

Lesson 1

European and Japanese Power

Conceptual Understanding

10.4a Note that Fabri avoids the question of whether imperialism is justified morally. Rather, he compares the rights of Germany and other countries.

Source: *New York State Grades 9–12 Social Studies Framework.*

Read Closely:

Direct Questioning

Fabri's opening sentence is a statement phrased as a question. Writers use this technique to draw readers into their essay.

Read Closely:

Problem and Solution

Fabri uses attempts to appeal to readers by organizing his writing as a problem and a solution. Readers who recognize the problem might also agree with his solution.

Read Closely: Comparison

Fabri compares his Germany of 1879 to Germany of the past, comparisons that his readers would be familiar with.

Read Closely: Call to Action

Note how Fabri makes an emotional appeal to his readers. Germans need to colonize to make the country great.

Portugal, Spain, France, and Great Britain led the European states in seizing colonies around the world. Germany was slow to join the competition. Divided in many small states until unification in 1871, Germany was too fragmented to claim colonies in the Americas or south Asia. To some Germans, establishing colonies in Africa and east Asia was essential to national pride and prosperity.

Skill: Read a Primary Source

Friedrich Fabri, "Does Germany Need Colonies?," 1879

Should not the German nation, so seaworthy, so industrially and commercially minded, more than other peoples geared to agricultural colonization, and possessing a rich and available supply of labor, all these to a greater extent than other modern culture-peoples, should not this nation successfully pave a new path on the road of imperialism? We are convinced beyond doubt that the colonial question has become a matter of life-or-death for the development of Germany. Colonies will have a salutary [positive] effect on our economic situation as well as on our entire national progress.

Here is a solution for many of the problems that face us. In this new Reich [new imperial Germany] of ours there is so much bitterness, so much unfruitful, sour, and poisoned political wrangling, that the opening of a new, promising road of national effort will act as a kind of liberating influence. Our national spirit will be renewed, a gratifying thing, a great asset. A people that has been led to a high level of power can maintain its historical position only as long as it understands and proves itself to be the bearer of the culture-mission. At the same time, this is the only way to stability and to the growth of national welfare, the necessary foundation for a lasting expansion of power.

At one time Germany contributed only intellectual and literary activity to the tasks of our century. That era is now over. As a people we have become politically minded and powerful. But if political power becomes the primal [most important] goal of a nation, it will lead to harshness, even to barbarism. We must be ready to serve for the ideal, moral, and economic culture-tasks of our time. The French national-economist, Leroy Beaulieu, closed his work on colonization with these words: "That nation is the greatest in the world which colonizes most; if she does not achieve that rank today, she will make it tomorrow."

Source: Friedrich Fabri, "Does Germany Need Colonies?," 1879