

The British Empire, Then and Now

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*Bristol Empire
2500
form*

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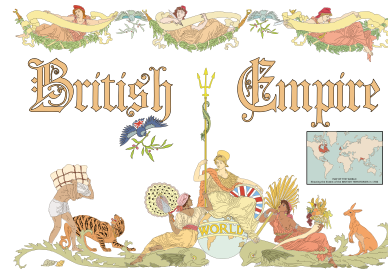
Why?

Why has English become the world's international language?

Why do many countries today, like Australia, Canada, and New Zealand, still have

the Queen of England as their queen?

Why are certain sports, like rugby and cricket, much more popular in particular countries?



A poster about the British Empire



Cape Town, South Africa

The answers lie in the history of the British Empire and its power over many centuries. The British at one point controlled over 24% of all the land in the world. Its power reached Africa, Asia, Australia, North and South America, as well as Europe.



Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe



Sydney, Australia

The Empire controlled the lives of billions of people all over the world. Although the Empire no longer exists, its influence can still be felt today.

Before the Empire

In the 16th century, two of the most powerful countries in Europe were Spain and Portugal. These



The Spanish taking control of the Americas

countries were expanding their powers all over the world in the Americas, Africa, and through Asia, taking their religion and language with them.



Painting of the Spanish in Mexico



Spanish buildings in the Philippines



A Dutch sailing ship

England, France, and the Netherlands built up their power and sent many people to live overseas in new countries in colonies.

A series of wars in the 17th and 18th centuries, and the union of England and Scotland into one country in 1707, made Great Britain one of the most powerful countries on earth.



Different parts of the UK

East India Company

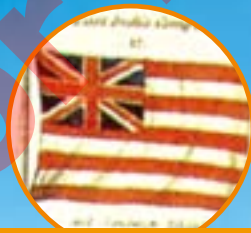
In 1600, the British East India Company was set up in London to build trade in India. The company had its own army and soon controlled much of India and South Asia. It also controlled lands in Africa and parts of the Middle East.



A military officer of the East India Company

The British government took control of the company's lands in 1857, greatly expanding the British Empire.

A British fort in Penang, Malaysia



East India Company flag

War and Expansion

The British colonized the North East of the Americas and set up several colonies there in the 17th century.



Georgian colonial house

After the War of Independence from 1775 to 1783, Britain lost control of these lands and turned to other places to develop its influence.



A celebration on the 400th anniversary of the founding of Jamestown in the United States

Plymouth Colony, the second permanent colony in the Americas

Comprehension Questions

1. The British Empire once controlled ... of the world's land.
(a) 5%
(b) 12%
(c) 20%
(d) 24%
2. Which of these areas were controlled by the Empire?
(a) Parts of Africa
(b) Parts of South Asia
(c) Parts of North America
(d) All of the above
3. ...were powerful in the 16th century.
(a) Spain and Nigeria
(b) Spain and Portugal
(c) Portugal and France
(d) France and America
4. The East India Company did NOT control lands in...
(a) South Asia
(b) Eastern Europe
(c) The Middle East
(d) Africa
5. What did Britain lose between 1775-1783?
(a) A fight with Napoleon
(b) Colonies in Africa
(c) Colonies in North America
(d) A fight with the Germans
6. Which of these helped Britain become a global power?
(a) The Industrial Revolution
(b) Its trade routes
(c) Its large navy
(d) All of the above
7. ...challenged the economic power of the British Empire.
(a) The USA and Germany
(b) The USA and France
(c) France and Germany
(d) Germany and England
8. The British Empire was over by around...
(a) 1901.
(b) 1947.
(c) 1948.
(d) 1980.
9. What is arguably the biggest remaining influence of the British Empire?
(a) The English language
(b) Sports like rugby
(c) The foods we eat
(d) All of the above
10. What did the British Empire NOT do?
(a) Make new trade routes
(b) Create new democratic governments
(c) Colonize all of Africa
(d) Destroy communities and cultures

Glossary

- **capture** to take into one's possession or control
- **challenge** to question; to dispute the truth or validity of
- **colonize** to take control over an area and live there or send people to live there
- **colony** a place controlled and ruled by a more powerful country
- **commonwealth** a group of countries with the same political or economic aims
- **effect** a result or consequence
- **expand** to make bigger
- **former** happening or existing in the past, but not now
- **independent** not controlled or ruled by anyone else
- **Industrial Revolution** the period of time when work began to be done more by machines in factories than by hand at home
- **influence** power to sway or affect based on money, ability, or position
- **load** to put a lot of things into a vehicle or machine
- **permanent** continuing always
- **remain** to continue to exist or stay
- **shine** to make a bright light
- **trade route** a passage or area along which people do business

Key 1. (d) 2. (d) 3. (b) 4. (b) 5. (c) 6. (d) 7. (a) 8. (d) 9. (a) 10. (c)