emerged at the [Paris](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010301.asp) Peace Conference, at the suggestion of General Jan Smut of [South Africa](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010301.asp). Most of the former colonies and other weak and backward [regions](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010301.asp) were assigned to the League of Nations. The League delegated its authority, subject to some restrictions, to various states as its agents or "mandatories." The mandatories had to submit to a League body called the ’Permanent Mandates Commission’ which were [annual reports](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010301.asp) about the moral and material progress in regions under their control.

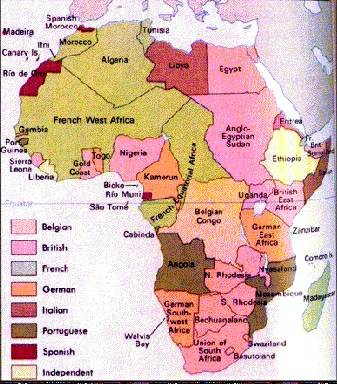
**Imperialism in Africa**

Several European explorers inaugurated the European penetration into the "Dark Continent." The most prominent among them were:

1. David Livingstone, a Scottish physician, who went to Africa in 1840, as a Protestant missionary.
2. Henry [Stanley](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010401.asp) an Anglo-American journalist who went in search of David Livingstone.
3. Karl Peters, a German student of British colonial activities.
4. An Englishman **Cecil** [**Rhodes**](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010401.asp), an outstanding African ’empire-builder.’

Further, Baker, Burton, Grant and Speke explored the courses of the four great rivers the Nile, the Niger, the Congo and the Zambezi. Henry Stanley also described these explorations in his books: *How I found Livingstone*, *Though the Dark Continent* and *In Darkest Africa*.

**King Leopold II of Belgium** organized in 1878, a private commercial company, under the name of the **International Africa (Congo) Association**. He was the president and the chief stockholder. The purpose was the purchase of Congo land for the exploitation of rubber resources. The king then secured international sanction, at the Berlin conference (1884-1885) for transforming the Company’s lands into the Congo Free State, with himself as its personal sovereign. He earned great profits in this undertaking. By 1908, the government of Belgium took over the [Congo](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010401.asp) Free State as a Belgian colony, on payment of liberal financial compensation to Leopold II.

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**Exhibit 1**  
European occupation of Africa

Many European nations such as Portugal, [Spain](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010401.asp), [Italy](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010401.asp), France and Germany entered a race to acquire lands in Africa, owing to its valuable resources.

1. **Portugal** established its hold over the province of Angola, to the South of the Belgian Congo. It also founded the colony of Mozambique, which came to be known as Portuguese [East Africa](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010401.asp).
2. **Spain** acquired [Morocco](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010401.asp), the Canary Island, islands on the Guinea Coast, Rio Muni, and Rio de Oro.
3. In 1889, **Italy** acquired the small territories of Eritrea and Somaliland, on the East Coast of Africa. It also acquired Tripoli and Cyrenaica, by defeating Turkey in 1911-1912.
4. France established a protectorate over Tunis in 1881 as well as over Morocco. On the West Coast of Africa, Senegal was already under the control of France. It conquered Upper Nigeria in 1882 and Tibactoo in 1894. The French also carved out a big state in the Congo Valley, under the name of the French Congo.
5. England acquired the Cape Colony in [South Africa](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010401.asp). In 1875, Disraeli purchased 176,000 shares of the Suez Canal Company from the Khedive of Egypt, with the idea of securing dominant control over the hundred-mile long Suez Canal. England established a protectorate over Egypt.
6. In 1884, the German Karl Peters acquired Eastern African lands, which took the shape of Africa, lying between British [Uganda](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010401.asp) and British Rhodesia. The **Germans** established three other protectorates, namely (a) German South-West Africa, lying on the west of British South Africa; (b) Cameroons on the South of the Congo and (c) Tologand.

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**The Boer Wars in South Africa**

The Boers opposed the British rule in the Cape Colony, especially after 1833, when the British government made slavery illegal in the Cape Colony. This forced the Boers to emigrate from the Cape Colony. **Piet Retief** and his followers established the Republic of Natalia. In May 1842, British forces invaded the Republic of Natalia and converted it into a British colony. From Natal, many Boers again trekked northwards to the Orange River, where they established two states, namely Transvaal and the Orange Free State, respectively. However, as a result of the **Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902)**, both Transvaal and the Orange Free State became British colonies.

British colonialists under the leadership of Cecil Rhodes acquired three British protectorates namely Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland. By 1888 they founded British, East Africa and by 1894, they took Uganda. Nigeria was acquired by the Royal Niger Company between 1886 and 1889.

Thus in the span of forty years, the whole of the Dark Continent (except Ethiopia and Liberia) was divided between the European powers.

**Imperialism in Asia**

The British, the French, the Dutch, the Portuguese and the Germans, also attempted to extend their imperialist rivalries into Asia.

**1. British Imperialism**

The foundation of the British Empire in India, was laid by **Robert** **Clive** by winning the Battle of Plassey in 1757. Thereafter **Warren Hastings** and **Lord Wellesley** forced most of the Indian rulers to submission. Finally **Lord Dalhousie**, by his **Policy of Lapse**, annexed much of the territories of the Indian princes. This completed the work of the British conquest of India by 1856. After the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, British India was transferred from the hands of the [East India](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010501.asp) Company, to those of the British Crown.

In the 1880’s Great Britain added Burma on the east and Baluchistan on the west. In southern Asia, she secured [Singapore](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010501.asp) and Mallacce with the Federated Malay States. A third of the island of [Borneo](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010501.asp) was also appropriated. In southwestern Asia, Great Britain obtained a series of protectorates form Aden to Kuwait. They had a sphere of influence in southern Persia. Great Britain secured Hong Kong from China. After 1898, a privileged position was obtained in [Tibet](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010501.asp) and the Yangtze Valley.

**2. French Imperialism in Asia**

In 1850, Napoleon III of France secured a part of Anam. The French added [Cambodia](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010501.asp) in 1864, Kochin-China in 1867, Tonkin in 1873 and later the whole of Anam. All these [regions](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010501.asp) were united to make French Indo-China. In India, France held Chandranagar, Yonaan, Pondicherry, Karikal and Mahe. In 1899, France leased Kungchow form China. It secured a privileged position in the [Chinese provinces](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010501.asp) of Kwangsi and Hainan.

**3. Dutch Imperialism in Asia**

In Asia, the Dutch established the Dutch East Indian Empire. The Empire was greatly extended by the conquest of the [islands](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010501.asp) of Sumatra, Java, Celebes, part of Borneo and half of New Guinea.

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**4. Portuguese Imperialism in Asia**

The Portuguese had comparatively a small empire in Asia, consisting of a few trading ports in India, the port of Macao in China and half of the east Indian islands of Timor.

**5. German Imperialism in Asia**

Germany had acquired the northeastern part of New Guinea in the 1880’s and renamed it Kaiser Wilhelmsland, and in 1898 leased from China, a part of Kiochow.

**6. Russian Imperialism in Asia**

Russia held Siberia and after 1850, it pushed its frontier through Turkestan and other areas of west [central Asia http://kona.kontera.com/javascript/lib/imgs/grey_loader.gif](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010501.asp" \t "_top)

to the borders of India, Afghanistan and Persia. It also, secured a sphere of influence in northern Persia in 1907.



**Exhibit 2**  
European colonies in Asia

**Significance and Consequences of Imperialism**

There were far-reaching effects in several respects:

Western imperialism converted **the lands of Asia and Africa** into **European colonies**. By 1875, about one-tenth of African territories remained to be colonized. Between 1871 and 1900, Great [Britain](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010601.asp) added 4.25 million square miles, with sixty six million people to her empire. [France](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010601.asp) added 3 - 5 million square miles with 26 million people, to her Empire. Russia added 0.5 million square miles with 6.5 million people. Germany added one million square miles with 13 million people. [Italy](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010601.asp) had 1,85,000 square miles with 750,000 people and [Belgium](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010601.asp) had 900,000 square miles with 8.5 million people.

Owing to a simultaneous colonial expansion of western powers into Asia and Africa, there were **frequent colonial collisions** all over Asia and Africa. The major collisions were five:

1. between Great Britain and France, over Egypt and the Sudan
2. between Great Britain and Germany, over [South Africa](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010601.asp)
3. between Great Britain and Russia, over Persia
4. between Russia and Japan, over China
5. between Germany and France, over [Morocco](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010601.asp).

**This led to the formation of political and military alliances and counter alliances, which ultimately brought about World War I (1914-1918).**

The European imperialists like the [Belgians](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010601.asp), the British, the French, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Japanese and the European imperialists in China, **exploited** their colonies **economically, commercially, industrially, socially and politically**.

An important result of Imperialism was that **Asia and Africa got westernized**.

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The process of *Europeanization* **in language, culture and civilization** began in the 16th century. In [India](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010601.asp), the English introduced the British educational system with western education taught through English, from the primary schools onwards to the University level.

The British in India:

1. converted many [Indians](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010601.asp) to Christianity;
2. remodeled Indian political and administrative institutions according to the English pattern;
3. industrialized India by building railways, stringing telegraph wires and setting up factories, mills and workshops;
4. introduced western customs and ideas to the Indians.

The Africans also obtained the fruits of Western Civilization.

However, the imperialists **reduced the colonies to poverty and social degradation**. They became masters in their colonies. The natives were transformed into servants and slaves.

Some of the **African** and **Asian** **nations** could not stand the attack of the European imperialists. They were **wiped out of existence** and their lands were occupied by the Imperialist powers.

Owing to the process of *Europeanization*, some of the colonies lost their culture and civilization. They became *Europeanized* and lost their identity as a nation.

**Points To Remember**

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| Countries | Name of Colonies | | |
| Britain | Africa | : | Cape Colony (SA), Egypt, Rhodesia, [Kenya](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010701.asp), |
|  | Asia | : | India, Burma, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Ceylon, Pakistan, Bangladesh. |
| France | Africa | : | Tunis, Morocco, Senegal parts of Nigeria, [Congo](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010701.asp). |
|  | Asia | : | Indochina, India (Pondicherry, Chandanagore, Etc.,) China (Kungehow) |
| Dutch | Africa | : | ---- |
|  | Asia | : | Indonesia |
| Portuguese | Africa | : | Angola, Mozambique |
|  | Asia | : | India (Goa, Daman, & Diu), Macao, Timor. |
| Germany | Africa | : | Cameroon, Togoland, South [West Africa](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010701.asp" \t "_top)  [http://konac.kontera.com/javascript/lib/imgs/grey_loader.gif](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010701.asp" \t "_top)  , and Eastern Africa land between Rhodesia and Uganda |
|  | Asia | : | North Eastern parts of New Guinea and leased Kio Chow from China. |
| [Italy](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010701.asp) | Africa | : | Eritrea, Somaliland Tripoli, Cyrenaica (by defeating Turkey) |
|  | Asia | : | ---- |
| Spain | Africa | : | Morocco, Canary [Island](http://www.pinkmonkey.com/studyguides/subjects/worldhis/chap10/w1010701.asp). |
|  | Asia | : | ---- |
| Russia | Africa | : | ---- |
|  | Asia | : | Outer Mongolia, Siberia, Turkestan, Northern Persia, and other areas of West Central Asia (Azerbaijan, Kazakistan etc.,) |
| Japan | Africa | : | ---- |
|  | Asia | : | Islands of Formosa, Korea, Manchuria |
| Belgium | Africa | : | Congo |
|  | Asia | : | ---- |