

Timeline

1601	East India Trading Company started.
1607	The first British colony in Jamestown, Virginia (USA) begins.
1672	King Charles II starts the Royal African Company.
1770	Captain James Cook discovered the Eastern Coast of Australia.
1857	Indian Rebellion.
1914 - 1918	Troops from countries within the British Empire fight for the British Army in the First World War.
1939 - 1945	Troops from countries within the British Empire fight for the British Army in the Second World War.
1964	Kenya becomes independent from the British Empire.

Key People

Captain James Cook	An important explorer in the 18th century. On one of his voyages in 1770, he travelled to New Zealand, and then to the Eastern Coast of Australia which he named New South Wales. This became the beginning of Britain's colony in Australia.
Cecil Rhodes	A politician who believed that Britain had a right to develop their empire, and dramatically increased Britain's influence in Africa. He became so important to building the empire in Africa that they named countries after him—Northern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Southern Rhodesia (Zambia).
Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer	A British General who was responsible for controlling part of the British Army in Amritsar, a city in Punjab, in early 1919. When peaceful protests broke out, he was responsible for telling the soldiers to fire on the protestors.

Key Terms

Empire	A large group of countries ruled over by a single monarch or state.
Imperialism	A policy of extending a country's power and influence by building and developing an empire.
Colony	A country or area under the direct control of another country and occupied by people from that country.
Colonial	A word used to describe the period of time in which a country is ruled by another country as part of their empire.
Government	The group of people with the authority to rule in a country or state.
Racism	The concept that there are different groups of people, as defined by their physical characteristics like skin colour, and that some of these groups are better than others.
New World	The name used by European travellers during the 18th and 19th centuries to describe the countries in the Earth's western hemisphere, including America and the Caribbean.
Partition	The action of being divided into parts. India was partitioned in 1948.
Indigenous	The name given to the group of people who already live in a country or area before an imperial power takes over.
Slave	A person who is the legal property of another and is forced to obey them.
Middle passage	The sea journey undertaken by slave ships from West Africa to America and the Caribbean.
Plantation	An area of land on which crops such as coffee, sugar and tobacco are grown.



The British Empire in 1897 (marked in pink).

Key Events

What was the British Empire?

- The beginnings of the British Empire began in the 17th century, with the increased trade with Asia and the Americas. It grew to control large areas of Asia, the Americas and Africa.
- At its height, the British Empire controlled around 10 million square miles of territory and 400 million people.

Why did Britain pursue an Empire?

- Britain wanted to spread the religion of Christianity, and thought that they could do this by taking control of people who were not Christian.
- Britain believed that they were part of a superior race, and that they had the right to control other people who were not the same race. They became rich from the trading of goods.

How did the Empire impact Britain?

- Britain became one of the most powerful and richest countries in the world as a result of their Empire.
- The soldiers from the Empire were fundamental to British war efforts in the First and Second World War. Nearly 1.5 million soldiers from India, over 400,000 from Australia and over 130,000 from South Africa fought on the side of Britain in the Second World War.

Empire in India

- Britain slowly increased their control over India from 1601 until 1947. They used techniques such as building alliances, violence and coercion to keep control.
- After India became independent in 1947, the country was partitioned into two different states. This led to large-scale violence, with approximately 1 million people dying.

Empire in Australia

- British people started settling in Australia from 1770 onwards. There was armed conflict between the indigenous people and British people, in a series of battles now sometimes called the Black Wars.
- As a result of British people arriving in Australia, the indigenous population caught smallpox. It killed 70% of the indigenous population in some areas.

Empire in Africa

- British men became involved in the human slave trade in the 1560s.
- The transatlantic slave trade continued in the British Empire until 1833.
- When African people tried to become independent from Britain in the 20th century, it was often met with violence, such as in the Mau Mau Rebellion in Kenya.



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