

Understanding and Interrogating Dominant Culture

Unit by Friendship Public Charter School team,
part of the 2021 cohort of *The 1619 Project* Education Network

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Questions related to [“Standardizing Imperialism” from *Rethinking Schools*](#)

Definition of *imperialism*: Imperialism is the **idea of expanding one's territory and**

cultural beliefs and practices by taking over another country. This is done by creating colonies or areas that have been taken over.

In the late 1800s, the United States practiced imperialism by taking over the modern-day countries the Philippines and Puerto Rico, as well as the current US state Hawaii. Today, these former colonies are either part of the US or heavily influenced and shaped by the US.

1. What did the author of this piece want to do re: standards that states require schools to use when they teach all courses, including social studies? (paragraphs 1-3)
2. The state of California has the most widely used, and some of the most respected, social studies standards in the country. What is the author's critical opinion of the California standards? (paragraph 3)
3. The author writes that, “...the United States uses its military and economic muscle to secure markets, natural resources, strategic sites, and energy to fuel its military, industries, and lifestyle.” In your own words, what do you think this means? (paragraph 4)
4. Create a t-chart and label the left side “How standards teach about indigenous people in the U.S.” and label the right side “A different perspective”. Compare these two by bulleting a few examples. (paragraphs 5-8)
5. The author claims that the United States government has a policy of “Us vs. Them” when viewing other nations, particularly those populated by people who are Muslims and/or Black and Brown. Briefly summarize 2 to 3 examples of how the author feels this is taught in the California Social Studies State Standards. (paragraphs 14-18)
6. While the author writes that the California standards describe the contributions, “...Black men and women made to the economic, political, and cultural development of the nation....” what does she say that the same standards fail to do? (paragraph 19)
7. At the end of the article, what are some of the things the author states that social studies teachers need to do when teaching their students? (paragraph 33)