

ASHT Learning Resources

The Maharajah & The Koh-in-oor

A resource pack to accompany the play and workshop



KS2/KS3 History



Anglo Sikh Heritage Trail
Preserving the Past, Inspiring the Future

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Introduction

The Maharajah and the Kohinoor is a theatre-in-education project aimed at Key Stages 2 and 3 and covering five National Curriculum subjects. It is a collaboration between the Anglo Sikh Heritage Trail, Zeroseefr, the education wing of Zeroculture, an arts production company with over three decades experience in young people's/schools activity and The Drum, one of the West Midlands leading contemporary arts centres.

The 60-minute play is followed by a workshop offering creative and accessible activities to encourage discussion and appreciation of Anglo Sikh Heritage. This pack provides further background information and suggested activities. It has been produced by the Anglo Sikh Heritage Trail in association with Zeroseefr.

Curriculum links

History KS2 Victorian Britain

- Place the Victorian period, and the wars which the British East India Company fought in India, in relation to other periods of British history
- Find out more about Queen Victoria's personal engagement with India through her meeting with Maharajah Duleep Singh.
- Find out more about the portrait of Duleep Singh which Queen Victoria commissioned.
- Duleep Singh was only a child when he fell into British hands. Find out more about how the British treated him, both in India and once he arrived in England.

History KS3 The British Empire

- Use a map of the Punjab to show how the British East India Company used the death of Ranjit Singh to extend British influence in northern India
- How did the East India Company deploy its trading activities and its private army to achieve the annexation of the Punjab in the 1840s.
- How does Lord Dalhousie's treatment of Duleep Singh and the Koh-i-noor throw light on the relationship between the East India Company and the British Crown?
- To what extent did the annexation of the Punjab contribute to the process by which the British government took control of India from the East India Company.

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

- Find out more about how Ranjit Singh created a Sikh state in the Punjab in opposition to Mughal authority
- To what extent did the annexation of the Punjab contribute to the rebellion against British rule in India in 1857?

RE

- Find out more about the roots of the Sikh faith in the Punjab
- Follow Duleep Singh's journey from Sikhism to Christianity and back

Geography

- Understand the importance of the geography of the Punjab in British and Indian history in the nineteenth century

Citizenship

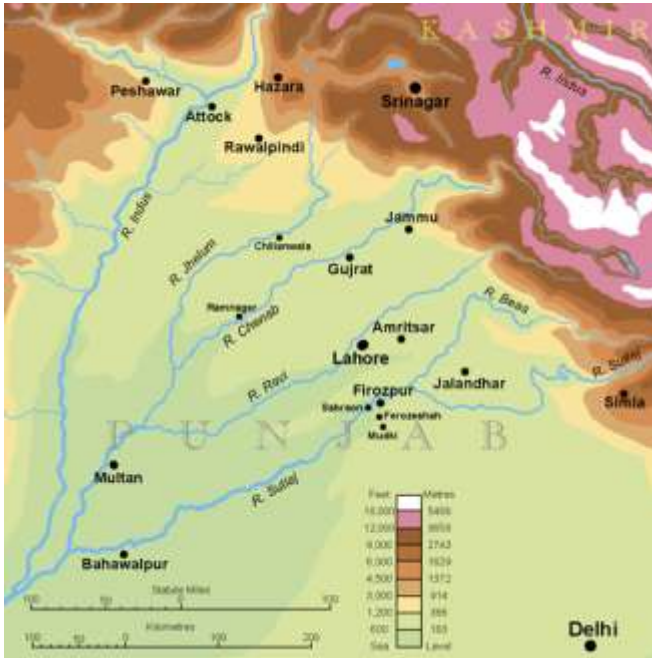
- Reflect on the story of Duleep Singh to understand one man's experience of exile, loss, and changes in ethnic, religious and cultural identity.

Drama

- Develop techniques for improving confidence, social and listening skills and creative expression through role-play, improvisation and performance.

The play's setting:

The Punjab - land of the five rivers



The 'five rivers' of the Punjab are the tributaries of the River Indus: the Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej.

Guru Nanak, the first Sikh guru, was born just north of Lahore in 1496. During the long fight against the Mughals, Banda Singh Bahadur established the first Sikh state in the Punjab in 1713.

At the end of the eighteenth century, Maharajah Ranjit Singh united many small states to form a Sikh empire, with its capital at Lahore and its religious centre at Amritsar, the site of the Harmandir Sahib, or Golden Temple.

Victorian Britain

Having won the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, Britain concentrated on acquiring a new empire in Asia. The Industrial Revolution meant a demand for new markets and the invention of new technologies such as railways and the telegraph made it possible to administer much wider territories. Between 1815 and 1914 around 10,000,000 square miles of territory and roughly 400 million people were added to the British empire.

The key to this expansion was India, where the British East India Company had been operating since the sixteenth century. Originally set up to trade in cotton, silk, saltpeter and tea, by the start of the Victorian period it controlled large areas of India and operated as the military and administrative arm of the Crown.

The Anglo-Sikh Wars

As the British East India Company expanded into northern India, Maharajah Ranjit Singh was strong enough to ally with the British and preserve his independence. However the Punjab was soon surrounded, as the British moved into Afghanistan, to the north, in 1838 and took over Sindh, to the south, in 1843. The River Sutlej was the frontier between British-ruled India and the Punjab. The reasons for the outbreak of the First Anglo-Sikh War are disputed, but when the Sikh army crossed the Sutlej on 11 December 1845 the British declared war. The Sikhs were defeated and the British gained control of the government. Sikh resentment at this led to the outbreak of the Second Anglo-Sikh War two years later, as a result of which the Punjab was fully absorbed into British India.