

America Becomes a World Power

*The Emergence of Modern
America (1890–1930)*



Expansionist policies

Territorial acquisitions

Intervention

Thematic Icons



Economics and business



Geography and environment



Historical concepts and questions



Politics, government and citizenship



Society and culture



War, diplomacy and foreign policy

Icons: For more detailed instructions, see the *User Guide*



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page



By the end of this section, you will learn about the expansionist policies of the U.S. and be able to answer these key questions:

- Why did the U.S. want to trade with Japan?
- What were justifications for American expansion?
- How did different people feel about imperialist policies?



Looking back timeline



In order to contextualize the period in which America became a world power, use this timeline to recap previous key historical events. Either press on a date or drag the pointer along the timeline to find out information about what happened in each year.

Press **start** to begin.

start





A changing outlook



For most of the time until the end of the 19th century, the U.S. was quite isolated in terms of **international relations**.

Geographically speaking, the U.S. was separated from the major **colonial** powers of Europe. Politically speaking, it had been more focused on internal affairs; as a young nation, there was much to do in settling the frontier and industrializing.



That all began to change in the latter part of the 19th century.

What do you know about U.S. involvement in current international affairs? Is it involved? Why is this?



As an industrializing nation, the United States was pushing the boundaries in technologies and innovation. The nation began thinking about new markets for surplus goods and trade became increasingly important.



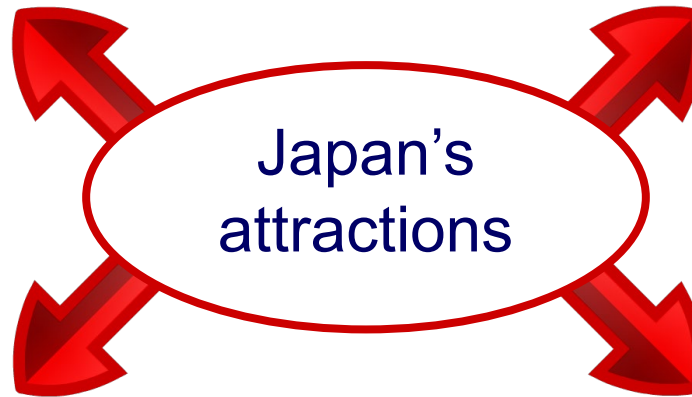
One key target market was the Far East, particularly Japan. With powerful steam ships, Commodore **Mathew Perry** left Norfolk, Virginia in 1852 and took the eastern route to Japan, past the Cape of Good Hope, India, and China.



There were various reasons for President **Millard Fillmore** to target Japan as a new market.

Protect sailors from cruel treatment by the Japanese

A new and wealthy market for trading surplus goods



Opportunities to trade in China and other places en route

Chance to create a coaling station for refueling ships





Commodore Matthew Perry was the man sent to the Far East to open up Japan to trade. He also made earlier voyages as the U.S. was expanding.

Watch the animation to find out about his travels.

Press **start** to begin.

start





Commodore Perry's voyage to Japan was recorded by Japanese artists, as well as by an artist traveling with the American fleet. The images show a different interpretation of each society and its culture.

Drag each picture to the correct place, depending on whether it is an American or a Japanese image.

Press **start** to begin.

start



How has cultural bias affected both sets of images?





Although the U.S. was successful in opening Japan to trade, the Civil War and then Reconstruction caused the U.S. to focus on internal affairs for a while.

Nevertheless, wheels had been set in motion, and the U.S. had proven itself to be capable of applying significant military pressure abroad in order to gain access and favorable trade negotiations.



This happened increasingly with its changed outlook towards the rest of the world in the latter part of the 20th century.







The Monroe Doctrine



The basis for U.S. foreign policy was the **Monroe Doctrine**, a declaration made by President James Monroe in 1823.



It stated that the American continents are free and not subject to European power



It also stated that any attempt by European powers to stretch their influence into the western hemisphere would be considered dangerous.

How has the Monroe Doctrine been applied over time?



During this period of expansion, a variety of different reasons were given for American foreign policy.

Press the buttons to find out about different justifications for expansion.

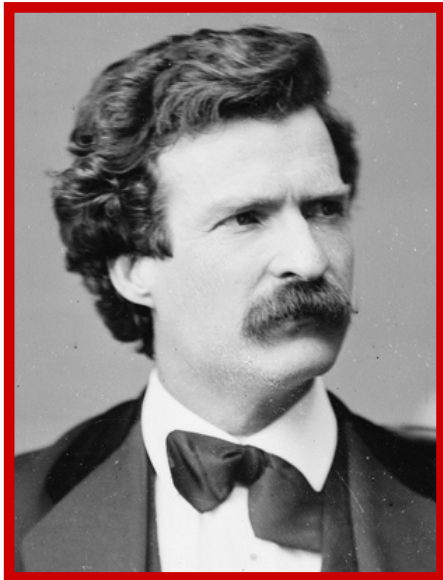
Press **start** to begin.

start





Some Americans were appalled by the idea of expansion and took up an **anti-imperialist** position. Had the U.S. itself not recently been liberated from a colonial power that taxed it and controlled it without representation? To some, like **Mark Twain**, doing the same to others was immoral.



“I have read carefully the treaty of Paris, and I have seen that we do not intend to free, but to subjugate the people of the Philippines. We have gone there to conquer, not to redeem.”

Can you find out how Mark Twain's views on imperialism changed over time?



There were many different opinions about America's voyages abroad. Imperialists believed that the U.S. should spread its doctrines to others, though people had different ideas about why expansion was good or bad.

Can you match the following terms to the statements that best express them?

Press **start** to begin.

start

