

TURTON SCHOOL HISTORY DEPARTMENT – KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER – BRITISH EMPIRE

Key events	Key people	Key questions/words
<p>An 'empire' is a group of countries ruled over by a single monarch or ruling power. An empire doesn't need an 'emperor'. The British Empire comprised Britain, the 'mother country', and the colonies, countries ruled to some degree by and from Britain.</p> <p>The British began to establish overseas colonies in the 16th century. By 1783 Britain had a large empire, with colonies in America and the West Indies. This 'first British Empire' came to end after the American Revolution.</p> <p>However, in the 19th century, the British built a second worldwide empire. It covered 1/4 of the world's land mass and included countries like India, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and Kenya.</p> <p>Having a global Empire gave Britain access to raw materials, large trading markets and strategic military ports.</p> <p>The British made some improvements to the countries they ruled. For example, they build railways and roads, schools and hospitals.</p> <p>However it came at a cost. The countries they ruled were taxed heavily, their resources and land given to British companies, and control maintained through violence and massacres.</p> <p>After World War II, Britain started to give back the colonies, known as decolonization. Britain decided to give back nations because World War II left the British Empire essentially bankrupt. Also, many of the persons the Empire had ruled over wanted to be in charge of their own country. One of the last parts of the British Empire was Hong Kong. Hong Kong was given back to China in 1997.</p>	<p>Mohandas Gandhi is one of the most famous leaders and champions for justice in the world. His principles and firm belief in non-violence have been followed by many other important civil rights leaders including Martin Luther King, Jr. and Nelson Mandela. His renown is such that he is mostly just referred to by the single name "Gandhi".</p> <p>Mohandas' parents wanted him to become a barrister, which is a type of lawyer. As a result, when he was 19 years old Mohandas travelled to England where he studied law at the University College London. Three years later he returned to India and started his own law practice. Unfortunately, Mohandas' law practice wasn't successful, so he took a job with an Indian Law firm and moved to South Africa to work out of the South African law office. It was in South Africa where Gandhi would experience racial prejudice against Indians and would begin his work in civil rights.</p> <p>Once back in India, Gandhi led the fight for Indian independence from the British Empire. He organized several non-violent civil disobedience campaigns. During these campaigns, large groups of the Indian population would do things like refusing to work, sitting in the streets, boycotting the courts, and more. Each of these protests may seem small by themselves, but when most of the population does them at once, they can have an enormous impact.</p> <p>Gandhi was put in prison several times for organizing these protests. He would often fast (not eat) while he was in prison. The British government would eventually have to release him because the Indian people had grown to love Gandhi. The British were scared what would happen if they let him die.</p> <p>One of Gandhi's most successful protests was called the Salt March. When Britain put a tax on salt, Gandhi decided to walk 241 miles to the sea in Dandi to make his own salt. Thousands of Indians joined him in his march.</p> <p>Reginald Dyer, British general remembered for his role in the Massacre of Amritsar in India, in 1919. Dyer was brigade commander at Jalandhar, southeast of Amritsar, in early 1919. Following the outbreak of rioting and violence in Amritsar in April—which included the killing of four Europeans and the beating of a woman missionary—he moved his troops to that city to restore order there; one of the stipulations was a ban on public gatherings. On April 13 Dyer's troops confronted a gathering of thousands of Indians in an enclosed area in the city, and he ordered them to open fire. According to an official report, his troops killed 379 unarmed Indian men, women, and children and wounded some 1,200. As a result, Dyer was removed from command into enforced retirement.</p>	<p>What was the British Empire? Why did Britain want an Empire? What did Britain do for its colonies? What was transportation like in the Empire? How are Britain and India linked? Did General Dyer order a massacre? How did the Empire help Britain during the war? How did the Empire end? What is the legacy of the Empire?</p> <p>Empire: an extensive group of states or countries ruled over by a single monarch, an oligarchy, or a sovereign state.</p> <p>Colonies: a country or area under the full or partial political control of another country and occupied by settlers from that country.</p>