

## The White Man's Burden (Rudyard Kipling, 1899)

Original title: "The White Man's Burden: The United States and the Philippine Islands"

Kipling composed this for Queen Victoria's jubilee in 1897, but replaced it with his poem prayer "Recessional." "White Man's Burden" was published two years later, altered to fit the theme of the American imperialist colonization of the Philippines, recently won from Spain in the Spanish-American War. The term "White Man's Burden" was subsequently used both seriously and ironically, such as in the cartoons on the right side of the page.

Take up the White Man's burden-- 1  
Send forth the best ye breed--  
Go, bind your sons to exile  
To serve your captives' need;  
To wait, in heavy harness, 5  
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, 10  
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 15  
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; 20  
And when your goal is nearest  
(The end for others sought)  
Watch sloth and heathen folly  
Bring all your hope to nought.

Take up the White Man's burden-- 25  
No iron 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, 30  
Go, make 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 35  
The hate of those ye guard--



"The White (?) Man's Burden"  
(Life magazine, March 1899)

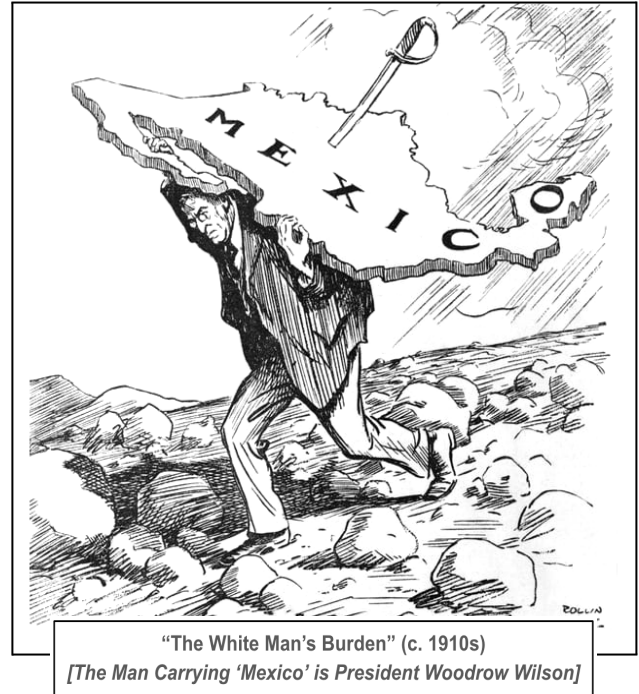


"The White Man's Burden." - Detroit Journal, Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>, 1899  
{The building in the distance is labeled "School House"}

The cry of hosts ye humour  
(Ah, slowly!) toward the light:--  
"Why brought ye us from bondage,  
Our loved Egyptian night?" 40

Take up the White Man's burden--  
Ye dare not stoop to less--  
Nor call too loud on Freedom  
To cloak your weariness.  
By all ye will or whisper, 45  
By all ye leave or do,  
The silent sullen peoples  
Shall weigh your God and you.

Take up the White Man's burden!  
Have done with childish days-- 50  
The lightly-proffered laurel,  
The easy ungrudged praise.  
Come now, to search your manhood  
Through all the thankless years,  
Cold, edged with dear-bought wisdom, 55  
The judgement of your peers



Choose THREE vocab words from this poem that seem pretty important to understand but which most people wouldn't know. Define/explain each one in plain, simple English:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Identify and explain TWO segments or lines which describe possible benefits of imperialism for native peoples:

- 4.
- 5.

Identify and explain TWO segments or lines which assert the biological, cultural, or other sorts of inferiority of those being impacted:

- 6.
- 7.

Identify and explain TWO segments or lines which indicate what makes imperialism such a “burden” for those doing the imperializing:

8.

9.

Identify and explain the use of PERSONIFICATION in the third stanza (what is it and why do it here?) -

10.

Identify and explain the ALLUSION in the fifth stanza (what is it and why use it here?) *{HINT: Consider referencing the Old Testament of the Bible - maybe Exodus 16 or Numbers 11 - to help you with your response.}*

11.

Identify and explain a few segments or lines you’d highlight if you wished to argue that Kipling was being entirely sincere – that he supported imperialism:

12.

13.

Identify and explain a few segments or lines you’d highlight if you wished to argue that Kipling was being ironic or sarcastic – that he didn’t necessarily support imperialism:

14.

15.

BONUS: Identify 2-3 lines you’d like to understand better or about which you’d have specific questions IF YOU CARED DEEPLY about better understanding this poem. Be clear about what you don’t understand for each.