

The British Empire and Slave Trade Knowledge Organiser

KLT1: British Empire: India

- **The East India Trading Company** assumed control of areas of India in the 1600's to become involved in the Indian Spice Trade.
- Company control was unpopular and the Indians tried to **rebel in 1857**. Britain crushed it through violence
- Britain restructured the hierarchy in India, **with Victoria as the Empress, the Viceroy** ruling the country **and the Civil Service** supporting him.
- The British used violent punishments to subdue and deter the Indians from further rebellion e.g. executions attached to a canon
- The British rule oversaw great famines in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.



KLT1: Who was involved in the slave trade?

- **British government:** Britain became more wealthy and more influential around the world because of the slave trade. The British government encouraged slave traders like the Royal African Company.
- **African slave traders:** African tribesmen had sold other rival tribesmen into slavery for centuries. It brought countries, such as **the Kingdom of Benin**, influence, power and wealth in the region.
- **Plantation owners:** Plantation owners needed a large and cheap workforce to harvest products that they sold for high profits.
- **British public:** British people bought slave-made products such as sugar and tobacco

KLT 1: Context of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

Why were people involved in the Slave Trade?

1. African rulers became involved because they gained wealth from products given to them by the British such as guns and ammunition, pots and pans and beer and wine
2. It gave them a great deal of influence and power
3. It made them a lot of money. Many businessmen invested their profits in industries which expanded their influence around the globe



KLT 1: British Empire: Australia

- **Indigenous and aboriginal people** = the original population of a region or area in Australia.
- First white settlements in Australia were used as **"Penal Colonies"** or prison colonies for criminals from the UK.
- In the 1850s, a gold rush in Australia caused more white settlers to move to the continent.
- Fighting for more land and power, the British settlers engaged in conflict with the indigenous population and tried to replace their society.
- These conflicts were **the Frontier Wars**. Over 40,000 aboriginals were killed in the conflicts.
- Even more aboriginals died from disease that the settlers brought with them.



KLT1: What was life like for enslaved people?

- **Middle Passage:** The journey from Africa to the Caribbean or the Americas. From the early 1600s to the 1830s, over 12 million people were taken from Africa to the Americas. More than 2 million died on the journey.
- **Life on plantations:** Enslaved people were forced to work on large plantations (farms) growing and harvesting resources that were highly sought after, for example sugar, rice, tobacco, and indigo. Slaves would be heavily punished and mistreated if they did not work hard enough e.g. whippings.
- **Resistance to slavery:** Not all slaves accepted their life. Many tried to "fight back" in some way.
 - Active Resistance** = violence and aggressive ways of fighting back e.g. murder, burning down buildings.
 - Passive Resistance:** smaller acts of resistance e.g. working slowly pretending to be sick, breaking your tools.

Abolition of the slave trade

The Slave Trade Triangle was abolished in 1807. Slavery was banned in the British Empire in 1833. There were several groups and individuals who were involved in the Abolition of the Slave Trade in Britain and the Empire:

William Wilberforce: A British MP and was a member of the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

The Quakers: They wrote pamphlets that stated that the slave trade was immoral as they believed that every body was equal in God's image.

Olaudah Equiano: A former slave who wrote a book about his experiences.

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Key word	Definition
Empire	The acquisition of other colonies by a key hegemonic (dominant) power, normally possessing and deploying military force against an enemy.
Colonies	Territorial land occupied and/or annexed by a dominant colonial power. Colonies may be states, countries or continents.
Colonisation	The forced repression of other countries by the hegemonic (dominant) colonial power. Britain colonised ¼ world's surface at its height in the 1880s.
Nationalism	Support for the interests of their own nation, especially to the exclusion or detriment of the interests of other nations
Settlement	The act of settling in a place and/or region of a country. It normally involves the growth of cities, towns and hamlets in a specific geographical area and can be named after the colonial occupation.
Democracy	A system of government whereby the whole population, vote for the government who run the country
Culturalisation	To take over and exert control on a colonies culture by enforcing British values regarding education and religion.
Religious indoctrination	Where the British Empire deliberately aimed to spread its Christian faith against the wishes of other religious communities, such as the Sikhs and Hindus in India.
Politically	How any country is ruled and governed. The Head of State in Britain during the height of her Empire was Queen Victoria in the years 1837 to 1901.
Ideology	A group of ideas and ideals, especially one which forms the basis of political theory and policy.
Genocide	The deliberate killing and mass execution of a large population which statistically exceeds over 1 million people. This is completed by the colonial power over the colonised country. Minorities and indigenous people tend to be vulnerable to genocide and mass annihilation.
Indigenous people	Indigenous was a colonial term for Indian populations and natives living in a geographical territory. They were the original settlers in countries such as Australia (Aborigines – Arboreal means forest dwellers)
Imperialism	A belief system which encouraged the growth of the British Empire and others such as France, Russia and Germany. The word normally has negative connotations.
Racism	To discriminate against people based on the colour of their skin and to render them culturally inferior.
The British Raj	The British Raj was the rule of the British Crown over the Indian Sub-Continent which lasted approximately from 1700 to 1947.
Famine	Famines are when an indigenous population is deprived of subsistence food to survive on a basic calorific diet. This can be caused by economic exploitation, such as the Bellary Famine in India and Aborigines in Australia, or a persistently bad series of poor harvests and drought.
The Caste System	The social strata in India based on a traditional hierarchy linked to surnames, religious denomination and class orientation.
Viceroy	Official colonial title of officials, ambassadors and high ranking civil servants controlled by the British Raj and Crown.
Civil Service	People who work for or within the government who help administer and run the country.
Frontier Wars	Conflicts over land borders, watersheds and geographical territories which segregate groups of indigenous peoples. Britain pursued Frontier Wars against the Aborigines in Australia.
Segregation	Deliberately separated indigenous natives from the imperial British power based on race, religion, ethnicity and beliefs.

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Key word	Definition
Enslaved Person	A person who is held forcibly against their will, and forced to perform jobs for free. These people are seen as property.
Transatlantic	Crossing the Atlantic
The Slave Trade Triangle	A system of trade between Britain, Africa and the Americas, which traded resources, money and enslaved people.
White Gold	A nickname given to sugar because it made people so much money.
Middle Passage	The second part of the Slave Trade Triangle, which involved shipping slaves from Africa to the Caribbean and Americas.
Shackles	Chains used to bind someone's hands and feet
Flogging	A punishment slaves received where they were beaten on their backs with a whip
Plantation	A large farm used for growing crops such as rice, indigo and tobacco
Cat and Nine Tails	A weapon used to flog enslaved people, with a handle and 9 whips attached.
Hierarchy	A system in which members of an organization or society are ranked according to their status or level of authority.
Overseer	A person in charge of looking after enslaved people in the fields, monitoring their work.
Field Hand	An enslaved person who worked in the Plantation fields.
Reparations	Repayments or compensation
Parliament	A government body that creates Laws for the UK. It is based in Westminster, London.
Active Resistance	Violent or visible forms of resistance i.e. rebellion.
Passive Resistance	Not reacting visibly or more subtle forms of resistance i.e. refusing to comply with an instruction
Traditions	The transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation, or the fact of being passed on in this way
Tyrant	A cruel and oppressive ruler
Rebellion	An act of armed resistance to an established government or leader.
Abolition	The action of abolishing/getting rid of a system, practice, or institution
Abolitionist	Someone who supports the cause of Abolition
Emancipation	The fact or process of being set free from legal, social, or political restrictions
Boycott	Withdraw from trading or social relations with a country, organization, or person as a punishment or protest against their actions.
Rhetoric	The art of effective or persuasive writing or speaking. Often used to convince people of a particular argument.
Customs Officer	A person who works for the official organization responsible for collecting taxes on goods coming into a country and preventing illegal goods from being brought in.
Antiquated	Old fashioned or outdated
Royal Assent	When the Queen or King signs a law after Parliament has debated it. After this, it becomes officially a law in our country.