Claims and Control

Trace the motives, claims, and actions behind colonial rule.

SS24.WH.6a "Trace the origins of late nineteenth century imperialism, imperialist ideology, and colonialism."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two motives for European expansion, circle one claim used to justify it, and number three steps in order from Leopold's agents' treaties to his possession of the Congo.

How the Congo Became a Colony

1. By the late 1800s, European factories needed steady supplies of materials such as rubber and cotton, while merchants sought new customers for manufactured goods. Powerful states also wanted naval stations and overseas territory to show strength against rivals. These goals encouraged a push into Africa, where Europeans had long traded but had not controlled most of the interior. Steamships could travel major rivers, and quinine helped some Europeans survive malaria, though it did not remove the danger. Better firearms gave invading forces an advantage. Economic demand and rivalry supplied reasons to expand; technology made conquest easier.

2. In central Africa, King Leopold II of Belgium sought control of the Congo River basin. His agents signed treaties with local leaders, sometimes using deception or pressure; European governments then treated those papers as proof of authority. At the Berlin Conference of 1884 to 1885, European powers set rules for recognizing claims in Africa without inviting African representatives. The conference did not itself draw every colonial border. Leopold's agents presented their actions as efforts to end slavery and spread Christianity. Such claims helped justify control, even as the drive for resources and status shaped the project.

3. In 1885, the Congo Free State became Leopold's personal possession, not a Belgian government colony. His officials demanded rubber from communities as demand for bicycle tires and other products grew. Armed forces took hostages and used violence to enforce collection quotas, causing severe suffering and many deaths. Officials claimed they were bringing progress, but colonial rule took power away from local people and redirected labor toward exports. Reports of abuses sparked international protests; in 1908, Belgium took over the territory. The Congo case shows how economic aims, competition, and claims of moral duty could lead to foreign rule with harsh consequences.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did industrial needs and new technologies work together to encourage European expansion into Africa?

2. Trace how Leopold's agents' treaties and the Berlin Conference helped turn his bid for control into recognized authority.

3. Which claim did Leopold's agents use to justify their actions, and how does the passage challenge that claim?

4. Trace a chain from the demand for rubber to one consequence for Congo communities.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence historian's account of a different, imaginary late-1800s territory. Trace an economic motive, a political step toward colonial rule, an imperialist justification, and one effect on residents; make clear that the justification is a claim, not a fact.

ANSWER KEY

Claims and Control

GRADE 9 · SS24.WH.6a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two motives for European expansion, circle one claim used to justify it, and number three steps in order from Leopold's agents' treaties to his possession of the Congo. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did industrial needs and new technologies work together to encourage European expansion into Africa?	**Factories wanted materials and merchants wanted customers. Steamships, quinine, and better firearms made travel and conquest easier.**
2	Trace how Leopold's agents' treaties and the Berlin Conference helped turn his bid for control into recognized authority.	**Agents obtained treaties from local leaders, sometimes through deception or pressure. European governments treated the treaties as proof of authority, and the Berlin Conference set rules for recognizing claims.**
3	Which claim did Leopold's agents use to justify their actions, and how does the passage challenge that claim?	**They claimed they would end slavery and spread Christianity. The passage shows that the drive for resources and status also shaped the project and that colonial rule brought coercion and violence.**
4	Trace a chain from the demand for rubber to one consequence for Congo communities.	**Growing demand for rubber led officials to demand it from communities. Armed forces used hostages and violence to enforce quotas, causing severe suffering and many deaths.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A European state wants palm oil for its factories and a port to outdo its rivals. It pressures local leaders to sign agreements, then claims the coast as its colony. Officials say foreign rule will bring education and peace, but this is their justification, not proof of benefit. Residents lose control of their land and must work to produce exports.

Accept other passage-supported motives and justifications. For Part 3, look for a plausible causal chain that distinguishes a ruler's claim from an effect on residents.