

Edexcel Geography A-level

Superpowers Glossary of Key Terms



Bipolar World - Two superpowers exist, each with opposing ideologies.

Capitalism - The belief that individuals may gain wealth and status through business ventures, the hours they work and their skills.

The Cold War - Tensions between the USA and USSR from 1950 to the 1990s due to their conflicting ideologies and competition to become a unipolar superpower.

Colonialism - The act of gaining control, building an empire and exerting influence over other countries.

Communism - The belief that everyone in a population should be equal financially, the property they own and politically.

Democracy - A political system where every member of the population has an equal vote.

Dictatorship - One individual controls a country, rather than an elected government.

Economic Alliances - Trade blocs that promote trade between members, offer each other financial assistance and loans and allow the migration of workers between states.

Emerging States - Countries that have quickly gained influence, developed and have notable culture. Emerging States may become superpowers in the future.

Empire - A collection of countries, ruled over or influenced by a single government.

Environmental Alliances - Groups of countries that discuss and pledge to reduce greenhouse emissions and protect the natural environment.

Frank's Dependency Model - Describes neo-colonialism and how a country can gain control over a neo-colony through exploitation and economic dependency.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) - The investment of money, infrastructure or assets by a foreign government or business.

Hard Power - Exerting a country's influence over another through the use of economic or military intervention.

Human Resources - The available workforce and skills of the population, which can contribute to a country's status.

Ideology - Beliefs and values that are shared within a population.

Imperial Era - The period of 18th and 19th Century, when European states created empires, using hard power to rule over America, Africa and Asia.



Intellectual Property - The ownership of ideas and designs, such as patents and copyrights.

Mackinder's Heartland Theory - Whoever controls the heartland (Russia, Eastern Europe and parts of South Asia) controls the majority of physical and human resources, and so will be a leading superpower.

Military Alliance - A group of states that share weapons & intelligence, offer military assistance and discuss international affairs such as terror attacks, national security, etc.

Multi-Polar World - There are several superpowers, each with a characteristic strength, competing for global influence and status.

Physical Resources - The natural assets such as fossil fuels, minerals or crops, that can be sold for profit or political gain.

Rostow's Modernisation Theory - The development of a country takes five stages of growth: Traditional Society, Pre-Conditions for Take Off, Take Off, Drive to Maturity, Mass Consumption.

Sanctions - Restrictions put into place against a country who breaks international law or agreements.

Soft Power - Exerting a country's influence over another through cultural diffusion, political reform and FDI.

Spheres of Contest - Areas of competition for superpowers and emerging states, e.g. land ownership, intellectual property, state borders.

Unipolar World - There is one superpower who dominates economically and politically.

Wallerstein's World Systems Theory - Describes the movement of raw materials and manufactured goods between the core and periphery.

