

E. M. Forster**A PASSAGE TO INDIA**

The book is set India in the 1920s. It's a story of Dr Aziz, an Indian doctor, his friend Mr Fielding, a British professor and two British women Mrs Moore and Miss Adela Quested. Due to something that happens in the Marabar Caves, the characters find themselves in the uncertainty and confusion of a changing India which draws attention to the difficult relationship between Indians and British.

In this reader you will find:

- Information about E. M. Forster's life and writing
- A focus on The History of English Colonialism
- A focus on religion and race in India during English Colonialism
- A focus on daily life in India during Colonialism
- Glossary of difficult words
- Comprehension and grammar exercises including B2 First-style activities

Tags

Classic literature Justice

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E. M. Forster

A PASSAGE TO INDIA

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Classic

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Book brief

- 1 *A Passage to India* is a 1924 Modernist novel written by English author E.M. Forster.
- 2 The story is told through an unnamed narrator who also lets the reader understand the inner state of the characters and is based on Forster's experiences in India.
- 3 The story is set in the 1920s in India during British Rule and the Indian Independence Movement.
- 4 The story centres around Dr Aziz, a young Indian doctor, who's accused of attacking a young Englishwoman, Adela Quested, during a trip to the Marabar Caves.
- 5 Main themes include the difficulty of English-Indian friendship, racial tension, and religion.

E. M. Forster

A Passage to India

Retold and Activities by
Alice Venessa Bever

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Lucia Sforza

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Main Characters

DR AZIZ

A young, intelligent, Indian doctor in Chandrapore, he's the protagonist of the story and has to fight to prove his innocence after being accused of a crime.



MRS MOORE

An elderly Englishwoman who travels to India with Adela Quested and becomes friends with Dr Aziz. She hopes that Adela will marry her son, Ronny.



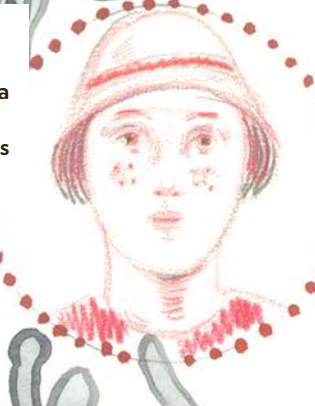
RONNY HEASLOP

Mrs Moore's son, and the Magistrate in Chandrapore.



MISS ADELA QUESTED

A young woman from England who travels to India with Mrs Moore to decide whether or not to marry Mrs Moore's son, Ronny.



CYRIL FIELDING

The headmaster of Government College near Chandrapore, he's different from most of the English in India and becomes friends with Aziz.





MRS TURTON

Mr Turton's wife, she's typical of the English in India who are rude to the local people.



MR TURTON

The Collector, the man who governs Chandrapore.



PROFESSOR GODBOLE

A Brahman Hindu who teaches at Fielding's college.



MAJOR CALLENDAR

A civil surgeon (head of the hospital) in Chandrapore, he treats Dr Aziz very badly.



MR MCBRYDE

The Superintendent of police in Chandrapore.

Before you Read

Reading Comprehension

1 Find the correct word to fill in each gap in this text about Aziz.

Aziz is an intelligent young widower who lives (1) Chandrapore, India and has three children. He's a doctor who has a good sense of humour but is also emotional. He thinks (2) deciding what is right and wrong behaviour is actually part of social correctness and therefore believes (3) good intentions rather (4) the black and white idea of right or wrong. He has confused feelings (5) the British in India but (6) his confusion, he does feel affection (7) some of the British people he gets to know.

Vocabulary

2 You'll see these words in Chapter 1. Complete the table with the correct forms, checking the meaning in your dictionary when necessary.

Noun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb
(1)	(2)	symbolic	(3)
mystery	x	(4)	(5)
(6)	to open	(7)	(8)
(9)	(10)	(11)	thankfully
(12)	(13)	real	(14)
apology	(15)	(16)	(17)

Listening B2 First

▶ 2 3 Listen to the beginning of Chapter 1. Choose the best answer A, B, or C for the following questions.

- 1 The city of Chandrapore is:
A enormous.
B extraordinary.
C ordinary.
- 2 The Ganges River in Chandrapore is:
A considered holy.
B not seen because of the market.
C a popular tourist destination.
- 3 From the colonial area, Chandrapore looks:
A attractive.
B mysterious.
C abandoned.
- 4 Mahmoud Ali and Hamidullah were discussing:
A whether British people were better than Indians.
B whether British people were friendly.
C whether Indians and British people could be friends.
- 5 The friends agreed that:
A Indians and English people could be friends only in England.
B Indians and English people could never be friends.
C Indians and English people could only be friends in India.
- 6 It takes for British women to become unbearable.
A two years
B two months
C six months



The Mosque

- 2 The small city of Chandrapore is an ordinary city, except for the mysterious Marabar Caves which are in the hills in the distance. In this city the Ganges River isn't considered holy* and there are no steps to walk to the water. The view of the river is hidden by the markets. The nicest houses in the city come from two hundred years ago. The rest of the landscape is dirty and dull.

Beyond the city are the British buildings which are efficient and simple. From this view, Chandrapore looks pretty because the worst parts of it aren't visible because of the thick greenery and fruit trees beyond the railway running next to the river. People who are new to the area must be driven down to the centre in order to understand how it is in reality. The only thing that connects the two contrasting areas is the sky which is ever-present.

A young man named Aziz arrived at his uncle Hamidullah's home by bicycle.

'I'm so sorry for being late!'

His other friend Mahmoud Ali had arrived before him and the two of them were discussing whether Indians and English people could be friends. Mahmoud Ali and Hamidullah had been talking about their different experiences with British people, both positive and negative*.

holy connected with God or a particular belief

positive and negative good and bad

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In the end, the friends decided that Indians could only be friends with an English person if they both live in England.

‘It takes two years for an Englishman and six months for an Englishwoman in India to become unbearable,’ said Hamidullah.

▶ 3 Before dinner Aziz spoke with Hamidullah’s wife (who was also his aunt) through a purdah.

‘You should have remarried after your wife’s death.’

‘One marriage is enough for me,’ said Aziz.

Though his children had moved to a different city to live with his mother-in-law, he could see them whenever he wanted to.

They sat down to eat dinner with Hamidullah’s cousin and Aziz happily started reading poetry aloud, something he loved to do. The guests were entertained by this typical Indian way of publically reciting* poems. Unfortunately, Aziz was interrupted by a servant who gave him a note saying that he needed to go to Major Callendar’s bungalow* right away. This made Aziz quite frustrated* but Callendar, the head of the hospital, was his boss. He had to leave dinner and abandon his poetry reading to find out what Callendar needed.

On the way to the Callendars, Aziz’s bike got a puncture* so he hired a tonga to take him. As soon as Aziz arrived at Callendar’s bungalow, two English ladies, Mrs Callendar and Mrs Lesley, came out of the house and rudely stepped up into his tonga and left.

Discovering that Major Callendar had gone out without having left a message for him, Aziz decided not to write a note. He simply told the servant to advise the major that Aziz had in fact come as requested. Since all the tongas of Chandrapore were at the Club and the ladies had taken his, Aziz decided to walk home.

A **purdah** is a curtain worn or used by women so they’re separated from men and strangers.

A **tonga** is a light vehicle used in India which is pulled by a horse or a donkey.

recite repeat aloud from memory in front of an audience

bungalow a building developed in India which is a type of low house with one floor or upper rooms in the roof

frustrated feeling annoyed because you can’t change a situation that you don’t like

puncture a small hole in a tyre, the black part that covers the wheel



While walking in the night air, Aziz decided to stop to rest at his favourite mosque. He always felt very at home there and believed the mosque to be a symbol* of Islam and love. He was filled with emotion and started to cry. Suddenly he saw a column* moving which he thought might be a ghost! He'd confused the column for an Englishwoman and Aziz wasn't happy about her being there.

'Madam! You can't be here. This is a mosque and it's a holy place! And take off your shoes!' Aziz shouted angrily.

'But I did take them off. I left them at the entrance to the mosque. I know that God is here.' The woman spoke cautiously.

'I'm sorry, I thought you were just like the other English ladies. What's your name?'

The woman shyly told him that her name was Mrs Moore. She'd decided to leave the Club earlier because she'd seen the play before in London and it was too hot for her inside.

'I'm so sorry for scaring* you but it isn't a good idea to go out at night by yourself.'

This started a friendly conversation between them. Aziz told Mrs Moore that he was a doctor and she mentioned that her son was Ronny Heaslop, the City Magistrate.

Aziz knew him well. Then the two discovered that they both had two sons and a daughter. As the conversation became more relaxed, Aziz revealed* that he didn't like Mrs Callendar. Mrs Moore seemed to be sympathetic* towards him so he continued to talk to her about how he'd been treated badly on various occasions by British people.

'You're an Oriental because you can sense* who you like and who you don't like,' he told Mrs Moore before walking her to the Club.

symbol (here) something that stands for a belief

column

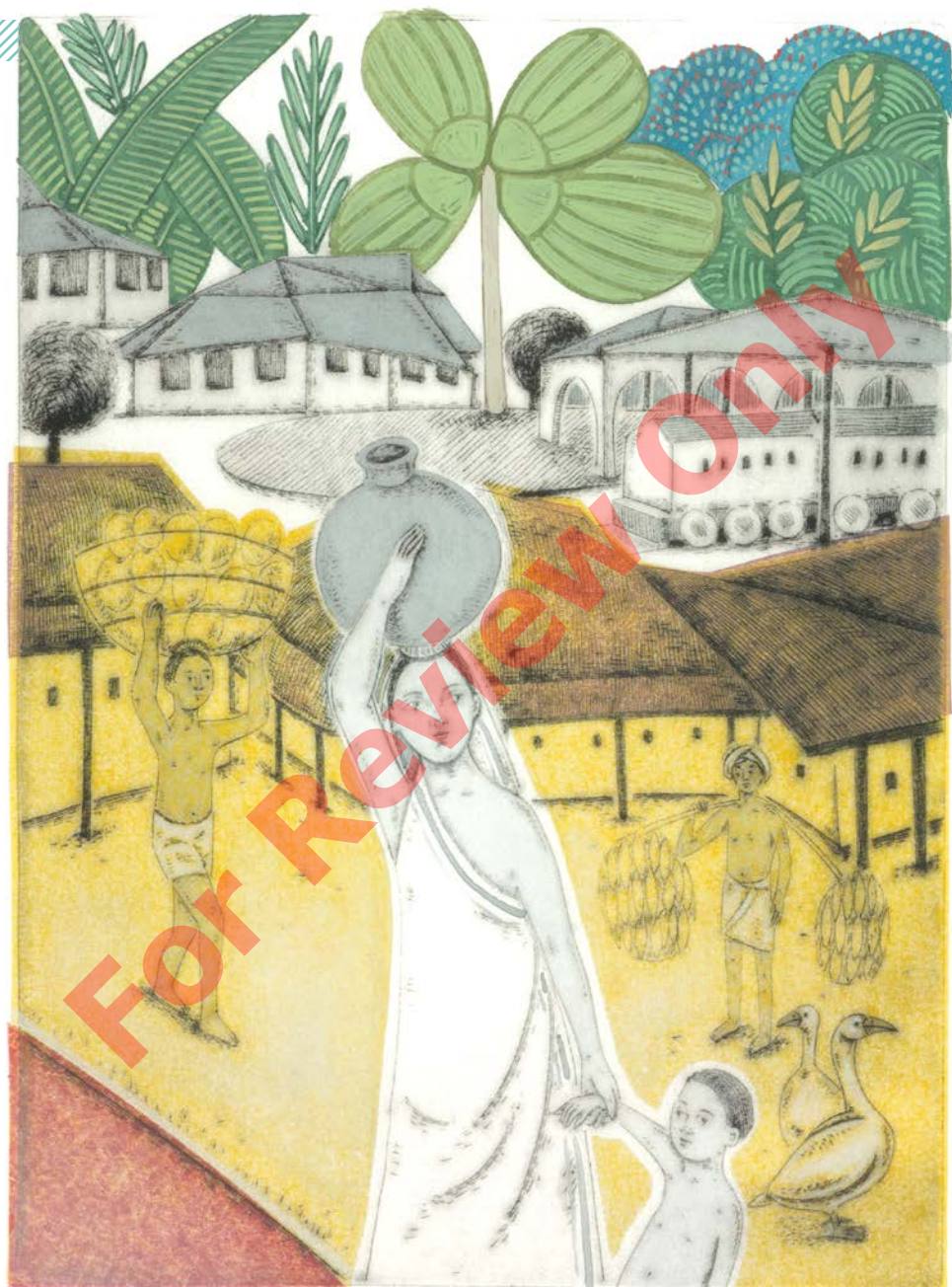


scare frighten

reveal tell (usually a secret)

sympathetic feeling or showing care or understanding

sense feel, know



'I'd invite you in but I'm not a member,' Mrs Moore said as they arrived at the gates.

'I'm an Indian so I can never go to the Club, not even with the invitation of a guest,' replied Aziz plainly as he walked away.

On the path he looked at the beautiful moon and his treasured mosque and felt content.

Mrs Moore entered the Club again and met Adela Quested, the woman she'd accompanied* to India from England to possibly marry her son. As neither of them wanted to watch the play, they chatted together to pass the time. Adela told her that she wanted to see the real India and Mrs Moore felt the same.

Mrs Moore was tired after her walk and bored of her surroundings. She began thinking about how her new life was dull, especially after the exciting journey they'd taken to arrive there.

Her thoughts were interrupted by Mr Turton, the Collector* who offered drinks to the two women. He went on to speak of Mrs Moore's son who was helping out with the play, praising him and saying that Ronny was a man of honour. His mother was quite surprised by this as she'd never thought of her son in that way. After the play finished, Ronny joined the two women.

'I want to see the real India!' Adela said.

Hearing this, the women at the club looked at Adela strangely. Being quite racist* towards the Indians, they were surprised by her interest to want to meet Indians and know their country.

'Indians can't be trusted!' the women warned Miss Quested.

Ronny asked Cyril Fielding, the headmaster at Government College, his advice on seeing 'the real India' and he replied:

accompany go with as a companion
Collector the most important British official
in Chandrapore

racist showing dislike and lack of respect for
someone just because they're different from
you in some way

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‘Go and see real Indians if you want to see the real India,’ and walked away.

The English ladies were shocked by his comment and continued to speak about the Indians quite harshly* until Mr Turton interrupted them.

‘I could have a Bridge Party at my home if you like.’ He explained that it wouldn’t be a party for card playing but a party to bridge* the two cultures*. Both Indians and English people would be present.

Adela was thankful to Mr Turton. On the way home with Adela and Ronny, Mrs Moore felt better and looked up at the sky, especially the moon. It made her think of heaven.

When they passed by the mosque, she mentioned the man she’d met earlier. Ronny was surprised that she’d wandered out alone and said that it wasn’t a good idea. Mrs Moore responded stating* that ‘the young doctor’ had said the same thing to her. Her description made Ronny think that the man she was speaking of was English though his identity was a mystery to him. He didn’t know any young British doctors in town. He was shocked when he understood that his mother had been chatting to an Indian but when he learned that it was Aziz, a man he knew, he was relieved.

‘I have no problems with him. But did he say anything bad about the English?’ Ronny asked his mother after they’d returned to the bungalow and Adela had gone to bed.

‘He doesn’t really like the Callendars,’ said Mrs Moore.

She didn’t think this information was something that would interest her son. Instead, he told her he was going to tell the Major because it wasn’t right for an Indian to speak badly about his boss.

harshly in an unkind way
bridge (here) join, fill the space between

culture the ideas, traditions and social behaviour of a particular people or society
state say

‘Oh, no! Please don’t say anything. It was a private conversation.’ Mrs Moore was worried but her son felt that telling Major Callendar was the right thing to do.

‘I’d want him to do the same thing for me. In India, *private* does not exist.’

Mrs Moore didn’t understand what he meant.

Ronny continued to tell her about the place of Indians in society using words and expressions she’d never heard him say before. He seemed unreasonable and repeated that Aziz hadn’t been correct in speaking to his mother about Major Callendar.

‘An Indian can’t say those things to a British lady.’

He thought that the young doctor had been inappropriate*.


In the end, Ronny agreed to keep quiet only if his mother would promise not to talk about Dr Aziz anymore to Adela. Ronny wasn’t comfortable with her being so curious about the Indians.

‘What if she starts worrying about how we treat the Indians?’ he thought to himself. Mrs Moore agreed to do as her son wished and they kissed good night.

Mrs Moore continued thinking about Aziz when she was alone in her room. At first he’d been angry at her, then kind and then he’d complained about a lot of things. He’d been open with her and so emotional. As she was going to bed, she saw a wasp* asleep on a hook*. Thinking of all the animals which deserve respect, she didn’t bother it.

‘You’re lovely,’ she said kindly.

The next day Mr Turton sent invitations to his Bridge Party to all the Indian gentleman in Chandrapore who found the gesture*

inappropriate unsuitable behaviour
wasp 

hook 
gesture (here) action, decision

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surprising and curious. The invitation also stated that women could come without their purdah!

The Indian men discussed the upcoming* event and the reason they thought Mr Turton was having the party. Some were impressed by the invitation but the event would be far from where they lived and not easy to get to. Mahmoud Ali believed that Mr Turton had been ordered by the Lieutenant-General to organise the Bridge Party.

The most important man in the group, the Nawab Bahadur said he'd go to the party. This got the attention of the group.

Nawab is a Muslim nobleman or person of high status.

'You'll be thought to be cheap if you accept the invitation,' said one of the men, Ram Chand.

This kind of expression wasn't very polite, especially to someone so prominent*.

Bahadur is an honourable title given to officers in British India.

'You can't say that to him!' said Mahmoud Ali.

The Nawab Bahadur was the leading landowner of the district* who was also a philanthropist*.

He decided he wasn't offended by the comment.

'I don't think it'll be 'cheap' if I go or if any of us attend the party. Mr Turton's invitation was written very well.'

He left, saying as he went that he'd see the other men at the event. As he was an important and hospitable* person in the community, the other gentlemen then began to encourage each other to go to the party. Around the group were others who'd never be invited to such a party. Either they weren't educated or wealthy enough or they were missionaries who weren't part of the rest of the British.



upcoming happening soon
prominent leading, very important
district an area of a city or country

philanthropist a person who tries to help others, especially by giving a large amount of money
hospitable friendly and welcoming to visitors or guests

Reading B2 First

1 Choose the correct answer A, B, C or D.

- 1 People who are new to the area must be driven down to the city because
 - A they think the city is dangerous.
 - B they think the city is too far.
 - C they don't know the roads to the city.
 - D they don't have their own transportation.

- 2 A purdah is used to
 - A protect women from men.
 - B protect women from the sun.
 - C hide women's faces from men and strangers.
 - D allow women to keep cool.

- 3 After learning that Major Callendar is no longer at his home, Aziz decides to
 - A write him a note.
 - B wait for him.
 - C leave a message with the servant for him.
 - D go looking for him.

- 4 When Mrs Moore says: 'I'd invite you in but I'm not a member,' Aziz tells her
 - A that he'd love to join her sometime.
 - B that he didn't really like the Club.
 - C that he'd already been to the Club.
 - D that he could never go to the Club because he was Indian.

- 5 Who's Miss Adela Quested?
 - A The possible future wife of Mrs Moore's son, Ronny.
 - B The new wife of Ronny Heaslep.
 - C Ronny Heaslep's friend.
 - D Mrs Moore's daughter from her second marriage.

- 6 How did Ronny feel when he learned that the Indian man in the mosque was Aziz?
 - A Relieved.
 - B Angry.
 - C Indifferent.
 - D Surprised.

- 7 How did Mrs Moore react when she saw a wasp?
- A She screamed.
 - B She trapped it and put it outside.
 - C She spoke kindly to it.
 - D She ran away from it.
- 8 The Nawab Bahadur thought
- A Mr Turton's invitation was written poorly.
 - B Mr Turton was cheap.
 - C anyone who went to the Bridge Party was cheap.
 - D Mr Turton's invitation was written well.

Grammar B2 First

- 2 Read the text below and choose the best answer (A, B, C, D) to fill in the gap.

The Ganges River

The Ganges River which (1) across India and Bangladesh has always been (2) to be one of the most important rivers in the world. It's 2,525 kilometres (3) and runs through the western Himalayan mountains in the Indian state of Uttarakhand and (4) the Gangetic plain of India and Bangladesh in the south and east. It (5) into the Bay of Bengal. The river is important to the millions of people who live (6) it and it's very holy to Hindus. (7), pollution has become a major threat to both humans and animals who live near the river. The Ganga Action Plan wants to help clean the water although it's been criticised for bad planning and (8) support from those in power.



- | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1 A is | B starts | C occupies | D flows |
| 2 A deserved | B thought about | C considered | D counted on |
| 3 A length | B long | C short | D tall |
| 4 A across | B above | C underneath | D below |
| 5 A falls | B stops | C closes | D empties |
| 6 A in | B of | C long | D beside |
| 7 A However | B Therefore | C Because | D Otherwise |
| 8 A losing of | B lack of | C finishing of | D finding of |