



How Britain Controlled India and Changed It Forever

KS4 HISTORY

BRITISH EMPIRE

COLONIAL RULE

Ages 13-16

🕒 4 min read

How Did Britain Take Over India?

Britain didn't conquer India with one big battle. Instead, it happened slowly over about **200 years**, starting in the 1600s. At first, the **British East India Company** was just a business trying to buy spices and cloth. But gradually, the Company built its own army and made deals with local Indian rulers. By the 1750s, **Britain was the most powerful force** in India. After a big rebellion in **1857**, the British government took direct control and made India part of the **British Empire**.

Think of it like a video game where you start with one small base, then slowly build more bases until you control the whole map.

Why Did Britain Want to Control India?

Money was the main reason. India had incredible wealth—spices, cotton, silk, tea, and jewels that European people wanted to buy. Britain could grow richer by controlling these resources and selling them around the world. India also had **300 million people**, so British companies could sell goods to a huge market. **Power and pride** mattered too—owning a huge empire made Britain feel like the greatest country in the world.

What Happened to Indian People?

The impact on **ordinary Indian people was terrible.** British rulers took India's wealth and sent it to **Britain**. Indian farmers were forced to grow crops like cotton and indigo for export instead of food crops for themselves. Millions of Indians starved during famines because their own food was being sold away. Indians weren't allowed to have important jobs in their own country—the best positions went to British people. Schools taught children British history instead of Indian history, making many Indians feel ashamed of their own culture.

Think of it like if someone came to your house, took all your toys and food, told you that you weren't allowed to be in charge, and said their way of doing things was

better than yours.

The Fight for Freedom

Indian people didn't accept this forever. A leader called **Mahatma Gandhi** taught Indians to protest peacefully. After **nearly 100 years of struggle, India finally became free in 1947.** But by then, the damage was deep—India was poor, and Britain's control had divided Indian communities in painful ways.