The British Take Over India

Objectives
- Understand the causes and effects of the Sepoy Rebellion.
- Explain how British rule affected India.
- Identify the origins of Indian nationalism.

Terms, People, and Places
- sati
- deforestation
- Ram Mohun Roy
- purdah

Note Taking
Reading Skill: Identify Causes and Effects. As you read this section, make a flowchart to show the causes and effects of British rule in India.

East India Company and Rebellion
In the early 1600s, the British East India Company won trading rights on the fringes of the Mughal empire. As Mughal power declined, the company’s influence grew. By the mid-1800s, it controlled three fifths of India.

Exploiting Indian Diversity
The British were able to conquer India by exploiting its diversity. Even when Mughal power was at its height, India was home to many people and cultures. As Mughal power crumbled, India became fragmented. Indians with different traditions and dozens of different languages were not able to unite against the newcomers. The British took advantage of Indian divisions by encouraging competition and disunity among rival princes. Where diplomacy or intrigue did not work, the British used their superior weapons to overpower local rulers.

Implementing British Policies
The East India Company’s main goal in India was to make money, and leading officials often grew rich. At the same time, the company did work to improve roads, preserve peace, and reduce banditry.

For more than 200 years, Mughal rulers governed a powerful empire in India. By the mid-1700s, however, the Mughal empire was collapsing from a lack of strong rulers. Britain then turned its commercial interests in the region into political ones.

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Teach

East India Company and Rebellion

Instruct

■ Introduce: Key Terms Ask students to find the key term sepoy (in blue) in the text and define its meaning. Explain that sepoys were Indian soldiers trained and led by British officers, who in turn answered to the British East India Company. Ask: What problems might this situation create? (conflicting loyalties, misuse of force for profit) Why did the British use this system? (cheap, easy to maintain)

■ Teach Ask: How did the British exploit Indian diversity? (They played different princes and peoples against each other) What changes did the East India Company bring to India? (It improved roads, preserved peace, reduced banditry, introduced Western education and law, and pushed for social change) How could the Sepoy Rebellion be interpreted as resulting from British feelings of superiority? (The rebellion flared because British rules did not take into consideration sepoys’ religious practices, possibly because the British did not regard Indian religions as equal in importance to their own religion.) Why do you think the Sepoy Rebellion was so violent? (religious fervor and long-simmering resentment over British control)

■ Quick Activity Have students access Web Code nap-2441 to take the Geography Interactive Audio Guided Tour and then have them note taking with the Sepoy Rebellion with the total area under British control in 1858.

Independent Practice

Have students write a letter from an Indian sepoy to Queen Victoria protesting the treatment of Indians by the East India Company. Make sure they include the Sepoy Rebellion as an example.

Monitor Progress

As students fill in their flowcharts, circulate to make sure they understand the causes of British rule in India. For a completed version of the flowchart, see Note Taking Transparencies, 150

History Background

British East India Company Founded in the 1600s, the British East India Company was the predecesor of the transnational corporation. Until 1858 the company did largely as it pleased, enforcing its will with a private army, its officers profited personally amid widespread corruption. Because of its monoply, it could drive down prices, causing destitution among India’s weavers, and sell high in Britain. It had many critics; even economist Adam Smith criticized its oppressive policies. Horace Walpole accused the company of having “murdered, deposed, plundered, usurped,” and caused “tremble in Bengal, in which millions perished” while the company hoarded rice for price gouging. Jawaharal Nehru noted it was not accidental that a Hindustani word absorbed into the English language was foot: “Edward Burke pointed out that every rap of profit made by an Englishman is lost for ever to India.”

By the early 1800s, British officials introduced Western education and legal procedures. Missionaries tried to convert Indians to Christianity, which they felt was superior to Indian religions. The British also pressed for social change. They worked to end slavery and the caste system and to improve the position of women within the family (One law banned sati (1857) as a Hindu custom practiced mainly by the upper classes. It called for a widow to join her husband in death by throwing herself on his funeral fire.)

Growing Discontent

In the 1850s, the East India Company made several unpopular moves. First, it required sepoys (in blue), or Indian soldiers in its service, to serve anywhere, either in India or overseas. For high-caste Hindus, however, overseas travel was an affront against their religion. Second, the East India Company passed a law that allowed Hindu widows to remarry. Hindus viewed both moves as a Christian conspiracy to undermine their beliefs.

Then, in 1857, the British issued new rifles to the sepoys. Troops were told to bite off the tips of cartridges before loading them into the rifles. The cartridges, however, were greased with animal fat—either from cows, which Hindus considered sacred, or from pigs, which were forbidden to Muslims. When the troops refused the order to “load rifles,” they were imprisoned. Angry sepoys rebelled against British officers, sparking a massacre of British troops, as well as women and children.

Rebellion and Aftermath

Angry sepoys rose up against their British officers. The Sepoy Rebellion swept across northern and central India. Several sepoy regiments marched off to Delhi, the old Mughal capital. There, they hailed the last Mughal ruler as their leader.

In some places, the sepoys brutally massacred British men, women, and children. But the British soon rallied and crushed the revolt. They then took terrible revenge for their earlier losses, torching villages and slaughtering thousands of unarmed Indians.

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The Sepoy Rebellion left a bitter legacy of fear, hatred, and mistrust on both sides. It also brought major changes in British policy. In 1858, Parliament ended the rule of the East India Company and put India directly under the British crown. It sent more troops to India, turning Indians to pay the cost of these occupying forces. While it slowed the “reforms” that had angered Hindus and Muslims, it continued to develop India for Britain’s own economic benefit.

Checkpoint: What were the causes of the Sepoy Rebellion in northern and central India?

Impact of British Colonial Rule

After 1858, Parliament set up a system of colonial rule in India called the British Raj. A British viceregal in India governed in the name of the queen, and British officials held the top positions in the civil service and army. Indians filled most other jobs. With their cooperation, the British made India the “brightest jewel” in the crown of their empire.

British policies were designed to incorporate India into the overall British economy. At the same time, British officials felt they were helping India to modernize. In their terms, modernizing meant adopting not only Western technology but also Western culture.

An Unequal Partnership

Britain saw India both as a market and as a source of raw materials. To this end, the British built roads and an impressive railroad network. Improved transportation let the British sell for:

Audio guided tour
Web Code: nap-2441

1. Special Needs
2. Less Proficient Readers
3. English Language Learners

For:

Adapted Reading and Note Taking Study Guide
Adapted Note Taking Study Guide, p. 220
Adapted Section Summary, p. 221

Answers

1. The Sepoy rebellion was caused by changes that violated Hindu beliefs: requiring sepoys to travel and to bite off greased cartridge tips and allowing widows to remarry.

Thinking Critically

1. The British forced Hindu and Muslim soldiers to do things that were against their religious beliefs.
2. northern and central India

Impact of British Colonial Rule

Instruct

■ Introduce: Vocabulary Builder
Students read the Vocabulary Builder term and definition. Ask students what the “overall” British economy included. (Trade across the British empire and the globe.) Ask what it meant for India to be just a part of this overall economy? (India’s interests were not a priority.)

■ Teach
Ask students how trade benefitted Britain, and how it benefited India. Then, on the board, write “British Raj,” the name for British rule, and beneath it, create two columns to list the positive and negative effects of British rule on India. Using the Idea Wave strategy (TE, p. T22), have students volunteer information to go in each column. Then ask: How did British rule lead to famine? (Improvements in health and farming led to population growth that could not be sustained. In addition, farmers grew cash crops rather than food for themselves.)

Quick Activity
Display Color Transparency 147: Indian Tea Poster. Use the lesson suggested in the transparency book to guide a discussion on trade in India.

Independent Practice
Have students fill in the Outline Map: Imperialism in India and shade the areas of India brought under British control.

Monitor Progress
Circulate to make sure students are filling in their Outline Maps accurately. Administer the Geography Quiz.

Vocabulary Builder

overall—(oh vur awl) adj. total

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Different Views on Culture

Indian Nationalism Grows

Instruct
- Introduce Have a volunteer read aloud the last sentence under the black heading Western Attitudes. Remind them that the word arrogant, used to describe Macaulay’s statement, means “full of self-importance.” Ask: How did the British strategy backfire? (Western ideas led to nationalism and calls for self-rule.)
- Quick Activity Have students take the role of Indian nationalists who are opening a new school. Have them decide whether they would establish the school in English, or in one of the major native Indian languages.

Independent Practice
Biography To help students better understand how educated Indians tried to blend Western with Indian culture, have them read the biography Rabindranath Tagore and complete the worksheet.

Monitor Progress
Check Reading and Note Taking Study Guide entries for student understanding.

Answers
nomadic herders became farmers, farmers grew cash crops, clearing farmland led to deforestation, and the British introduced new farming methods.

Caption a degree of peace and order, improved communication and transportation, a faster legal system, an increased sense of unity, and better educational opportunities for young men of the upper class.

Different Views on Culture

Indian Attitudes In the early 1800s, Ram Mohun Roy combined both views. A great scholar, he knew Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic classics, as well as English, Greek, and Latin works. Roy felt that India could learn from the West. He was a founder of Hindu College in Calcutta, which provided an English-style education to Indians. Many of its graduates went on to establish English schools all over the region. While Roy saw the value of Western education, he also wanted to reform traditional Indian culture.

Roy condemned some traditions, such as rigid customs distinguishing class, marriage, and mourning. He also condemned the practice of sati, the isolation of women in separate quarters. But he also set up educational institutions that helped revive pride in Indian culture. Because of his influence on later leaders, he is often hailed today as the founder of Indian nationalism.

Differentiation Solutions for All Learners

Advanced Readers A Gifted and Talented Indian literature is the oldest literature in the world, with some of the Vedas dating back to about 1000 B.C. Have students read an excerpt of Indian literature. Possible works could include an excerpt of the Vedas, a contemporary Indian account of the time period covered in this chapter, such as The Travels of Dean Macartney, or a work by Rabindranath Tagore, such as Gitanjali (Song Offerings). Help students to find these works or others in the school’s library or a local library. Then ask students to present a summary of the example they read to the class.

Population Growth and Famine The British introduced medical improvements and new farming methods. Better healthcare and increased food production led to rapid population growth. The rising numbers, however, put a strain on the food supply, especially as farmland was turned over to growing cash crops instead of food. In the late 1800s, terrible famines swept India.

Benefits of British Rule On the positive side, British rule brought some degree of peace and order to the countryside. The British revised the legal system to promote justice for Indians regardless of class or caste. Railroads helped Indians move around the country, while the telegraph and postal system improved communication. Greater contact helped bridge regional differences and develop a sense of national unity.

The upper classes, especially, benefited from some British policies. They sent their sons to British schools, where they were trained for posts in the civil service and military. Indian landowners and princes, who still ruled their own territories, grew rich from exporting cash crops.

Checkpoint How did British colonial rule affect Indian agriculture?

Railroads and Trade By building thousands of miles of railroads, the British opened up India’s vast interior to trade. The British also encouraged Indians to grow tea (top photo) and jute (bottom photo). Today, tea is one of India’s biggest crops. What were some of the benefits of British rule?
Western Attitudes The British disagreed among themselves about India. A few admired Indian theology and philosophy. As Western scholars translated Indian classics, they acquired respect for India’s ancient heritages. Western writers and philosophers borrowed ideas from Hinduism and Buddhism.

Most British people knew little about Indian achievements and dismissed Indian culture with contempt. In an essay on whether Indianism and Buddhism.

However, a few British respected Indian culture, and others favored a mixture of Western and Indian methods. Some Indians adopted Western culture, while others favored a mixture of Western and Indian culture. A few British respected Indian culture, but most despised it.

Indian Nationalism Grows

During the years of British rule, a class of Western-educated Indians emerged. In the view of Macaulay and others, this elite class would bolster British power. As it turned out, exposure to European ideas had the opposite effect. By the late 1800s, Western-educated Indians were spearheading a nationalist movement. Scotland in Western ideals such as democracy and equality, they dreamed of ending imperial rule.

Indian National Congress

In 1885, nationalist leaders organized the Indian National Congress, which became known as the Congress party. Its members believed in peaceful protest to gain their ends. They called for greater democracy, which they felt would bring more power to Indians like themselves. The Indian National Congress looked forward to eventual self-rule, but supported Western-style modernization.

Muslim League

At first, Muslims and Hindus worked together for self-rule. In time, however, Muslims grew to resent Hindu domination of the Congress party. They also worried that a Hindu-run government would oppress Muslims. In 1906, Muslims formed the Muslim League to pursue their own goals. Soon, they were talking of a separate Muslim state.

Checkpoint How did Indians and British view each other’s culture in the 1860s?

Assess and Reteach

Assess Progress

- Have students complete the Section Assessment.
- Administer the Section Quiz.

Teaching Resources, Unit 5, p. 66

To further assess student understanding, use:

- Progress Monitoring Transparencies, 102
- Spanish Reading and Note Taking Study Guide, p. 221
- Adapted Reading and Note Taking Study Guide, p. 221
- Online Self-quizzes with vocabulary practice

Reteach

If students need more instruction, have them read the section summary:

- Reading and Note Taking
- Study Guide, p. 221
- Quick Write: Draft an Opening Paragraph

Extend

Have students research the economic relationship between Britain and India today. Have them draw diagrams or graphic organizers to describe their findings.

Answers

- Some Indians adopted Western culture, while others favored a mixture of Western and Indian culture. A few British respected Indian culture, but most disparaged it.
- British rule led to schooling in Western ideals of democracy, which led to nationalism.

Writing About History

Responses should include opening sentences with interesting details that build to a clear thesis statement taking a strong position.

Section 4 Assessment

1. Most of the terms are related to British imperialism in India (sepoys, viceroy, deforestation) or Hindu customs targeted by the British (sati, purdah).

2. The British East India Company exploited Indian diversity and used its monopoly to extend control over most of India; then the British government took over.

3. Cause: British rules that violated Hindu beliefs, Effects: distrust and hatred on both sides and more direct control of India by the British.

4. Positive: improved transportation, communication, medical care, farming methods, order, justice, and education.

5. Western-educated Indians learned ideas about democracy, which they applied to their situation.