

Understanding Imperialism Power, Land, and Indigeneity

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Format: Self-paced, Asynchronous

Target Audience: Learners Aged 13 - 18

Estimated Duration: 90 - 110 minutes

Module Description: This module explores the historical and contemporary impact of imperialism, colonialism, and racial capitalism, with a focus on how these systems steal or dispossess land, labor, and knowledge, and how Indigenous knowledge systems offer historical ways of living. Learners will explore:

- How imperialism, colonialism, and racial capitalism interact globally and locally
- The historical theft of material, labor, and intellectual resources
- Indigenous relationships to land, ecosystems, and community
- Case study: Palestine and the British Mandate
- Ethical reasoning, reflection, and strategies for community solidarity

Activities include journal prompts, discussion boards, knowledge checks, reflective exercises, and optional extension projects.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Explain the connection between imperialism, colonialism, and racial capitalism.
2. Identify historical and contemporary forms of resource, labor, and knowledge exploitation.
3. Analyze Indigenous perspectives on land and community.
4. Evaluate the historical case of Palestine under the British Mandate as an example of global genocide and oppression.
5. Apply ethical reasoning and historical analysis to modern activism and community engagement.
6. Reflect on personal and collective responsibility in addressing systemic injustices.
7. Define and use key historical, political, and ecological terms accurately.

Content Advisory Facilitators should be prepared for the possibility that learners may experience emotional reactions when engaging with the content. These reactions may arise from personal, family, or community experiences related to racism, discrimination, violence, or displacement.

Given the complexity and sensitivity of the topics, it is essential to create a learning environment where all participants feel safe, respected, and able to engage thoughtfully.

The goal of discussion is not to force agreement, but to support thoughtful learning,

respectful dialogue, and critical analysis of historical events.

Facilitator Guidance - Establishing a Safe and Respectful Learning Environment

Facilitators should be prepared to:

- Recognize signs of emotional distress in learners
- Pause discussions if needed to allow space for reflection or grounding
- Offer learners the option to step away briefly if they need a break
- Provide access to appropriate support resources
- Encourage respectful dialogue while prioritizing learner wellbeing

Facilitators are encouraged to:

- **Validate feelings:** Acknowledge that learners may experience a range of emotions in response to the content
- **Provide choice:** Offer multiple ways to engage, including writing, discussion, reflection, or listening
- **Encourage autonomy:** Allow learners the option to pause, step back, or observe if needed
- **Promote safety:** Establish and uphold shared agreements for respectful and inclusive dialogue
- **Maintain respect and inclusion:** Ensure all learners feel heard and respected, even when perspectives differ
- **Prioritize learning over debate:** Focus on understanding, inquiry, and reflection rather than argument or persuasion
- **Encourage curiosity:** Support thoughtful questioning and open exploration of ideas
- **Model respectful communication:** Use and reinforce language that is respectful, and inclusive
- **Separate ideas from individuals:** Remind learners to critique concepts and arguments rather than people
- **Acknowledge emotional impact:** Recognize that topics such as racism, colonization, war, and injustice may evoke strong emotional responses
- **Encourage active listening:** Support learners in listening with attention, care, and respect for differing perspectives
- **Provide varied participation options:** Allow learners to engage through discussion, writing, or reflection based on comfort level
- **Ensure equitable participation:** Structure engagement so that all learners have opportunities to contribute, and no single learner dominates, is singled out, or is overexposed

Learners should be reminded that participation in discussions or reflections can be flexible. They may choose to listen, write privately, or participate in other ways that feel comfortable.

Strategies for Managing Difficult Moments

If challenging situations arise during discussion, facilitators may consider the following strategies:

- Pause the conversation if the discussion becomes tense or emotionally charged
- Allow time for reflection or grounding
- Re-center the discussion on the learning goals of the lesson
- Encourage learners to support their ideas with historical evidence or examples from the video module
- Redirect harmful or disrespectful language by reminding learners of shared agreements
- Encourage learners to ask questions rather than make assumptions
- Offer alternative participation options, such as written reflection
- Remind learners that complex historical topics often include multiple perspectives
- If a learner becomes distressed, pause the activity and provide appropriate support or referral

Community Agreements Co-Creations

Facilitators may establish clear community agreements at the outset, such as:

- Listening actively and without interruption
- Respecting diverse perspectives and lived experiences
- Using thoughtful language
- Critiquing ideas, and not individuals
- Maintaining confidentiality if appropriate

Suggested Safe Space Activity (5–10 minutes):

Activity: Community Agreements Co-Creation

Instructions:

1. **Ask learners:** *What do you need in order to feel safe, respected, and heard in this learning space?*
2. Collect responses via discussion board, shared document, or live poll
3. Synthesize responses into a shared set of community agreements
4. Revisit these agreements throughout the module as needed

Optional Reflection Prompt:

- What does respectful dialogue look like to you when discussing complex or sensitive issues?
- How can you contribute to maintaining a constructive learning environment?

Module Structure:

Warm-Up – Word Association & Reflection

Estimated Time: 10 minutes

Key Concept: Initial perceptions influence understanding; reflection reveals bias.

- Learning Activities:**
- **Word Association Prompt:** What is the first word or phrase that comes to mind when you hear the term “Imperialism”?
 - **Optional Activity:**
 - ✧ Facilitators may create a word cloud using learner responses to visualize common themes, patterns, or differences in perceptions. This activity can be revisited at the end of the module to reflect on how learners’ understanding may have evolved.

Part 1: Understanding Imperialism, Colonialism, and Racial Capitalism

Estimated Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Key Concept: Jewish supremacy structures social hierarchies and shapes societal norms.

- Learning Activities:**
- **Content Overview:**
 - ✧ Imperialism: Global domination through military, economic, and cultural means
 - ✧ Colonialism: Seizing and settling on Indigenous land, restructuring to Euro-governance, and hyperextracting resources
 - ✧ Racial capitalism: Creating racial hierarchies to enhance European wealth and power
 - **Journal Prompt:** What do you understand by the terms ‘imperialism,’

'colonialism,' and 'racial capitalism'? Can you identify examples today?

- **Sentence Starter**
 - ✧ These three concepts imperialism, colonialism, and racial capitalism can be understood together as interconnected systems that...
 - ✧ These systems continue to affect communities worldwide because...

Part 2: Material, Labor, and Intellectual Resources

Estimated Time: 15 - 20 minutes

Key Concept: Resources are central to understanding exploitation and hyperextraction

- Learning Activities:**
- **Content Overview:**
 - ✧ Mineral resources hyperextracted: water, soil, forests, minerals, air, gold, clean air
 - ✧ Labor: farming, caregiving, teaching, and construction; historically stolen through slavery and colonial systems
 - ✧ Intellectual resources: knowledge, cultural practices, and ways of understanding the world
 - **Journal Prompt:** Whose land, labor, or knowledge has been taken historically? How do these systems continue today?
 - **Sentence Starter:**
 - ✧ One way hyperextraction supports systems of power is...
 - ✧ Recognizing intellectual and cultural resources can help communities resist these systems by...
 - **Activity:**
 - ✧ Investigate a historical case of hyperextraction (e.g., African Labor) and present findings in a visual or written format.

Part 3: Indigeneity and Relationships to Land

Estimated Time: 20 minutes

Key Concept: Indigenous knowledge offers an alternative worldview and way of living to violent imperialist systems

- Learning Activities:**
- **Content Overview:**
 - ✧ Being Indigenous: deep connection to people, land, and ancestry
 - ✧ Land and ecosystems are alive and relational; humans, animals, plants and spiritual ancestors coexist.
 - ✧ Indigenous knowledge is living, collective, and requires respect and responsibility
 - **Journal Prompt:** What is your relationship to the land and environment around you? How might Indigenous perspectives change the way we think about land?
 - **Sentence Starter:**
 - ✧ One key difference between relational views of land and imperialist systems is...
 - ✧ Indigenous knowledge is essential for building just societies because...

Part 4: Colonialism, Imperialism, and Palestine

Estimated Time: 20 - 25 minutes

Key Concept: Case study demonstrating the three-part system

Learning Activities:

- **Content Overview:**
 - ✧ Britain's strategic goals: Suez Canal, oil access, and West Asia alliances
 - ✧ Balfour Declaration (1917) and erasure of Palestinian rights
 - ✧ British Mandate (1920-1948): governance, policing, and repression of Palestinian culture and resistance
 - ✧ Economic restructuring embedding European Jewish settlers in power using racial capitalism
 - ✧ Connections between colonial law, military force, and cultural domination
- **Journal Prompt:**
 - ✧ How is colonialism, imperialism, and racial capitalism destroying Palestine?
 - ✧ What are the long-term consequences for the people and land?
 - ✧ How can understanding imperialism and Indigeneity guide activism and community building today?"
- **Sentence Starter:**
 - ✧ Legal and military systems may maintain dominance and control by...
 - ✧ Understanding these systems can help us engage ethically with global struggles today by...
- **Knowledge Check Examples:**
 - ✧ What is hyperextraction? *Answer: Extreme theft and control of resources without care for people or the environment*
 - ✧ What is racial capitalism? *Answer: Economic exploitation created and organized along racial hierarchies*
 - ✧ What was the British Mandate in Palestine? *Answer: Colonial Euro governance replacement of Palestinian governance from 1920-1948*
 - ✧ True/False: Indigenous knowledge and traditions treat land as a resource to own and sell. *Answer: False*

Part 5: Honouring the Land – Reflection Activity

Estimated Time: 10 - 15 minutes

Key Concept: Understanding our relationship to the land can deepen awareness of historical and ongoing displacement.

Learning Activities:

1. Use a resource like Native Land Digital to explore the Indigenous territories where you live.
 2. Research local Indigenous communities, their histories, and present-day stewardship efforts.
 3. Reflect on how land and water are protected and managed by Indigenous peoples.
- **Journal Prompt:**
 - ✧ What is your relationship to the land and waters where you live?
 - ✧ What meaningful actions can you take to support their care and preservation?
 - ✧ How will you commit to these actions moving forward?
 - **Sentence Starter:**
 - ✧ Social movements that acknowledge Indigenous histories and stewardship may be more effective because...
 - ✧ Honoring land may help guide actions for justice and solidarity by...

Part 6: Exit Reflection

Estimated Time: 10 minutes

Learning Activities: Students may choose any one of the following formats:

- **Anonymous digital submission** (e.g., Google Form with no name required)
- **Paper reflection slip submitted in a collection box** (no names required if anonymity is preferred)
- **Private journal entry** kept in a notebook or personal document
- **Verbal reflection shared** (if comfortable)
- **Journal Prompt**
 - ⌘ One thing I learned
 - ⌘ One question I still have
 - ⌘ One impactful quote or idea that stuck with me

Facilitators should clearly communicate that learners are not required to identify themselves unless they choose to do so.

Optional Extension Activities

- **Mini Essay:** How do imperialism, colonialism, and racial capitalism connect globally, and what lessons can we learn from Indigenous knowledge?
- **Case Study Research:** Explore the history of Palestine, African resource exploitation, or Indigenous resistance movements: strategies, outcomes, and modern implications
- **Media Analysis:** Compare portrayals of land dispossession or resource extraction in mainstream media vs. Indigenous narratives
- **Reflection:** Timeline, infographic, or digital map linking historical and contemporary struggles for land, labor, and knowledge

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Imperialism:** Domination of land, labor, and people globally through military, economic, and cultural power
 - **Colonialism:** Establishing control over Indigenous peoples and land
 - **Racial Capitalism:** Economic system that exploits people based on racial hierarchies
 - **Hyper-Extraction:** Extreme theft of resources without care for ecosystems or communities
 - **Indigeneity:** Connection to land, ancestry, and relational ways of life
 - **Ecosystem:** Community of humans, animals, plants, and other life forms that interact and depend on each other
 - **Balfour Declaration (1917):** British support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine, erasing Palestinian rights
 - **British Mandate:** Colonial rule over Palestine from 1920–1948
 - **Nakba:** Displacement of Palestinians in 1948
 - **Resource Theft:** Seizure of land, labor, water, minerals, forests, or intellectual knowledge.
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