



Knowledge Organiser – Year 8: The British Empire

Key Words

Empire	Countries ruled over by another country
Colonies	a country or area under the control of another country
Mughals	The House of Timur became known as the Mughals and this is the name used from C16th across the world to describe them.
Dynasty	a family who rule one after another e.g. Henry VII, Henry VIII, Edward, Mary and Elizabeth are the Tudor Dynasty
East India Company	company created to trade with the Mughals and then seized control of large parts of India.
Loot	Originally a Hindi word. Private property taken by an enemy during war.
Maharajas	Indian Kings who ruled their states in partnership with the British Empire.
Raj	term for British rule of India from 1858 – 1947
Viceroy	top British official in India.
Sepoy	Indian soldiers in the British army.

Key individuals:

Queen Victoria – ruled Britain at the height of its Empire's power. Empress of India.

Duleep Singh – young Maharaja, owner of Koh-I-Noor diamond before Queen Victoria.

Robert Clive – British military officer & East India Company official, became 1st Governor of Bengal.

Countries Britain controlled 1660 - 1824

Mostly coastal regions & 13 American colonies



Countries Britain controlled 1824 - 1919

13 American colonies lost. Australia, India, Canada, S Africa were added.



Why did Britain gain an empire?

- To stop other countries taking them.
- To increase British status as more land equalled power.
- To develop the British economy by protecting trade, giving them access to cheap raw materials e.g. cotton and provide a market for the finished products.
- To spread Christianity.
- To 'civilise' natives. Many British were fundamentally racist and saw themselves as superior to other nations so Britain thought they had a duty to rule them.

1660 British Empire included coastal regions & 13 American Colonies

1837 Victoria became Queen

1851 Great Exhibition

1876 Queen Victoria becomes Empress of India

1783 Britain lost control of 13 American Colonies

1845 Irish Potato Famine

1857 Indian Rebellion



Case Study: India

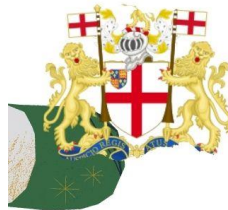
1 In 1526, the Mughals from Central Asia invaded northern India. They established a huge empire in 16th. The Mughals ruled over a huge Hindu population. During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the vast wealth of India funded the growth of art and architecture.

2 The East India Company first set up trading posts in India in Surat (1612), Madras (1638) and Bombay (1668). In the 1700s the East India Company began to take more and more Indian land. It had its own private army and navy and used them against the various regional rulers of India.

3 At the Battle of Plassey in 1757 around 3000 Company troops (2200 of whom were local Indians) led by Robert Clive, defeated an Indian army of over 40,000 led by local prince Siraj-ud-Daulah (who was even helped by the French!). This allowed the East India Company to take over Bengal, the area formerly ruled by Siraj, and one of the richest parts of India. The Company fought against other European nations too – and took over their trading posts.

India Timeline

**The Mughals
1526-1707**

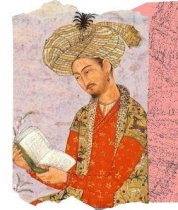


**The Battle of Plassey
1757**



**The British Raj
1858**

1



**The East India Company
1638 - 1858**

2

3



4

**Indian Rebellion
1857**

5



1

The senior officers of the East India Company were always British, but most of the soldiers were Indians. They were called 'sepoys'. For many years, the sepoys had been loyal to their commanding officers, but by 1857 there were tensions.

Some sepoys in 1857 refused to load their guns at Meerut because they believed their guns contained animal fat. They were stripped of their uniform at a parade and put in prison for 10 years. This sparked mass revolt across India.

On 6th June 1857, the rebels besieged the British army base at Cawnpore. Inside there were British soldiers, some loyal sepoys and many women and children. The army surrendered, the rebel leader said the British could leave Cawnpore by river, but they were killed in the boats as they left. Other women and children, still in prison, were shot and beaten to death.

After 18 months, the British regained control of Northern India. Their revenge was brutal, they killed the rebels, sometimes they were tied to a cannon and blown up.

5

The 1857 rebellion made Britain change the way it ruled India. The East India Company was dissolved and India was not ruled directly by the British Government.