- collaborators
- competition
- ‘men on the spot’

- Most history, however, combines elements of all these explanations

**Why is empire important?**

- Much of history is imperial history
- The present is shaped by that imperial history
- Present-day political debate is also shaped by that imperial history

**What is empire?** ‘An empire is a large, composite, multi-ethnic or multinational political unit, usually created by conquest, and divided between a dominant centre and subordinate, sometimes far distant, peripheries’.

**Key elements of the history of empire:**

1. Intersections/relations between empires
2. Economies
3. Empire at home
4. Imaginaries (images, beliefs, ideology)
5. Difference
6. Intermediaries/collaborators

**Explanations for empire:**

1. Political/socio-economic explanations
2. Imperialism as backward or modern
3. Metropolitan and peripheral explanations