

Nationalism/Imperialism Worksheet Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Read the following thoughts by George Orwell, “Notes on Nationalism” and answer the questions that follow:

“By ‘nationalism’ I mean first of all the habit of assuming that human beings can be classified like insects and that whole blocks of millions or tens of millions of people can be confidently labelled ‘good’ or ‘bad’<sup>(1)</sup>. But secondly — and this is much more important — I mean the habit of identifying oneself with a single nation or other unit, placing it beyond good and evil and recognising no other duty than that of advancing its interests. *Nationalism is not to be confused with patriotism*. Both words are normally used in so vague a way that any definition is liable to be challenged, but one must draw a distinction between them, since two different and even opposing ideas are involved. By ‘patriotism’ I mean devotion to a particular place and a particular way of life, which one believes to be the best in the world but has no wish to force on other people. Patriotism is of its nature defensive, both militarily and culturally. Nationalism, on the other hand, is inseparable from the desire for power. The abiding purpose of every nationalist is to secure more power and more prestige, *not* for himself but for the nation or other unit in which he has chosen to sink his own individuality.”

-George Orwell, Notes on Nationalism

([http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/nationalism/english/e\\_nat](http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/nationalism/english/e_nat) )

According to Orwell, what’s the difference between patriotism and nationalism?

### **Orwell goes on to explain three ideas central to nationalism:**

“It would be an oversimplification to say that all forms of nationalism are the same, even in their mental atmosphere, but there are certain rules that hold good in all cases. The following are the principal characteristics of nationalist thought:

*Obsession.* As nearly as possible, no nationalist ever thinks, talks, or writes about anything except the superiority of his own power unit. It is difficult if not impossible for any nationalist to conceal his allegiance. The smallest slur upon his own unit, or any implied praise of a rival organization, fills him with uneasiness which he can relieve only by making some sharp retort. If the chosen unit is an actual country, such as Ireland or India, he will generally claim superiority for it not only in military power and political virtue, but in art, literature, sport, structure of the language, the physical beauty of the inhabitants, and perhaps even in climate, scenery and cooking.

*Instability.* The intensity with which they are held does not prevent nationalist loyalties from being transferable. To begin with, as I have pointed out already, they can be and often are fastened up on some foreign country. One quite commonly finds that great national leaders, or the founders of nationalist movements, do not even belong to the country they have glorified. Sometimes they are outright foreigners, or more often they come from peripheral areas where nationality is doubtful.

*Indifference to Reality.* All nationalists have the power of not seeing resemblances between similar sets of facts. A British Tory will defend self-determination in Europe and oppose it in India with no feeling of inconsistency. Actions are held to be good or bad, not on their own merits, but according to who does them, and there is almost no kind of outrage — torture, the use of hostages, forced labour, mass deportations, imprisonment without trial, forgery, assassination, the bombing of civilians — which does not change its moral colour when it is committed by ‘our’ side.”

-George Orwell, Notes on Nationalism

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Make a connection between Orwell's description of "Nationalistic Obsession" and something you have learned in history class or seen in the news:

Make a connection between Orwell's description of "Nationalistic Instability" and something you have learned in history class or seen in the news:

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Now that you understand nationalism, let's look at the term "imperialism" with a short animated clip read from Howard Zinn's "A People's History of an American Empire".

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zrTnlato-fA&feature=related>

From watching this clip, what do you think the definition for "Imperialism" is?

Are Nationalism and Imperialism Connected? How?