

Austin Che

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Period 3

Mrs. Rogers

What I know, assume or imagine

I looked quickly over the list of countries. I didn't really care which country I had to write about. I saw that all but two of the choices were countries in Africa. I looked for countries that no one had signed up for and found a country that I knew very little about. Ghana seemed an interesting name so I signed up to write about it.

I know that Ghana is a small country on the western part of Africa. I think that the British had control of Ghana during the Age of Imperialism. I would like to know why Britain took control of Ghana and how the British used Ghana for military and economic purposes. Also, I would want to find out about the differences in Ghana before and after imperialism to study the effects of imperialism.

To find this information, I will first look in the encyclopedias that I have at home. Because my history teacher has said that these countries has changed names, I will need to find all the names that this country has ever had. Then I will find books at libraries and search through them to find information about Ghana under imperialistic rule.

The search

I started my search in the school library. I didn't have much choice since my entire class went to research their country. I started with some binders that had information on every country. These pamphlets had a lot of information that I didn't need. The information about the flag, government, and population was useless considering I needed to write about Ghana through imperialism.

The most important information I found was that Ghana used to be called the Gold Coast until 1957 when it declared its independence. I also found that the Portuguese landed in 1470 and that the Gold Coast became a British colony in the late 1800's.

I was still in the library and didn't know what to do. The computers were being used and I couldn't find much other information. Luckily, my teacher asked if I wanted to try DIALOG. I looked under some historical abstracts and looked for the words "Ghana" and "British". I found an abstract that described the British decolonization from the Accra revolt in February 1948 to independence in 1957.

Ghanaian policy increased in significance and effectiveness as the local ruling class gained power which started happening as independence came closer. British influence over the social elite was notable (*L'indipendenza del Ghana*) which shows that the British probably had a great deal of influence over this country.

This information still didn't tell whether Ghana was helped or hurt by imperialism so I went to the Cupertino library to find some books. I could only find two books on Ghana. Ghana didn't seem to be a very popular subject. The first book had a section on history and government and the other book had information about Ghana when it was a colony.

I started reading the first book. I quickly skipped over the information on Ghana that took place before the 1800's. I found the section on colonization of the Gold Coast. Great Britain declared the northern territories of Ghana a protectorate in 1900. What did this mean?

I read on and also found that modern Ghana is made up of the Gold Coast colony, the Asante region, the Northern Territories, and British Togoland.

Ghana achieved its independence on March 6, 1957 from Great Britain. Ghana was the first black colony of British Africa to gain independence and also helped along the independence movement in other colonies (Ghana in pictures p. 32).

This surprised me since I had no idea that Ghana was actually special compared with all the other colonies. I had thought that Ghana was just some small country in Africa that had very little impact on the rest of the world.

However, so far I had not read much information on the conditions in Ghana before or after imperialism. Luckily, I found some useful information in the second book.

The Europeans wanted to convert the native people to Christianity and in the process made the Ghanaians give up many of their traditions in crafts and folktales. However, many Ghanaians received educations and moved into professional jobs as missionaries, teachers, administrators, military officers, doctors, and journalists (Enchantment p. 44).

I don't think this is a fair trade. The British didn't ask Ghanaians if they wanted to be educated. The culture of the Ghanaians should be more important than the education of a few people.

In the late 1800s, European powers wanted many colonies. Underdeveloped and undefended territories had raw materials which the Europeans needed for their industries.

What did Ghana have? I found that the most important thing Ghana has is cacao seeds, which are used to make chocolate. Ghana also had deposits of bauxite, diamond, gold, and manganese.

The British made the Gold Coast a crown colony in 1872. The Asante and their coastal allies did not wish to be under the rule of the British. In 1874, the British army fought against the Asante confederation. The Asante confederation was broken up in 1896.

I hadn't realized that it took the British so long to control the Gold Coast. I thought Britain was much stronger than the Gold Coast so I was surprised that the Asante confederation lasted such a long time against the British.

During the time of British rule, there were many unhappy people. Ghanaian workers complained about low wages and poor housing. Businessmen were angry about the competition from European, Syrian, and Indian traders in Ghana (Enchantment p. 47). I wasn't really surprised that the Ghanaians should feel this way. Most colonial powers were unfair to their colonies.

The Ghanaians saw the unfairness in the colonial system as they became educated. Only one university had been constructed in Ghana by 1948 so people had to leave their country to get a higher education. I think that the British were afraid of educating too many students which might cause them to ask for reforms which would lead to independence.

Before the 1890's, many senior officials were native Ghanaians, while few native people had any positions of authority during the colonial years. I think that the British were really trying to keep control of Ghana in order to benefit from this colony. For example, many Ghanaians were drafted into the British army during World War II.

After I read this information about Ghana before and during imperialism, I looked in an encyclopedia for newer information. I found that 45 per cent of the people practice traditional African religions, 40 percent are Christians, and 10 per cent are Muslims.

This shows that the Europeans really influenced and changed their religion. The Europeans believe that it is their duty to convert people to Christianity. They don't care about other beliefs or religions.

Ghana now has three universities and about a third of the nation's adults can read and write. Ghana was helped by the knowledge that the Europeans brought in to their country. However, they probably could have gained more knowledge if the British weren't in their way.

Therefore, Ghana was probably more hurt by imperialism. The British didn't even care about the Ghanaians besides the military and economic resources that they had. Even though the British improved Ghana in some ways, they did not allow Ghanaians to live their own life and rule themselves.

What I discovered

I was correct in my assumptions about Ghana. I found out most of what I wanted to find out about Ghana.

I believe Ghana was hurt by imperialism. The British forced a new religion on the Ghanaians and used Ghana's resources for British needs. The British also caused innocent bloodshed. The only good things the British did was extend roads and railways, build hospitals, and develop the schools.

The Ghanaians were perfectly fine before the British came in. They could rule themselves and even though they weren't as advanced as the British, and might be less advanced today if Britain hadn't come in, Ghana will eventually become as advanced as all the other countries. Imperialism made Ghana advance slightly faster with great losses to their resources and economy.

I've learned from researching about Ghana, many things about researching and writing effectively. The most important thing is to know exactly what to look for and write about. Each step will build on to the next step by itself as long as the steps are done accurately and efficiently. Also, not procrastinating is helpful in doing things on schedule.

Many things have been learned from writing this paper. Researching and writing have been important skills that were used in this paper. These are essential skills to write a good paper. Finally, the information on Ghana and imperialism also has had some effect on my learning.

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