



HISTORY

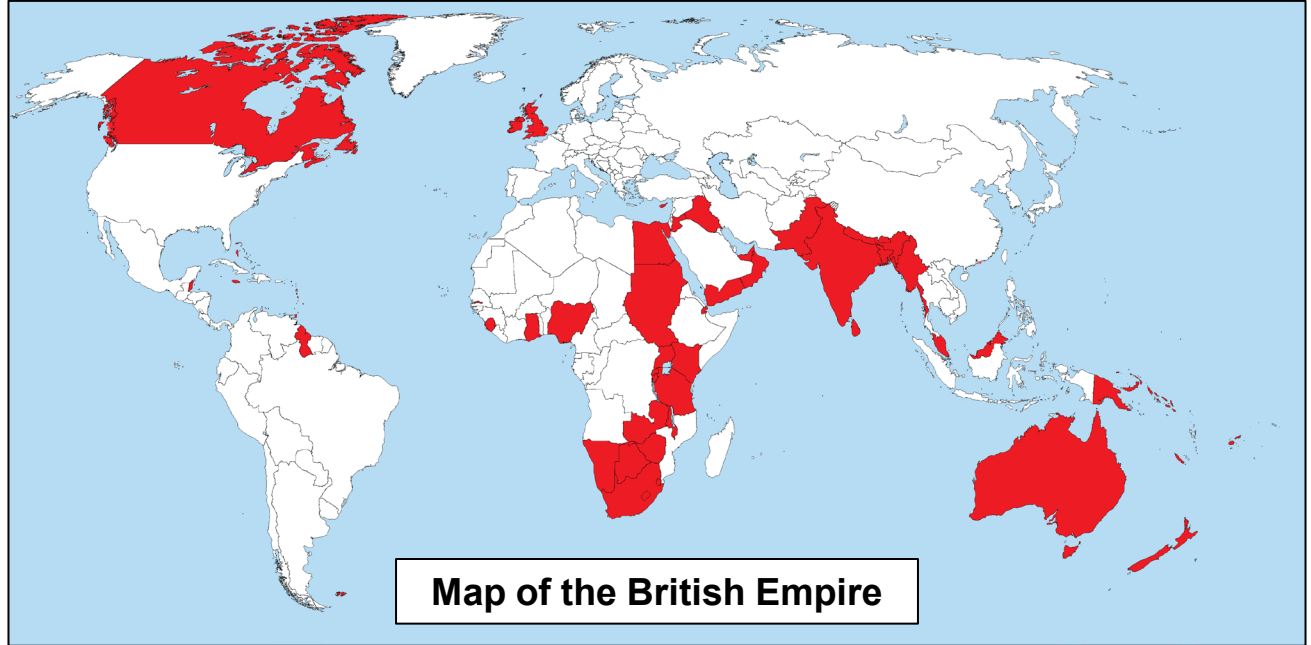
Year 8

Empire

The British Empire, at its largest, covered 13 million miles or 22% of the world! It controlled over 450 million people or 1/5 of the world's population. It began in the 16th Century, with British forces establishing trading posts overseas and grew all the way through to the 20th Century. Some of the main countries in the British Empire were: Australia, Jamaica, South Africa, Tanzania, Canada, New Zealand, Barbados, Sri Lanka, India.

Areas of the British Empire

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| Australia | Australia was used as a location for criminals. Criminals would be shipped to Australia, where they would be used as a workforce. They built roads, buildings, houses, shops etc. It also gave people an opportunity to escape poverty and gain wealth in Australia. |
| The Caribbean | Because of the warm climate, the Caribbean grew important crops that Britain could not. Therefore sugar, cocoa and coffee were all grown in the Caribbean and taken to Britain. |
| Africa | Britain used the people of Africa as slaves and made a lot of money selling them at auctions. The Gold Coast was important because it held lots of gold, ivory and silver, which were traded for fortunes. |
| India | India was an important producer of spices, and of materials that were traded for money across the Empire. |



Map of the British Empire

Key Words

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| Empire | A group of countries, people or land controlled and ruled by one single powerful country. |
| Colony | A country that is part of an Empire. |
| Commonwealth | A group of nations with a shared loyalty or government. |
| Imperialism | The policy of seeking to build and maintain an empire. |
| Monopoly | When one person or company has the sole right to trade a good. |

How did Britain control its Empire?

Due to huge size of the Empire, Britain had to develop a variety of methods in order to keep control of the variety of colonies under her Empire.

Military Force – Britain’s weaponry developed throughout this period, inventing weapons such as the Maxim Gun – one of the first machine guns invented. They also stopped guns coming into the hands of those in the Empire. The Africans had poor quality weaponry; they made their own bullets, which broke their guns sometimes.

Use of Locals – The British went on a charm offensive, making the local rich people feel wanted and gave them more money and power. Local people ran the police, law courts and prisons, making them feel in charge of their country and less likely to break laws.

Communication – The British could easily communicate between the countries of their empire using methods such as telegraphs, radios and ships.

Gradual Change – The British didn’t try to change everything at once, they gradually changed and developed areas of countries.

Dealing with Resistance – The British were efficient in stopping anyone who opposed the Empire. Protestors were immediately jailed and broke up local armies.

Empire – Good or Evil?

Good

- **Clean water and sanitation:** Britain improved these important services in the Colonies, which meant people were generally healthier.
- The colonies benefitted from the introduction of a British **education system**.
- **Raw Materials:** Britain benefitted from a plentiful supply of cheap raw materials that could be made into manufactured goods, such as rubber, cloth, and woollen goods. This made Britain wealthy.
- Many former Colonies continue to use the **democratic system** of Parliament introduced by Britain. This is a force for good in the world.

Evil

- **Rebellion:** Many people in the colonies were killed when they rebelled against British rule for example the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya in 1956.
- **Economies** in the Colonies were wrecked because of Britain’s hold over transport and raw materials.
- People in the colonies had no resistance to the **diseases** the British brought with them, so many died.
- Native people such as the Aborigines of Australia had their **land taken** by The British. 80% of the Aboriginal population were wiped out in 150 years.

Fall of the Empire

Actions by people in the colonies – There were demonstrations against British rule in the 1920s for failing to honour promises to Egypt and Iraq. Britain allowed Ireland to partition (splitting into Northern Ireland and Ireland). It sent out a message to others in the Empire that they could leave. In 1948 there was violence in Palestine aimed at the British. There were strikes in India, Egypt and Kenya against British Rule.

Actions by people in Britain – In the 1960s people in Britain were more interested in freedom, rather than using force to keep people under control.

World Events – In 1931, Canada, Australis and New Zealand formed a new Commonwealth. The domination of the USA and Russia after WW2 showed that you didn’t need to have an empire to be a world leader. The loss of countries such as Singapore and Burma during WW2, changed people’s attitudes on whether Britain could maintain an empire. Britain was heavily in debt to the USA after WWII.

Trade and Economics - India became less important to the British Empire. The cost of keeping a large number of soldiers to defend the empire was too much. It also became clearer that the Empire could no longer provide Great Britain with the military and economic security she needed. Exports focused from Western Europe and the USA, rather than the Empire.