

Grade Seven Unit 3 Task 1: Imperialism and the Rise of the British Empire

Essential Questions: What are the causes and impacts of imperialism? How and why are empires formed?

Suggested Pacing: 18-20 days



Background: Last unit, students analyzed why people moved and what happens when cultures collide. This included the rise of slavery in Middle America and the Caribbean, as well as immigration and emigration. Students learned about the various push and pull factors which influence people to emigrate from one place to another. Students will utilize the map skills they learned in previous grades and previous units, as well as historical knowledge and geographic and research skills.

Task: In this task, students will explore the rise of the British Empire and what motivated the people who built it. Students will conduct research on why and how such a small country came to rule a huge empire. Additionally, they will analyze the resources Britain gained from their colonies and create a map to analyze Britain's influence on other countries.

Social Studies Skills Introduced Through this Task:

- SS.6-7.GEO.1: Construct and use a variety of maps to support spatial concepts and ideas. (6-7.1-2, 8.1)
- SS.6-7.HIS.1: Explain how people, events and developments can influence, affect and impact a place or region. (6-8.1, 8.1-2)
- SS.6-7.HIS.3: Select, evaluate, and use different sources to learn about the past. (8.6-8)
- SS.6-7.HIS.4: Develop and explain causes and effects of events in the past. (8.9-10)

Purpose: The story of the British Empire begins with North America and the Caribbean and spreads to the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Australia. In this unit students will be exploring the issue of colonization, imperialism, and cultural assimilation that resulted from the great European Empires.

Throughout this task, pair with myWorld:

Chapter Connections to be used and added as needed.

Academic Vocabulary	
Great Britain United Kingdom Humanitarianism Social Darwinism Superpower	Globalization Colonization Imperialism Empire

Getting Started:

Students will explore the meaning of the term “imperialism.”

First, students will encounter the term on a piece of chart paper and give their best guesses as to what the term means based on their knowledge of the word and word parts, like imperial. Look up the word imperial with students and break down the definition with them to get at the heart of the term “imperialism.” [You can also use the image provided to help ascertain the definition.](#)



Next, students will quickly research the term and either draw a picture on a sticky note or write a description of the term to be placed on the chart paper. Once groups have determined the definition, they will review everyone’s work and come up with a definition for the class.

Making Meaning:

Next, the teacher will display the quote, ‘The sun never sets on the British Empire’ alongside a map of British colonization ([slide of map and quote](#)). Students will think about the quote and the image together and discuss what it means in small groups. After students have had time to discuss, the teacher will lead the class in a whole group discussion of their thoughts. The teacher should gently guide students to the idea that the British Empire was at one point so vast that it was always daytime somewhere in it.



Next, the teacher will ask students to brainstorm reasons why a country might want to extend its territory so far. Students can discuss their thoughts with a partner and jot down possible reasons for expansion in their notebooks. Following their discussion, the teacher will lead the students in creating a list of reasons for expansion on a piece of chart paper. This anchor chart should remain displayed in the room for future reference.

Next, the teacher will explain that we will now think about one continent Britain colonized in particular. They will display a resource map of the continent of Africa. Students will explore the continent of Africa through this [map](#). Students will examine the map and discuss in groups why European imperial powers wanted to gain a foothold in Africa and how the control of natural resources can be a source of power to a nation.

Opportunity to Assess Journal Writing

In their social studies journals, have students write down their thoughts about the following questions.

- What were the major motivations that countries had for creating Empires?
- Who benefitted from the Imperialism of the 18th and 19th century? Why?
- Infer: What impact did Imperialism have on the continents of Asia and Africa?

Investigation:

Guiding Questions:

1. How do you see British imperialism and empire building within this continent or area?
2. Why did the British decide to expand into this area? (relevant resources, strategic advantage, etc.)
3. How did British expansionism in this area affect the continent or area?

The Caribbean	Article: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Toll of Slavery and Exploitation Under British Colonial Rule in the Caribbean Video: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Caribbean Colonization Map: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Caribbean
North America	Article: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Motivations for Colonization in North America Video: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● North America and colonization Map: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● North America colonization
South America	Article: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Human Geography of South America Map: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● South America Colonization
India	Article: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The East India Company: The British Company that Once

	<p>Ruled India</p> <p>Video</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The East India Company and Nutmeg <p>Map:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India Colonization
Africa	<p>Article:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What Caused the Scramble for Africa? <p>Video:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How France Still Controls West Africa <p>Map:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Africa Map of Colonization
Australia	<p>Article:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Geography of Australia and Oceania <p>Video:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Brief History of Australian Colonization <p>Map:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australia

Opportunity to Assess Journal Writing

In their social studies journals, have students write down their thoughts about the following questions using their notes from the centers.

1. How do you see British imperialism and empire building within this continent?
2. Why did the British decide to expand into this area? (relevant resources, strategic advantage, etc.)
3. How did British expansionism in this area affect the continent?

Use the guiding questions for each center as an opportunity to assess understanding. Students will answer questions in their journals.

Create/Produce:

Students will create a constructed response about the power wielded by empires and its impact on different areas of the world. For example, indigenous people in Australia were subjugated as the British sent people to the continent. Africa was seen as a rich source of natural resources that empires wanted to control. Students will address the following questions:

- How and why do empires rise?
- What impact do empires have on the world around them?

Students will support their responses with evidence collected from the centers.

Communicate/Present:

Students will share their constructed responses with a partner and compare their evidence and reasoning. They will share their partner's thinking in their own journals and write about the similarities and differences between their work and the work of their partner.

Reflection:

Students should use the information and insight gained from their learning in order to draw conclusions. Students will reflect on the question:

- What gives a nation or country power and why do you think Great Britain chose to use their power as they did?