

# The effects of manifest destiny essay sample



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The idea of Manifest Destiny, which claimed the United States was meant to expand to the Pacific coast, was transformed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries into imperialism. After the Civil War, American expansion meant warfare against Native Americans in the West, culminating in 1890 with the massacre at Wounded Knee.

At the same time, the European powers (mainly Britain, France, Germany, and Belgium) were rapidly building empires in Africa and Asia, and some Americans believed that the United States would lose international standing if it did not follow suit. Manifest Destiny's drive for expansion combined with a desire to compete with these new empires, along with racist notions that twisted Darwin's ideas and claimed that people of color were inferior and needed white rule.

Initially, the United States took a more active role in Latin American affairs, adding a new twist to the Monroe Doctrine by barring European interference there while coming to dominate the region's politics and economics. In addition, it increased its influence over Hawaii, as American merchants overthrew the native ruler and created a republic in 1893; the United States annexed the islands in 1898, thus starting the transition from Manifest Destiny to outright imperialism.

The turning point was the Spanish-American War, a short conflict in which the United States won the former Spanish colonies of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines, where American forces put down the Filipino independence movement, relying on imperialism's racist ideas to justify taking over the islands to establish a foothold in Asia. By 1915, Manifest Destiny had long

since been completed and had become imperialism; the United States was an imperial power, illustrating how its desire for expansion had turned into overseas conquest and competition with Europe's empires.