

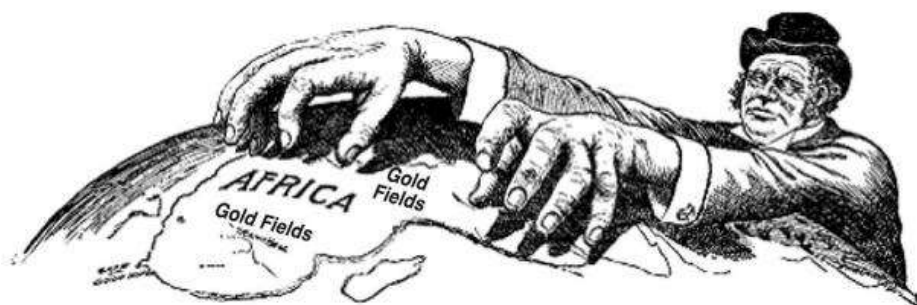
# THE AGE OF IMPERIALISM

It didn't take long for the European countries to realize that their new factories being built in the Industrial Revolution needed resources. There were many resources which were scarce in Europe, which meant that they were not common in Europe and Europeans needed to look elsewhere to get them. Soon, the eyes of every nation in Europe turned to Africa, one of the last places they had not fully explored. Their goal was to take over many new colonies, establishing an empire. When countries try to significantly expand their influence over other places in the world, this is called imperialism..

## African Resources

For many years, Africa was a source of slaves, gold, and ivory, but Europeans had cared little for the many other resources that the land possessed. Metals like aluminum, iron, and many

others were simply not important to the Europeans, because they had all they needed in Europe. Once factories began to boost the demand for raw materials that could be used to mass-produce goods, things began to change.



Source: <http://www.boondocksnet.com> (adapted)

Many European countries began to establish colonies in Africa, India, and all the way to China. These colonies started off as trading-posts where goods could be brought to the sea, but soon, Europeans began to use their vast advantage with technology to conquer lands. Since the Africans mostly lived in fairly small tribes that often fought, uniting against the Europeans was difficult. By the year 1914, there were only two countries, Liberia and Ethiopia, in all of Africa that weren't controlled by the European countries.

## The Sun Never Sets on the British Empire

Great Britain had been the world super-power since defeating the Spanish Armada in 1588. After several wars with the French, and the American colonies, Britain continued to be the most powerful nation in the world. Their empire grew to be so large that people started to say that the sun never set on the British Empire.



England, shown here as an octopus reaching into many countries, was the most active imperialistic nation during the 1800's.

What they meant when they said this was that Britain owned land all over the world. Since the earth rotates while it orbits the sun, half of the world is always light, and half is always dark. Britain owned land in Australia, Europe, India, South Africa, Central America, Egypt, Canada, and many other places as well. If you look at a map, you can see that these countries are all over the world, so even when it was night in Europe, it was day time in Australia, and even though it is night time in Egypt, it is day time in Canada. So the sun literally, never set, on the British Empire.

## Direct vs. Indirect Rule

There were two main styles of ruling colonies. The French way, called direct rule, tried to force French culture and language on the people they

conquered. All of the ruling people in each colony were French people who had moved from the mother country. In this way, the French directly controlled everything that happened in their colonies.



*Control of the trade with China, with its many resources and exotic spices was especially valuable to many countries. The symbols of the Dragon (China), Bear (Russia), Lion (Great Britain), and Eagle (USA) are the normal animals associated with those nations even today.*

The way used by Britain was called indirect rule. Indirect rule meant that as long as Britain benefited by trading with the colony, there was no real need to control everything the people did.

Normally, there would be a British governor who was in charge of the colony,

but all of the people below him that helped him run the colony would be local people. Languages, cultural practices, and everything else were kept largely the same.

Whether the colony was controlled by direct or indirect rule, any attempt that the people made to establish self-rule was dealt with quickly and ruthlessly. Opposing leaders would be executed as soon as they were caught, and military rule would force all colonies to benefit the mother country, whether they wanted to or not.

### Reading Comprehension Questions

1. Why did the Europeans need to create colonies in different regions of the world to fuel their economic development?
2. What does it mean to say that the "sun never sets on the British Empire."
3. What were the differences between a colony ruled by direct rule and indirect rule.

Write about it.

Would you rather live in a British or French colony. Explain your reasons why.