### Overview of Imperialism

### *Read the overview of the Age of Imperialism. When you are finished reading, write and answer the questions. Keep this in your binder.*

### GENERAL OVERVIEW:

We live in a world today in which the consequences of nineteenth-century Western imperialism are still being felt. By about 1914 Western civilization reached the high point of its long-standing global expansion. This expansion in this period took many forms. There was, first of all, economic expansion. Europeans invested large sums of money abroad, building railroads and ports, mines and plantations, factories and public utilities. Trade between nations grew greatly and a world economy developed. Between 1750 and 1900 the gap in income differences between industrialized Europe and America and the rest of the world grew at an astounding rate. Part of this was due Western European countries preventing industrialization in areas Westerners saw as markets for their manufactured goods. These areas included large parts of Africa and Asia. European economic penetration was very often peaceful, but Europeans (and Americans) were also quite willing to force isolationist nations such as China and Japan to throw open their doors to Western goods. Second, millions of Europeans migrated abroad. The pressure of poverty and overpopulation in rural areas encouraged this migration, but once in the United States and Australia, European settlers passed laws to prevent similar mass migration from Asia.

A third aspect of Western expansion was that European states established vast political empires, mainly in Africa but also in Asia. This "new imperialism" occurred primarily between 1880 and 1900, when European governments scrambled frantically for territory. White people came, therefore, to rule millions of black and brown people in Africa and Asia.

The causes of the new imperialism are still hotly debated. Competition for trade, superior military force, European power politics, and a racist belief in European superiority were among the most important. Some Europeans bitterly criticized imperialism as a betrayal of Western ideals of freedom and equality.

Western imperialism produced various reactions in Africa and Asia. The first response was simply to try to drive the foreigners away. The general failure of this traditionalist response then led large masses to accept European rule, which did bring some improvements. A third response was the modernist response of Western-educated natives, who were repelled by Western racism and attracted by Western ideals of national independence and economic progress. Thus, imperialism and reactions to it spread Western civilization to non-Western lands.

###### Schmiechen, James. A History of Western Society, 6th ed. Study Guide vol. II. Boston: Houghton, 1999. (pp. 441-442)

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| **1. What did Europeans invest their money in?** |  |
| **2. There was a huge income difference between which groups of countries:** |  |
| **3. During what years did this income difference grow?** |  |
| **4. What did Europeans prevent in many parts of Africa/Asia?** |  |
| **5. What Europeans force isolationist countries do?** |  |
| **6. What were the two isolationist countries mentioned?** |  |
| **7. Where did Europeans create large empires?** |  |
| **8. When did this “new imperialism” take place?** |  |
| **9. Why did white people go to Africa and Asia?** |  |
| **10. What are four causes of imperialism?** | . |
| **11. Why did some Europeans criticize imperialism?** |  |
| **12. List two responses to European imperialism by natives:** |  |