IMPERIALISM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA
The Motive for Imperialism

As the Europeans did in Africa, they rushed to divide up Southeast Asia.

These lands form part of the Pacific Rim (the countries that border the Pacific Ocean).

Western nations desired the Pacific Rim lands due to their strategic location along the sea route to China.
The Imperialist Countries

**France** captured Saigon in 1859, and extended her colony to include Annam, Tonkin, Laos, and Cambodia.

**The British** ruled Burma from the late 19th century until 1948. They also governed the Malay Peninsula as the Straits Settlements until 1957.

**The Dutch** colonized the Indonesian archipelago during two periods: 1605-1799 by the Dutch East India Company and 1825-1930’s by the Dutch government.

**Portugal** occupied Malacca from 1511 to 1641, when it was taken over by the Dutch; and continued their rule over Timor.

**Spain** governed The Philippines from 1565 until 1898, when Spain was defeated by the United States in the Spanish-American War.

**The United States**, after a peace settlement with Spain in 1898, occupied the Philippines until her independence in 1946.
The lands of Southeast Asia were perfect for plantation agriculture. As these products, such as coffee, bananas, and sugar cane, became more important, Europeans raced to claim the lands.
Early in the 18th century, the Dutch East India Company established control over most of the 3,000 mile long chain of Indonesian islands. The Dutch continually added to their territories in southeast Asia. They eventually gained control of present-day Indonesia (Dutch East Indies).

The Dutch treated Indonesia as their home.

- They lived and worked there.

Dutch established a rigid class system.

- Dutch → rich & educated Indonesians → plantation workers.

Farmers were forced to plant specified crops on 1/5 of their land.
The British took the Malay Peninsula and Singapore to compete against the Dutch. They also controlled the Strait of Malacca which is the key ocean route between India and China.
The importance of Singapore

Singapore became vital to the British because it was a needed way-station for Indo-Chinese trade. The opening of Suez Canal and the increased demand for tin and rubber made it geographically strategic. The British encouraged Chinese immigration as workers (coolies). The Malays then became a minority.
The French control Indochina

The French took over Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, the area became known as **Indochina**. The French used **direct colonial management**. They did not encourage local industry.

Rice and rubber were the main cash crops. Everything was exported to France. This created resistance from the local peasant people.
Siam (Thailand) Remained Independent

Despite losing some territory, Siam remained a Neutral Zone between British controlled Burma and French controlled Indochina.

They built their own modern infrastructure, modernized education and the government under the reign of King Mongkut and his son.

Government reforms reduced racist treatment, social turmoil and economic exploitation.
Because Americans had fought for their independence from Britain, most of them disliked the idea of colonizing other nations. Some Americans felt it was their duty to help America become a world power by colonizing. Others felt that colonizing would open new markets and trade possibilities.
As a result of the Spanish-American War in 1898, the United States acquired the Philippine Islands, Puerto Rico and Guam. President McKinley used Social Darwinism to “educate Filipinos and uplift and Christianize them”. He promised the Filipinos independence after the Spanish-American War, but it did not happen!
The United States had to fight an uprising by Filipino nationalists but defeated them in 1902. The U.S. then promised to prepare the Filipinos for self-rule. They built roads, railroads, hospitals and school systems. Businessmen encouraged growing cash crops instead of food crops which led to local food shortages.
Hawaii becomes a Republic

U.S. interest in Hawaii began around 1790 when Hawaii was a port on the way to China and East India.

Americans corporations established sugar cane plantations and it changed Hawaii’s economy.

By 1850, sugar cane accounted for 75% of Hawaii’s wealth
In 1890, the McKinley Tariff Act passed by the set off a crisis in the islands. The act eliminated the tariffs on all sugar entering the United States.

Sugar from Hawaii was no longer cheaper than sugar produced elsewhere. This cut into the sugar producers’ profits. Some U.S. business leaders pushed for annexation (adding of the territory to the U.S.) of Hawaii.

Making Hawaii a part of the U.S. meant that Hawaiian sugar could be sold for greater profits because American producers got an extra two cents a pound from the U.S. government.
Queen Liliuokalani was the ruler of Hawaii who called for a new constitution. She wanted to give power back to the Hawaiians and away from the wealthy American businessmen.

The U.S. businessmen plotted to overthrow her. She was removed from power in 1893 and Hawaii was annexed in 1898.
The Effects of Imperialism

Colonization brought mixed results in Southeast Asia.

Economies grew based on cash crops and exported goods.

Education, infrastructure, communications, health and sanitation drastically improved.

Millions of people migrated and were forced to work on plantations and the mines in Southeast Asia.

This mixing of cultures led to the racial and religious tensions in this area as seen today.
In Southeast Asia, economies grew based on cash crops or goods such as tin and rubber that could be sold on the world market. Roads, harbors, and rail systems linked areas and improved communication and transportation. These improvements were more for the benefit of European business than the local population. However, education, health, and sanitation improved!
Political changes unified areas at the cost of weaker local leaders and governments. Unlike other colonial areas, millions of people from other areas of Asia and the world migrated to work on plantations and in the mines in Southeast Asia. This migration changed the cultural and racial makeup of the area. Southeast Asia became a melting pot of Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and Buddhists. The resulting cultural changes often led to racial and religious clashes that are still seen today.