

WORLD HISTORY READERS

Level 5 • 0

# The Mughal Empire

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## The Beginnings

The Mughal Empire lasted for almost 350 years and was one of the greatest empires India has ever seen.

India has always been one of the most diverse nations in the world. It has many languages, religions, and cultures. The Mughal Empire united many tribes in India.



Map of the Mughal Empire

The Mughals oversaw India's greatest flourishing of art, culture, architecture, and imperial strength, especially in the 16th and 17th centuries.



An Indian wall painting, Agra

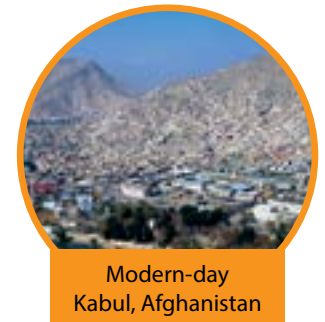


Three different Indian religions together: Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu

## Babur (1483-1530)

Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire, was descended from the Mongol emperor Genghis Khan and the Mongol-Turkish emperor Timur. It is from this connection that the Mughal Empire gets its name. In Persian, Mughal means Mongolian.

Babur was unable to get control of Samarkand, so he turned his attentions to other places. In 1504, Babur captured the city of Kabul in modern-day Afghanistan.

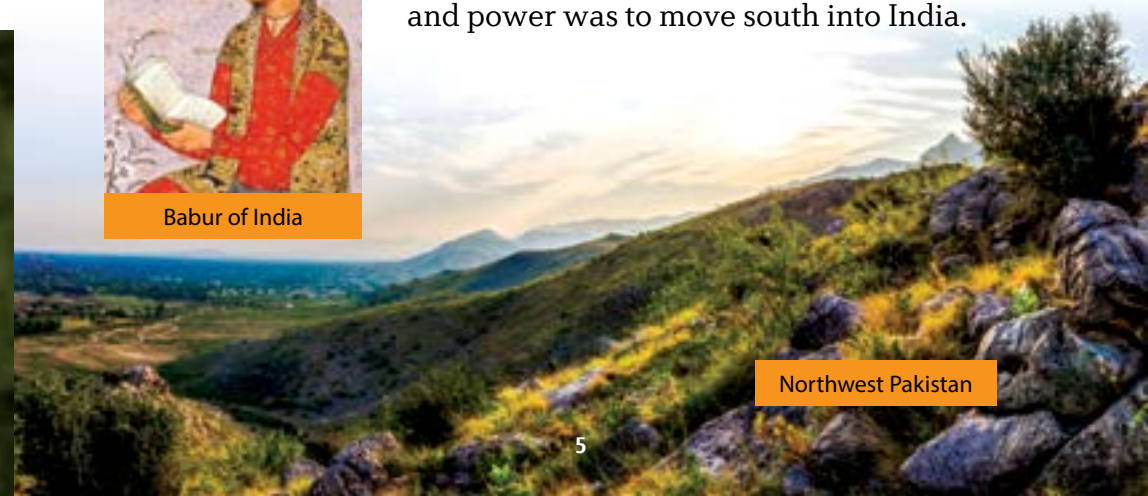


Modern-day Kabul, Afghanistan



Babur of India

From his base in Kabul, he faced the Persians in the west and Uzbeks in the north. Babur's only way to gain more land and power was to move south into India.



Northwest Pakistan





A Rajput horseman

As he moved south into India, Babur defeated the Lodi army using skillful strategies against a much larger army. Victory at the Battle of Panipat brought Babur the prized cities of Delhi and Agra.

However, the Lodi army of Delhi was not his only enemy. The Rajput army also wanted to

control Delhi. Babur defeated the Rajputs at Khanwa in March 1527.

Over the next three years, Babur occupied most of northern India. However, after his death, his son Humayun was forced out of rule by the Afghan armies of Sher Shan. Later, Humayun regained his title but died the next year.



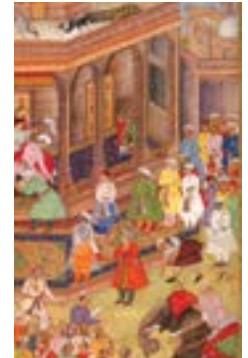
Babur's army fighting the Rajputs



Fighting at the Battle of Khanwa, 1527

## Akbar (1542-1605)

By the time Akbar came to power in 1556, he had to win back and secure much of the land his grandfather Babur had won. Akbar not only did this, but he expanded the empire as well. He united his empire with that of the Rajputs by marrying a Rajput princess and changing some laws to make Hindus and Muslims more equal.



Akbar greeting some Rajputs at his court

Akbar's empire thus became the largest in India's history since the time of Asoka some 1,300 years previously. It made him the most successful of the Mughal emperors.



Akbar of India



Tomb of Akbar, Agra



Fatehpur Sikri near Agra, India



A closer look at some of the architecture

Akbar is also known for his marvelous palaces. His most famous one was in the town of Fatehpur Sikri near Agra. This palace was built from the red stone found there. Fatehpur Sikri served as Akbar's capital from 1571-1585. Then it was abandoned for lack of fresh water.

One of Akbar's great talents was to use craftsmen from all over the region with their different artistic styles. He put them to use to create his own style of architecture.

His intelligence is shown in the construction of the Diwan-i-Khas (Hall of Private Audience). It is a room specifically built so the emperor can speak to someone in private, but people below can hear as well.

Diwan-i-Khas, Fatehpur Sikri, India



## Jahangir (1569-1627)

After Akbar's death in 1605, Akbar's only surviving son, Jahangir, became emperor. During his time as emperor, there were few incidents to cause him trouble. He spent his time advancing the arts.

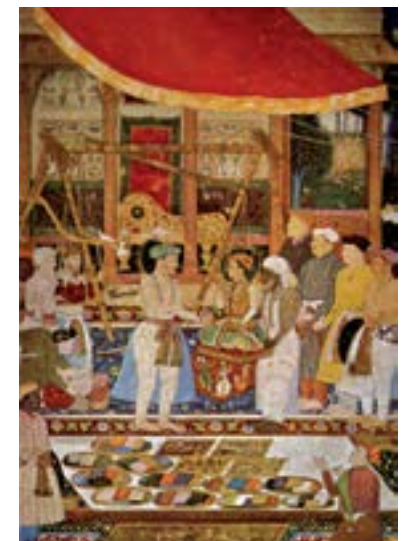
One of the greatest artistic advances in this period was the development of "miniatures." These are small paintings that combined Persian and Mughal painting styles.



A miniature of a lady



Jahangir receiving a guest, 1616



Jahangir



## Comprehension Questions

1. The Mughal Empire lasted about...  
(a) 200 years.  
(b) 250 years.  
(c) 300 years.  
(d) 350 years.
2. The word Mughal comes from ...  
(a) Turkish.  
(b) English.  
(c) Persian.  
(d) Chinese.
3. ...first built the Mughal Empire.  
(a) Akbar  
(b) Shah Jahan  
(c) Babur  
(d) Jahangir
4. What did Babur NOT do?  
(a) Defeat the Lodi army  
(b) Control Samarkand  
(c) Control most of northern India  
(d) Live in Kabul
5. Akbar united the empire by...  
(a) marrying a princess.  
(b) changing the laws.  
(c) making people more equal.  
(d) All of the above
6. Which famous building did Shah Jahan NOT build?  
(a) Fatehpur Sikri  
(b) Taj Mahal  
(c) Delhi Red Fort  
(d) Agra Fort
7. Aurangzeb's empire was...  
(a) small but powerful.  
(b) small but weak.  
(c) large and powerful.  
(d) large but weak.
8. Who was the greatest threat to the Mughal Empire?  
(a) Sher Shan  
(b) Mumtaz Mahal  
(c) Nadir Shah  
(d) Mir Jafar
9. Robert Clive took control of...  
(a) Hyderabad.  
(b) Bengal.  
(c) The British East India Company.  
(d) The British Raj.
10. The British Raj was a time when the British...  
(a) ruled India.  
(b) left India.  
(c) fought the French.  
(d) attacked Bengal.

## Glossary

- **abandon** to leave, ~~not meaning~~ to ever go back
- **assert** to cause others to recognize (one's authority or power)
- **be descended from** to be born into the family of
- **chaos** a state of utter confusion
- **centerpiece** the most important part of something
- **ethnic** relating to a race or a large group of people who have the same customs, religion, origin, etc.
- **flourish** to grow well; to make progress or advance
- **imperial** of or related to an empire
- **impose** to force or place (a rule, tax, etc.) on a group or individual
- **magnificence** greatness; deserving to be admired
- **marvelous** amazing; fabulous; extremely good
- **last** to exist for a very long time
- **pledge** to make a formal promise to give or do something
- **prestige** the respect and admiration given to someone or something
- **tolerance** the act of accepting the ways, beliefs, and customs of others