

1.7 How did the development gap grow?

This unit is about reasons for the differences in development around the world.

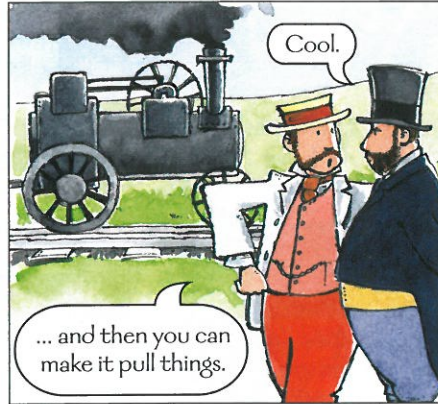
Some reasons for the development gap

1 Historical reasons

2000 years ago, India and China were the world's richest countries. But over the centuries, the pattern changed. Countries in Europe and North America raced ahead. Let's see how that happened.



By 1500 AD, Western Europe had begun to develop fast, thanks to good farmland, a mild climate for farming, and industries such as shipbuilding and textiles.

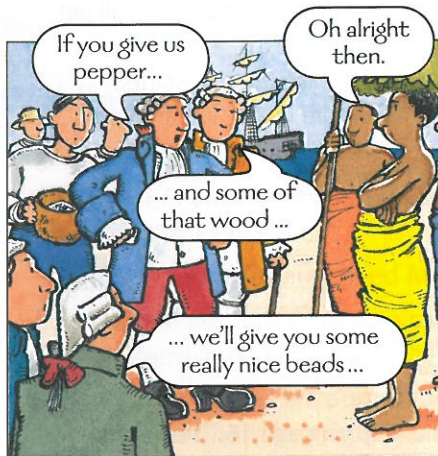


Then the Industrial Revolution came along. It began around 1750 in Britain and spread to Europe. It led to a leap in wealth and development for several countries.

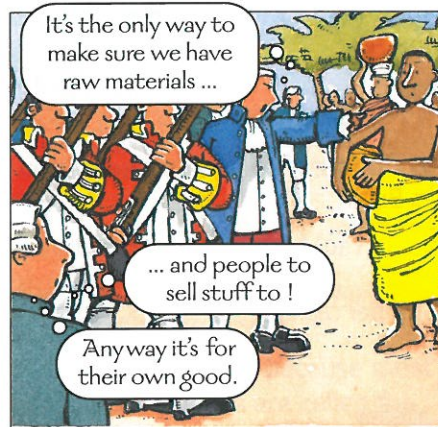


Europeans had already settled in North America by then. So they started to develop industries too. And soon North America began to grow wealthy.

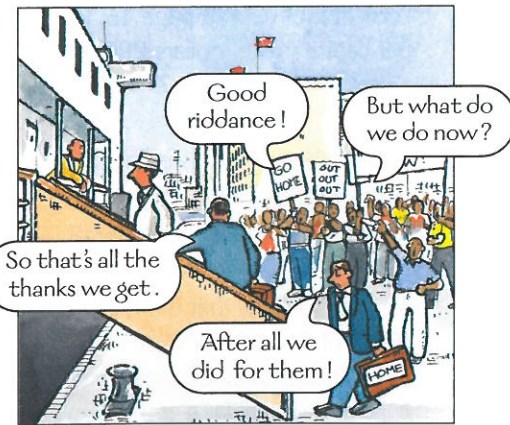
Meanwhile, Europeans had been exploring Africa, South America, and Asia. They had found lands rich in natural resources. Trading soon followed.



It began with friendly trading for things like gold, tobacco, timber, and spices. The Europeans gave goods in exchange. But as time went by they grew greedier, and ...



... took over many of their trading partners by force, as **colonies**. They took their raw materials, and sold them finished goods – and that made many Europeans very rich !



In time, the Europeans were forced out. They left behind them countries with very little industry, low levels of education and skill, and often a great deal of unrest.

Between them, countries like Britain, France, Spain, and Portugal carved up Africa, South America and much of Asia as colonies. Many of their ex-colonies are still poor today – and some are still unstable.