The Monroe Doctrine
James Monroe (written by John Quincy Adams)

Overview
As new governments were forming in Latin America, the United States announced an American policy aimed at discouraging European powers from interfering in the Western Hemisphere. President James Monroe declared the United States position in his annual message to Congress in December 1823.

Guided Reading
As you read, consider the following questions:
• What are the main points, or main ideas, of the excerpts?
• What distinctions does Monroe make between European colonies and independent Latin American nations?

As you read, feel free to highlight passages and take notes on this paper.

The occasion has been judged proper for asserting, as a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European power...

The citizens of the United States cherish sentiments the most friendly in favor of the liberty and happiness of their fellow-men on that side of the Atlantic. In the wars of the European powers in matters relating to themselves we have never taken any part, nor does it comport with our policy so to do. It is only when our rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we resent injuries or make preparation for our defense. With the movements in this hemisphere we are of necessity more immediately connected, and by causes which must be obvious to all enlightened and impartial observers... We owe it, therefore, to candor and to the amicable relations existing between the United States and those [European] powers to declare that we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not interfere. But with the [Latin American] governments who have declared their independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and on just principles, acknowledged, we could not view any interposition for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny, by any European power in any other light than as the manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward the United States.

| assert: stating |
| comport: agree with |
| menaced: threatened |
| amicable: friendly |
| interposition: intruding |
| manifestation: a public demonstration |
Directions: Respond to the following questions.

1. What are the main points, or main ideas, of the excerpts?

As Americans, we don’t want to take part in European wars. But if anyone attacks our rights, or us we will defend ourselves. We are more connected to events in the Western Hemisphere than European countries. So, we will not interfere with current European colonies in the Western Hemisphere, but European countries are not supposed to create any new colonies. If they do, the United States will consider it a hostile act against the United States.

2. What distinctions does Monroe make between European colonies and independent Latin American nations?

The United States will not interfere with current European colonies in the Western Hemisphere but countries who have gained their independence should be left alone by European countries.

3. What might James Monroe view as an objectionable European influence?
   - A. a city with a European cultural influence
   - B. a European country controlling a major port city in North America
   - C. the United States recognizing a religious holiday that originated in Europe
   - D. the United States importing goods from Europe.

4. Which of the following would President Monroe most likely support?
   - A. imposing the laws of the United States on European colonies in North America
   - B. aiding a European colony in gaining its independence from Europe
   - C. incorporating a European colony’s laws into the federal laws of the United States
   - D. fighting to stop European influence in the Western Hemisphere

5. Which of the following would President Monroe most likely oppose?
   - A. trading with European countries
   - B. U.S. interference with existing European colonies
   - C. European immigrants living in the United States
   - D. westward expansion