

Unit 6: Consequences of Industrialization, c. 1750–1900

Unit 6 covers why industrialized states built empires between 1750 and 1900, how colonized peoples responded, how the global economy reorganized around industrial demand, and why millions of people migrated. CED topics 6.1 through 6.7.

AP World History

Consequences of Industrialization

About 15 minutes to read

How to use this guide

Read it in order the first time because the unit tells one connected story. Industrial power gave some states new reasons to want colonies and new tools to take them. Colonized peoples answered with resistance, new states, and rebellions. The same industrial demand reorganized economies on other continents around exports, and steamships and railroads moved millions of workers to where the jobs were. Exam questions usually give you a scenario from one of those stages and ask you to name the process.

After the first read, use the trap boxes and the tables to review the distinctions that exam questions test most often. Finish with the practice questions, then complete the recall check on the last page out loud and note any items you cannot explain yet.

What holds this unit together. Every topic in Unit 6 traces back to industrialization. Factories needed raw materials and markets, which pushed states toward empire. Steamships and railroads made distant colonies governable and mass migration possible. When you see a question about this period, ask which of those two forces, the demand for materials or the new ability to move people and power, is driving the scenario.

6.1 Rationales for Imperialism from 1750 to 1900

Imperialism is the policy or practice of extending a country's power and influence through colonization, military force, or economic control. From 1750 to 1900, industrialized states built vast overseas empires. They justified the project to themselves and to each other with a short list of arguments, and exam questions expect you to recognize each one.

RATIONALE	WHAT IT CLAIMED
Nationalism	Pride in one's nation and the drive to advance its interests. Rivalries pushed European states to compete for colonies as symbols of national power.
Social Darwinism	Misapplied Darwin's ideas of natural selection to human societies, claiming stronger nations or races were destined to dominate weaker ones.
Civilizing mission	The claimed duty to bring a superior civilization, education, and institutions to colonized peoples. It framed empire as benevolence rather than conquest.
Religious conversion	The desire of Christian churches and missionaries to convert indigenous populations. Missionaries often arrived before colonial officials did.

Trap. Social Darwinism is not Darwin's theory. It is imperialists twisting natural selection into an excuse for conquest. If a question describes someone arguing that a stronger nation deserves to rule a weaker one because nature works that way, the answer is Social Darwinism, and the point is that the reasoning is a distortion.

Notice that none of these rationales mention money directly, yet economic motives ran underneath all of them. Factories needed raw materials and markets. Keep that in mind when a question asks which motive best fits a scenario about cotton, rubber, or trade concessions.

6.2 State Expansion from 1750 to 1900

States expanded in several distinct ways, and the exam tests whether you can tell them apart.

FORM OF EXPANSION	WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE
Settler colonies	Europeans settled permanently and built communities, displacing indigenous peoples and taking the land. New Zealand is the CED example.
Land-based expansion	The United States, Russia, and Japan conquered and settled neighboring territories overland, mirroring Europe's overseas empire-building.
Empire-building in Africa	European states used warfare and diplomacy to carve nearly the entire continent into colonies. The competition is commonly called the Scramble for Africa.
Acquisitions in Asia and the Pacific	European states, the United States, and Japan seized territories such as French Indochina, British Burma, the U.S. Philippines, and Japanese Taiwan, while Spanish and Portuguese influence declined.

Some states also tightened control they already had. In a **shift from non-state to direct state colonial control**, governments took over colonies previously held by non-state entities. The Congo passed from the private ownership of Belgium's King **Leopold II**, whose rubber-extraction regime was notorious for violence against Congolese people, to direct control by the Belgian government.

Trap. Settler colonies are not the same as colonies run for extraction. Settler colonies involved large-scale permanent European settlement and displacement of indigenous peoples. If a question emphasizes Europeans moving in to stay and taking land, it is pointing at the settler pattern, not at mines or plantations.

6.3 Indigenous Responses to State Expansion from 1750 to 1900

Colonized peoples did not simply accept imperial rule. **Anticolonial movements** grew as people questioned political authority and as nationalism spread, challenging the legitimacy of foreign domination. The responses took several forms.

RESPONSE	WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE
Direct resistance	Armed conflict or open defiance. Indigenous peoples fought colonial armies and officials rather than cooperating.
New states on the peripheries	Peoples created new states on the edges of empires, such as independent states in the Balkans, the Sokoto Caliphate in modern-day Nigeria, and the Zulu Kingdom.
Religious anti-imperial rebellions	Rebellions shaped by faith: the Ghost Dance movement in the United States, the Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement in Southern Africa, and the Mahdist wars in Sudan.

The **1857 rebellion in India**, also called the Sepoy Rebellion, was an uprising of Indian soldiers against British East India Company rule. After it was suppressed, Company rule ended and India passed under direct British Crown rule. That consequence is the detail exam questions reach for most often.

Trap. The 1857 rebellion did not end British rule in India. It ended *Company* rule and replaced it with direct rule by the British Crown. If an answer choice says the rebellion won Indian independence, it is wrong by nearly a century.

6.4 Global Economic Development from 1750 to 1900

Industrial demand reorganized economies on other continents. Regions that had fed themselves began producing for distant factories instead.

PATTERN	WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE
Export economies	Economies specializing in raw materials or food for export to industrialized nations, then using the profits to buy finished goods back.
Commercial extraction of natural resources	Large-scale extraction of rubber, guano, and diamonds for world markets, driven by industrial demand in places like the Amazon and the Congo basin.
Industrial crops	Plants grown for factory use rather than food, such as cotton grown in Egypt for textile mills.
Rising urban food demand	Growing industrial cities needed more food, pulling supplies from around the world and reshaping agriculture on other continents.

Trap. Export economies and industrial crops describe what the *producing* region did, not what the industrial power did. If a question describes Egypt growing cotton for British mills, the concept being tested is the export economy on Egypt's side, not British manufacturing.

6.5 Economic Imperialism from 1750 to 1900

Economic imperialism is control by industrialized states and their businesses over other regions' economies, without necessarily ruling them politically. From 1750 to 1900 it was practiced primarily in Asia and Latin America. This is the distinction the whole topic turns on: political control is optional.

Unequal commodity trade gave merchants and companies based in Europe and the United States a distinct advantage. Cotton from South Asia and Egypt flowed to Britain on terms that favored the British side. The **opium trade with China** worked the same way in reverse: opium grown in South Asia and the Middle East was exported to China, where European merchants sold it for enormous profits while fueling addiction and crisis there.

When China tried to stop the opium trade, Britain and later France answered with military force. The **Opium Wars** of the mid-19th century expanded Western economic influence in China. The CED treats them as the lead example of industrialized states using military power for economic ends.

Trap. Economic imperialism does not require colonies. If a question describes a European power dominating China's trade without governing China, that is economic imperialism, not a failed attempt at colonization. The absence of political rule is the point, not a missing piece.

6.6 Causes of Migration in an Interconnected World

Millions of people moved in this period, and the CED organizes the causes into a short list.

Demographic change in both industrialized and unindustrialized societies pushed people out of old patterns of living. **New modes of transportation**, steamships and railroads, made travel faster and cheaper, so more people could move farther, within countries and across borders. Those same ships and trains also made **return migration** possible: many migrants went home periodically or permanently, such as Japanese agricultural workers in the Pacific and Lebanese merchants in the Americas. Because migrants increasingly headed for cities, the century saw significant **19th-century urbanization**.

TYPE OF MIGRATION	HOW FREE WAS THE CHOICE
Voluntary migration	Free choice, often for work. Irish migrants to the United States and Italian industrial workers to Argentina.
Semicoerced migration	Technically voluntary but practically forced by poverty or pressure. Chinese and Indian indentured servitude.
Coerced migration	Forced movement, including enslavement and convict labor, to plantations, mines, and colonies. The new global capitalist economy continued to rely on it.

Indentured servitude bound Chinese and Indian workers to fixed-term contracts, often on plantations or in colonies. The contracts were legal, but conditions were harsh and workers had few rights. **Convict labor** is a different case: it moved prisoners to colonies against their will to work under harsh conditions, which makes it coerced migration, not semicoerced.

Trap. Indentured servitude sits between voluntary and coerced, and questions exploit the blur. Workers signed contracts, so it looks voluntary, but poverty left them little real choice and the conditions were brutal. If a question stresses the contract, it is testing whether you still place it in the semicoerced category.

6.7 Effects of Migration

Migration reshaped both the societies people left and the ones they entered. Because migrants were mostly male, women in the home society took on **shifting gender roles**, filling roles men had occupied. Abroad, migrants built **ethnic enclaves**, communities such as Chinese, Indian, Irish, and Italian neighborhoods that transplanted home cultures into new environments.

Receiving societies did not always welcome newcomers. **Ethnic and racial prejudice against immigrants** ranged from social discrimination to violence. States answered the increased flow of people with **state regulation of immigration**, laws restricting who could enter and settle. Two examples carry the point. The **Chinese Exclusion Act**, an 1882 U.S. law, barred Chinese workers from entering the country and was the first major American law restricting immigration by nationality. The **White Australia policy** restricted non-white immigration to keep the country predominantly British and white.

Trap. The Chinese Exclusion Act and the White Australia policy are both examples of state regulation driven by racial prejudice, but they belong to different countries. If a question asks which state barred Chinese workers in 1882, the answer is the United States. Australia's policy is the parallel example, not the same law.

Confusions That Cost Points

Most missed questions in this unit come from a short list of pairs that look alike under time pressure. Review each pair carefully so you can tell them apart when you see them in a question.

PAIR	HOW TO SEPARATE THEM
Social Darwinism vs Darwin's theory	Darwin described natural selection in nature. Social Darwinism twisted it into an excuse for stronger nations to dominate weaker ones. One is a scientific theory about biology, the other is a political justification dressed up as science.
Settler colonies vs extraction colonies	Settler colonies meant Europeans moving in to stay and taking land. Extraction-focused holdings existed to pull out resources. The difference is whether Europeans settled the land or just shipped its resources out.
Direct resistance vs new peripheral states	Direct resistance fought the empire head-on. New peripheral states built something separate on the empire's edges. One challenged the empire from inside its reach, the other grew up beyond it.
Economic imperialism vs political imperialism	Economic imperialism controls the economy without ruling the territory. Political imperialism governs it. The Opium Wars expanded economic control, not British administration of China.
Voluntary vs coerced vs semicoerced migration	Voluntary is free choice for work. Coerced is forced, including enslavement and convict labor. Semicoerced looks voluntary on paper: indentured contracts signed under poverty that removed the real choice.
Export economies vs economic imperialism	Export economies describe the producing region reorganizing around foreign demand. Economic imperialism describes the industrial power's control over that trade. Same relationship, viewed from opposite ends.
1857 rebellion: what actually changed	It ended East India Company rule and began direct British Crown rule. It did not end British rule in India. The company lost control and the Crown took over.

Practice Questions

Original questions written for this guide in the style of the AP exam. Answers and explanations are on the next page, so complete the questions before checking them.

- 1.** In an 1895 speech, a European politician argues that his nation must acquire colonies because stronger races are destined by nature to rule weaker ones, and resisting this law would weaken the nation. This argument is an example of

 - A. the civilizing mission
 - B. Social Darwinism
 - C. economic imperialism
 - D. nationalist competition for prestige
- 2.** In the late 1800s, large numbers of Europeans permanently settled in New Zealand, built towns, and took control of farmland, displacing the indigenous population. This pattern best illustrates

 - A. a settler colony
 - B. economic imperialism
 - C. an export economy
 - D. a treaty port system
- 3.** Which of the following was the most direct political consequence of the 1857 rebellion in India?

 - A. India gained independence from Britain
 - B. The British East India Company's rule ended and direct Crown rule began
 - C. The Mughal Empire was restored to power
 - D. Indian soldiers were granted equal rank with British officers
- 4.** A historian studying Egypt in the 1800s finds that Egyptian farmers increasingly grew cotton for British textile mills instead of food for local consumption. This development best illustrates

 - A. a settler colony
 - B. an export economy organized around an industrial crop
 - C. voluntary migration to industrial cities
 - D. direct resistance to imperialism

- 5.** The Opium Wars are best understood as an example of
- A. a religious anti-imperial rebellion
 - B. industrialized states using military force to expand economic influence without establishing political rule
 - C. a settler colony displacing an indigenous population
 - D. voluntary migration driven by demographic change
- 6.** In the late 1800s, thousands of Chinese workers signed fixed-term contracts to labor on plantations in Southeast Asia. Though the contracts were legal, the workers faced harsh conditions and had almost no ability to leave. This is best categorized as
- A. voluntary migration
 - B. coerced migration
 - C. semicoerced migration
 - D. return migration
- 7.** The United States Congress passed a law in 1882 barring Chinese workers from entering the country. This law is best understood as an example of
- A. an ethnic enclave
 - B. state regulation of immigration driven by racial prejudice
 - C. shifting gender roles in the home society
 - D. a new state forming on the periphery of an empire
- 8.** The Ghost Dance movement in the United States is best categorized as
- A. a religious anti-imperial rebellion
 - B. an anticolonial movement based on Enlightenment political ideas
 - C. an example of direct state colonial control
 - D. a voluntary migration movement

Answer Key

- 1. B.** The speech applies "nature" and natural law to nations and races, which is Social Darwinism. A is about bringing civilization and education, not nature's law. C is about economic control without political rule, which the speech never mentions. D is about prestige and rivalry, but the argument here rests on biology, not honor.
- 2. A.** Permanent settlement, town-building, farmland seizure, and displacement of indigenous peoples is the settler colony pattern. B requires economic control without political rule, but the Europeans are governing the land they took. C describes a producing region reorganizing around exports, not Europeans moving in. D names a system not in this unit's required content.
- 3. B.** After the rebellion was suppressed, the British East India Company lost its authority and India passed under direct British Crown rule. A is wrong by nearly a century. C reverses the direction of power. D invents a reform that did not happen.
- 4. B.** Egypt reorganized its agriculture around a single crop for foreign mills, which is an export economy built on an industrial crop. A requires Europeans settling permanently, which is not described. C is about people moving, not crops shifting. D is about fighting empire, not farming for it.
- 5. B.** Britain and France used military force to pry open China's trade after China tried to stop the opium traffic, expanding economic influence without taking political control of China. A describes rebellions like the Ghost Dance, not wars launched by imperial powers. C requires permanent settlement. D is about workers moving, not navies fighting.
- 6. C.** Signed contracts make it look voluntary, but harsh conditions and no real ability to leave make it semicoerced. That is the defining blur of indentured servitude. A ignores the lack of real choice. B is for outright force such as enslavement, without even the paper form of a contract. D is about migrants going home, not arriving under contract.
- 7. B.** The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act barred Chinese workers and was the first major U.S. law restricting immigration by nationality, driven by racial prejudice. It is state regulation of immigration. A is a migrant community, not a law. C is about women taking on new roles when men migrate. D is about new states forming, not Congress passing restrictions.
- 8. A.** The Ghost Dance was a faith-shaped movement resisting U.S. expansion, which makes it a religious anti-imperial rebellion. B mislabels it; its ideas were religious, not Enlightenment political theory. C describes states tightening colonial control, the opposite of a rebellion. D confuses a movement of belief with people relocating.

When you check your answers, note which distinction each miss came from. Make a flashcard for that distinction and drill it spaced out over the next few days instead of rereading the whole section. If you missed one of these questions, the same distinction is worth practicing again in Rycal, where the Consequences of Industrialization deck has flashcards for it and more practice questions use the same kinds of traps.

One-Page Recall Check

Say each answer out loud before you look back, and mark the ones you cannot finish. Anything you cannot say out loud yet belongs in your flashcard deck. In Rycal, add those items to the Consequences of Industrialization deck and let spaced review bring them back over the next few days.

- Name the four rationales imperialists used and give the one-sentence version of each.
- Explain why Social Darwinism is a distortion of Darwin rather than an application of him.
- Describe the difference between a settler colony and a colony run mainly for extraction.
- Explain what changed in the Congo when it passed from Leopold II to the Belgian government.
- Name two examples of land-based imperial expansion and two of Asia-Pacific acquisitions.
- Distinguish direct resistance, new peripheral states, and religious rebellions, with one example of each.
- State what the 1857 rebellion changed about who ruled India.
- Explain how an export economy works, using Egyptian cotton as the example.
- Define economic imperialism and explain why it does not require political rule.
- Explain how the opium trade led to the Opium Wars.
- Sort voluntary, semicoerced, and coerced migration, with one example of each.
- Explain why indentured servitude counts as semicoerced rather than voluntary.
- Describe two effects of migration on the societies migrants left.
- Explain what the Chinese Exclusion Act did and what it illustrates about state regulation.

Where to go next. Turn every missed item above into flashcards and drill them spaced out over several days rather than in one sitting. In Rycal, open the Consequences of Industrialization deck under AP World History. The deck covers the terms in this guide, and its practice questions target the same traps named here. If you have a test date, add it in the Test Planner. You can also start your next review with a Brain Dump, then check what you missed against this guide.

Key terms for this unit

Imperialism, Social Darwinism, nationalism, civilizing mission, religious conversion as imperialist rationale, shift from non-state to direct state colonial control, settler colonies, land-based imperial expansion (U.S., Russia, Japan), European empire-building in Africa, Leopold II's Congo (Belgian Congo), European, U.S., and Japanese acquisitions in Asia and the Pacific, anticolonial movements, direct resistance to imperialism, new states on the peripheries of empires, religious anti-imperial rebellions, 1857 rebellion in India (Sepoy Rebellion), export economies, commercial extraction of natural resources, industrial crops, rising urban food demand, economic imperialism, unequal commodity trade, opium trade with China, Opium Wars, demographic change as a migration driver, new modes of transportation, 19th-century urbanization, voluntary migration, coerced labor migration, semicoerced labor migration, indentured servitude (Chinese and Indian), convict labor, return migration, shifting gender roles in migration, ethnic enclaves, ethnic and racial prejudice against immigrants, state regulation of immigration, Chinese Exclusion Act, White Australia policy.

About this guide. Written for Rycal and aligned to the College Board AP World History course framework, Unit 6, topics 6.1-6.7. All questions and explanations are original Rycal writing. Rycal is independent and is not affiliated with or endorsed by the College Board.

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