

## Examining Primary Sources: Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden" (1899)

Rudyard Kipling, a British writer, wrote this poem following the U.S.A.'s acquisition of the Philippines following the Spanish-American War. Read the poem and answer the questions that follow.

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Take up the White Man's burden—  
Send forth the best ye breed—  
Go bind your sons to exile  
To serve your captives' need;  
To wait in heavy harness,  
On fluttered folk and wild—  
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,  
Half-devil and half-child.

Take up the White Man's burden—  
In patience to abide,  
To veil the threat of terror  
And check the show of pride;  
By open speech and simple,  
An hundred times made plain  
To seek another's profit,  
And work another's gain.

Take up the White Man's burden—  
The savage wars of peace—  
Fill full the mouth of Famine

And bid the sickness cease;  
And when your goal is nearest  
The end for others sought,  
Watch sloth and heathen Folly  
Bring all your hopes to nought.

Take up the White Man's burden—  
No tawdry rule of kings,  
But toil of serf and sweeper—  
The tale of common things.  
The ports ye shall not enter,  
The roads ye shall not tread,  
Go mark them with your living,  
And mark them with your dead.

Take up the White Man's burden—  
And reap his old reward:  
The blame of those ye better,  
The hate of those ye guard—  
The cry of hosts ye humour  
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light:—

"Why brought he us from bondage,  
Our loved Egyptian night?"

Take up the White Man's burden—  
Ye dare not stoop to less—  
Nor call too loud on Freedom  
To cloke your weariness;  
By all ye cry or whisper,  
By all ye leave or do,  
The silent, sullen peoples  
Shall weigh your gods and you.

Take up the White Man's burden—  
Have done with childish days—  
The lightly proffered laurel,  
The easy, ungrudged praise.  
Comes now, to search your manhood  
Through all the thankless years  
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom,  
The judgment of your peers!

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Questions
How are imperialized people viewed by the writer? Give specific examples.
How and why does the author express that imperialist nations are helping imperialized nations?
Imagine that you are a Filipino or other native resident of an imperialized nation. How might you react to this poem?
Imagine that you are an American or other citizen of an imperializing nation. How might you react to this poem?