

Year 8- British Empire

Title: Was the British Empire good or bad?

There are lots of people who say that the British Empire is one of the proudest parts of British history, however this is also fought against as many historians say that the British took advantage of other countries. In this week's lesson you will decide what you think of the British Empire.

TASKS:

1. There is a very good 2 part BBC Teach documentary that covers whether or not the Empire was a force for good? (Around 15 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HnXenihxSeg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qpHlkfPSo8o>

2. Use the information below to pick 2 strong pieces of evidence. One should show how the empire was harmful and one should show how the empire was beneficial. Copy the information down and say why this evidence is important.

1 Maoris in New Zealand lost lands to the British settlers.	2 Many Aboriginal people in Australia were killed by settlers and lost the right to live on their ancestors' lands because these lands were turned into cattle and sheep ranches.
3 The number of hospitals increased in India from 0 to 65.	4 Britain helped to irrigate many fields in India which meant that more land could be farmed. The land used for farming increased from 400,000 acres to 3.2million acres.
5 Britain provided some education to Indians. The education challenged many superstitious beliefs (e.g. about how to remain healthy). The number of schools in India increased from 170 to 2900.	6 The best jobs in India were reserved for the British.
7 Indian workers were often exploited (not paid enough).	8 The British in India had more luxurious lives than they had had at home and were often looked after by many servants.
9 By 1900 the British had built nearly 50,000 miles of road in India. They built dams and dug nearly 70,000 miles of canal.	10 Britain allowed a free press and free speech in India.
11 During famines in India, Britain provided relief.	12 In Africa, missionaries such as David Livingstone spread Christianity and European ideas.
13 Britain taxed its colonies and used some of the money in Britain (rather than within the colony itself).	14 Through most of the Empire, British sports like cricket, football and rugby were taken up.
15 Britain banned the practice of sati (this was the Hindu custom of widow burning, where a woman would have to jump on the funeral pyre of her dead husband). Britain also worked hard to end infanticide (the mass killing of unwanted children) in India.	16 For some the Empire became a way to escape unemployment and poor living conditions in Britain itself. Between 1800 and 1914 about 14 million people emigrated from Britain, mainly to Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

3. Write a PEEL paragraph to summarise your own opinion using the evidence you have gathered to answer the following question: 'Was the British Empire more beneficial or harmful?'

Extra Challenge:

There is a game (attached separately) which may be interesting to play with your family about how trade routes began across the 18th century and build the British Empire.