

India and the British Empire

teachers' notes

1) The Sikh connection

The Sikhs' relationship with Britain went through many changes during the 19th century. The Sikhs fought Britain twice in the Anglo-Sikh Wars in the 1840s, and though they won some spectacular victories, they were defeated in both wars and the Sikh kingdom was absorbed into British India. Despite this, the Sikhs were loyal to Britain in the Great Rebellion, and their dispossessed ruler, Maharajah Duleep Singh, made his home in Britain. The story of this changing relationship deserves to be better known.

2) Curriculum

The resource supports a range of approaches to the new KS3 History curriculum as well as earlier schemes of work. It also supports cross-curricular work in Citizenship and English.

KS3 History: The impact through time of the movement and settlement of diverse peoples to, from and within the British Isles

The resource supports work on migration to Britain from India in the mid-nineteenth century, especially the experience of one key individual, Maharajah Duleep Singh

KS3 History: the development of trade, colonisation, industrialisation and technology, the British Empire

The resource supports work on culture and beliefs in the Punjab before British annexation, on the role of the railways in extending British influence in India, and on the way British attitudes to its Empire in India affected the early stages of Indian nationalism.

KS3 History Unit 14 The British Empire: how was it that, by 1900, Britain controlled nearly a quarter of the world?

The resource supports work on the means by which Britain acquired its empire in India, and the British government's decisions on whether to come to terms with native rulers or to demand full annexation.

KS3 History Unit 13 Mughal India and the coming of the British, 1527-1857

The resource supports work on why there was a rebellion against British rule in India in 1857, and what were some of its consequences.

KS3 Citizenship Political, legal and human rights

The resource supports work on religious liberty and on anti-discrimination employment. It allows pupils to compare Queen Victoria's views on religious liberty, as expressed in her 1858 Proclamation to India, with those prevalent today.

KS3 Citizenship The changing nature of UK society, including the diversity of ideas, beliefs, cultures, identities, traditions, perspectives and values that are shared.

KS3 English How Victorian writers such as Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins responded to Britain's changing relationship with India in the mid nineteenth century

3) Material

The resource uses a range of original sources, from the letters of Queen Victoria to paintings, photographs and newspaper reports of the day. Weblinks are provided to the resource in its original context, to encourage further research.

4) Themes

This resource aims to consider the roles that politics, trade and industry, religion and culture played in the changing relationship between Britain and India in the nineteenth century. It highlights the role that key individuals, both British and Indian, played in forging this relationship.

It allows pupils to study the changing British relationship with India in the nineteenth century from a new angle, that of one of the peoples most directly affected.

It points up many contemporary resonances in the debates between Queen Victoria and her ministers, such as the Queen's insistence on the need to ensure religious liberty and avoid any perception of administrative corruption.

5) Classroom use

The powerpoint resource is mainly intended for individual use. However there are some pages which could be used for group work, such as page 2 - make a timeline of British India and p. 3 - A Who's Who of British India, where groups could be divided up for role-playing, debates or similar activities. Pages 6 and 7 use two large-scale images, representing the two potential approaches to governing India; they would be suitable for group work using a whiteboard.

6) Differentiation

Opportunities for extended work are indicated throughout the resource. Other suggestions include relating the British response to the Great Rebellion to the Crimean War, which they had only just concluded. What effect did this have on the British response in India?

7) Bibliography

Peter Bance, *Sovereign, Squire and Rebel, Maharajah Duleep Singh and the Heirs of a Lost Kingdom*, London: Coronet House, 2009

Peter Bance, *The Duleep Singhs, The Photograph Album of Queen Victoria's Maharajah*, Sutton Publishing, Stroud, Gloucestershire, 2004

8) Additional notes, page by page

1) Home page

Maharaja Duleep Singh, engraving by TL Atkinson, London 1882, after painting by Capt. J. Goldingham, BL P1435 © The British Library Board.

<http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/images/apacbritasia/large14446.html>

Duleep Singh wears round his neck the portrait of Queen Victoria given to his father, Maharajah Ranjit Singh. On his left breast he wears the Grand Cross Star of India, an order of knighthood created by Queen Victoria in 1861 to honour Indian chiefs and princes and British officers and administrators.

2) Time line

Correct dates:

- 1600 British East India Company formed
- 1784 India Act passed, to oversee the activities of East India Company
- 1838 First shipments of Assam tea arrive in Britain
- 1840s Anglo-Sikh Wars
- 1857 Great Rebellion (also known as the Indian Mutiny)
- 1877 Queen Victoria proclaimed Empress of India
- 1885 Indian National Congress founded
- 1947 Queen Victoria proclaimed Empress of India

Pupils can add other significant dates to the timeline as their work proceeds.

3) A Who's Who of British India

Here pupils meet some of the key individuals they will encounter later in the resource. They could also use this information at the end of their work, to debate the relative roles and importance of these, or other, individuals. Clockwise from left to right:

The Indian prince: Maharajah Duleep Singh (see also home page)

Franz Xaver Winterhalter, *The Maharaja Dalip Singh*, 1854, oil on canvas, © The Royal Collection, 204 x 110 cm, RCIN 403843

<http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/egallery/object.asp?object=403843&row=0&detail=about>