

# Reasons For American Imperialism Worksheet Answers

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## REASONS FOR AMERICAN IMPERIALISM

**Introduction:** Expansion has always been a part of America's history. At first, expansion headed towards the Pacific within North America. *In the 1700's and 1800's*, European nations began practicing **imperialism**, which is one people ruling over or controlling others. Initially, Americans did not look to take over other countries. Having been colonists themselves, many Americans were against it. America also feared that foreign involvement would bring the country into a war. However, attitudes began to change in the *late 1800's* as America began to look to the Pacific. Use the chart below to answer the questions.

**Territorial Expansion of the United States**

Territory	Date Acquired	Square Miles	How Acquired
Original 13 Colonies	1783	888,685	Treaty with Great Britain
Louisiana Purchase	1803	827,192	Purchased from France
Florida	1819	72,003	Treaty with Spain
Texas	1845	390,143	Annexed
Oregon	1846	285,580	Treaty with Britain
Mexican Cession	1848	529,017	Mexican American War
Gadsden Purchase	1853	29,640	Purchase from Mexico
Alaska	1867	589,757	Purchase from Russia
Hawaii	1898	6,450	Annexed
Philippines	1899	115,600	Spanish American War
Puerto Rico	1899	3,435	Spanish American War
Guam	1899	212	Spanish American War
American Samoa	1900	76	Treaty with Germany and Britain

1. What is imperialism? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Why was America hesitant at first to get involved in foreign affairs? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. According to the chart, name five places that America acquired. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What area of the world are most of the areas acquired after 1850 in? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Why might having these places be useful to America? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Reasons for American imperialism worksheet answers** are essential for understanding the motivations behind the expansionist policies of the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This period marked a significant transformation in American foreign policy, as the nation shifted from a focus on continental expansion to overseas imperialism. In this article, we will explore various factors that contributed to American imperialism, including economic interests, strategic considerations, cultural beliefs, and political motivations.

# The Economic Motivations Behind American Imperialism

One of the primary reasons for American imperialism was the pursuit of economic interests. As the United States industrialized, it experienced a surge in production capabilities and a need for new markets. The following points outline how economic factors fueled imperialistic efforts:

- **Access to New Markets:** American manufacturers sought to expand their customer base beyond domestic markets. By acquiring territories, the U.S. could establish new markets for its goods.
- **Raw Materials:** The demand for raw materials to support industrial growth led to the acquisition of resources from other nations. Territories rich in natural resources, such as sugar in Hawaii and rubber in the Philippines, became targets for American expansion.
- **Investment Opportunities:** American investors were eager to invest in foreign lands, seeking profitable ventures in agriculture, mining, and infrastructure. This economic motivation often overlapped with political strategies.

## The Role of the Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution significantly influenced American imperialism. As industries boomed, the need for resources and markets intensified. The United States transitioned to an economic model that relied heavily on exports, making access to foreign markets a strategic imperative.

## Strategic Considerations in American Imperialism

Alongside economic motivations, strategic considerations played a crucial role in American imperialism. The U.S. aimed to strengthen its global presence and enhance national security through territorial acquisitions. Key strategic factors included:

- **Military Bases:** Establishing naval bases in strategic locations, such as Pearl Harbor in Hawaii and Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, allowed the U.S. to project military power and protect its interests.
- **Global Competition:** As European powers expanded their empires, the U.S. felt pressured to assert itself on the world stage. Competing with established empires like Britain and France motivated American leaders to pursue imperialist policies.

- **Increased National Security:** Expanding U.S. territory was seen as a means to secure the nation against potential threats. Control over key regions was deemed essential for maintaining national security.

## The Influence of Alfred Thayer Mahan

Alfred Thayer Mahan, a naval officer and historian, significantly influenced American strategic thinking. In his seminal work, "The Influence of Sea Power upon History," Mahan argued that a strong navy and overseas bases were essential for a nation's prosperity and security. His ideas spurred American leaders to adopt expansionist policies to enhance naval power.

## Cultural Beliefs and American Imperialism

The cultural beliefs of the time also played a significant role in justifying American imperialism. The concept of Manifest Destiny, which originally applied to continental expansion, evolved to support overseas imperial ambitions. Key cultural factors included:

- **Manifest Destiny:** Many Americans believed it was their divine right to expand and spread democracy and civilization. This belief was often used to justify the annexation of territories inhabited by non-Western peoples.
- **Social Darwinism:** The notion that certain races and cultures were superior to others led many Americans to view imperialism as a moral obligation. This pseudo-scientific belief rationalized the subjugation of other nations.
- **American Exceptionalism:** The belief that the U.S. had a unique role in the world fostered a sense of duty among Americans to promote democracy and capitalism globally.

## The Impact of Missionary Activity

American missionaries played a significant role in promoting imperialism. They sought to spread Christianity and Western values to other cultures, often advocating for U.S. intervention in foreign lands. Their efforts were frequently intertwined with economic and political motivations, as they believed that spreading their beliefs would lead to civilizational progress.

# Political Motivations for American Imperialism

Political factors also contributed to American imperialism, as leaders sought to assert the nation's influence globally. Key political motivations included:

- **Expansion of U.S. Influence:** Political leaders aimed to expand American influence in international affairs, particularly in regions like Latin America and Asia.
- **Presidential Leadership:** Presidents such as Theodore Roosevelt and William McKinley were strong advocates of imperialism, using their positions to promote expansionist policies.
- **Domestic Politics:** Support for imperialism was often used to unite the American public during times of economic uncertainty or political division. It provided a common cause that fostered national pride.

## The Spanish-American War as a Turning Point

The Spanish-American War in 1898 marked a significant turning point in American imperialism. The conflict resulted in the U.S. acquiring Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines. This war was fueled by a combination of humanitarian concerns, economic interests, and the desire for strategic advantage. It solidified America's status as an emerging global power and set the stage for further imperialistic endeavors.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, **reasons for American imperialism worksheet answers** reveal a complex interplay of economic, strategic, cultural, and political factors that drove the United States to expand its territory and influence in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Understanding these motivations allows for a deeper comprehension of American history and its implications on global relations. The legacy of this era continues to shape contemporary discussions about U.S. foreign policy and its role in the world. As students and scholars study these factors, they gain insight into the driving forces behind one of the most significant chapters in American history.

## Frequently Asked Questions

**What were the primary motivations behind American**

## **imperialism in the late 19th century?**

The primary motivations included economic interests, political competition, military strategic advantages, and a belief in cultural superiority.

## **How did the concept of Manifest Destiny influence American imperialism?**

Manifest Destiny fueled the belief that the U.S. was destined to expand its territory and spread democracy, justifying imperialistic actions.

## **What role did the Spanish-American War play in American imperialism?**

The Spanish-American War marked a significant turning point, leading to the U.S. acquiring territories such as Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines, thus expanding its influence.

## **Which economic factors contributed to American imperialism?**

Economic factors included the desire for new markets for American goods, access to raw materials, and the need to invest surplus capital.

## **How did social Darwinism relate to American imperialism?**

Social Darwinism was used to justify imperialism by suggesting that stronger nations had the right to dominate weaker ones as part of a natural order.

## **What was the significance of the Open Door Policy in American imperialism?**

The Open Door Policy aimed to ensure equal trading rights for all nations in China, reflecting America's desire to expand its influence without direct colonization.

## **How did American attitudes towards race and culture impact imperialistic policies?**

Racial and cultural attitudes often viewed non-Western societies as inferior, leading to policies that aimed to 'civilize' these populations through imperialism.

## **What was the role of the media in promoting American imperialism?**

Media outlets often sensationalized foreign events, creating public support for imperialistic ventures through yellow journalism that highlighted American interests abroad.

# How did the acquisition of Hawaii fit into the context of American imperialism?

The annexation of Hawaii in 1898 was driven by strategic military interests and the desire for economic opportunities, exemplifying American expansionist policies.

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