

# History A-Level summer home learning pack

Dear A-Level Historians,

I'm really excited to introduce to you this pack, which will help you to prepare for the wonderful course that is your History A-Level. It will be a fantastic opportunity to learn more about the past, studying time periods and concepts that we've never looked at before. In particular, your entire Year 12 course will look at the ways that people campaigned for their rights and freedoms in two contrasting countries (India and the USA), which is so important for helping us to understand how our modern world has been shaped. A-Level History also offers you a great chance to develop your critical thinking and ability to put together an argument, as well as your writing style, so you've made a great choice!

Here is an outline of what you will study, as part of the Edexcel A-Level History specification:

Time	Unit	%	Key foci
Year 12 unit 1	In search of the American Dream: the USA, c1917–96	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The changing role of the US President</li><li>• Changing ideologies in 20<sup>th</sup> century America</li><li>• The fight for civil rights, for Black Americans and other minority groups</li><li>• The changing position of women</li><li>• Migration and economic change</li><li>• Changes in popular culture, e.g. cinema</li></ul>
Year 12 unit 2	India, c1914–48: the road to independence	20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The impact of WW1 on British rule in India</li><li>• The fight against British rule</li><li>• Changing government in India</li><li>• Gandhi's role</li><li>• The impact of WW2 on British rule in India</li><li>• Indian independence</li></ul>
Year 13 unit 3	Lancastrians, Yorkists and Henry VII, 1399–1509	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The relationship between the king and his 'over-mighty' subjects</li><li>• The 'Wars of the Roses'</li><li>• Changes to government in fifteenth century England: the growth of Parliament</li><li>• Henry V and the battle of Agincourt</li><li>• The challenges of Richard III</li><li>• Henry VII and the start of the Tudors</li></ul>
Year 13 course work	In search of the American Dream: the USA, c1917–96	20%	As above – you will choose a particular area to focus on, and write an extended essay (3-4,000 words) investigating an interesting question. You will evaluate historians' work to come to your own argument.

The work set out in this pack will help to introduce you to the units that you'll study in Year 12 (India and America).

If you have any questions about it, please don't hesitate to contact me on [e.lacey@arkjohnkeatsacademy.org](mailto:e.lacey@arkjohnkeatsacademy.org)

Have a wonderful summer, and enjoy getting ready for your exciting A-level courses!

Ms Lacey

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## **Section A – The USA, 1917-96**

### **Task 1 – The story of America (3.5 hours)**

Watch the documentary, 'The Story of America':

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMnXJpOYRYg>

As you watch, answer these questions:

1. What do Americans mean when they say 'the American Dream'?
2. How was America settled by the British? Which types of people mainly travelled to America, and why do you think they wanted to go there?
3. What was the American Revolution, and why did it happen?
4. Why is the idea of 'freedom' so important to Americans?
5. Why would the American Revolution have an important impact on the mindset of Americans?
6. What is the US Constitution, and why is it so important to Americans?
7. Why did the American Civil War happen, and what impact would it have on America going forwards?
8. Why did America become so wealthy? How would this impact the 'American Dream'? How did this cause problems in some ways?
9. Who migrated to America? What impact would this have on American society?
10. What examples are there of racism in America in the 1900s?
11. How did WW2 impact America?
12. Why did the Cold War happen, and how did it impact America?

## **Task 2 – Timeline of American Presidents (1.5 hours)**

a) Create a timeline of all the American presidents from 1917 to 1996 including the dates they were in office.

b) Provide a key to show which Presidents are Democrats and which are Republicans (the 2 main political parties in the USA).

c) For each President add 1 or 2 key features about their time in office. (This could be a key event like the Vietnam War or a key policy like the New Deal)

e.g.

Woodrow Wilson (1913-21)

The USA enters the First World War in 1917

### Suggested resources:

The White House website

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/>

BBC

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/country\\_profiles/1230058.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/country_profiles/1230058.stm)

### Further background reading:

Hugh Brogan, *The Penguin History of the United States of America* (Penguin, 2001)

David Reynolds, *American, Empire of Liberty: A New History* (Penguin, 2009)

Jane Shuter, Rosemary Rees, William Beinart, Edward Teversham, Rick Rogers *Paper 1 & 2: Searching for rights and freedoms in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Pearson, 2015)

Joanne de Pennington, *Modern America: 1865 to the Present: The USA, 1865 to the Present* (SHP Advanced History Core Texts), (2005)

## **Section B – India, 1914-47**

### **Task 3 – The British Conquest of India (1 hour)**

Watch this documentary on the British Conquest of India:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7GOh8qlLwQ>

As you watch, answer these questions:

1. How did British rule in India come about?
2. How did Britain create a large army in India?
3. Why does Jeremy Paxman (the presenter of the documentary) say ‘the whole thing was built upon something decidedly fragile’?
4. How were India involved in WW1?
5. How did the British manipulate some Indians to help them rule?
6. How did the British impact India? Write down as many things as you can think of

## Task 4 – How did the British rule India? (1.5 hours)

Read through this information on the way that the British ruled India, and then answer the questions beneath it:

### The debate about British rule in India

The rule of the British in India is possibly the most controversial and the most hotly debated aspect of the history of the British empire. Admirers of British rule point to the economic developments, the legal and administrative system, the fact that India became the centre of world politics. Critics of British rule generally point out that all of these benefits went to a tiny British ruling class and the majority of Indians gained little. Admirers of British rule counter this by saying that most Indians were poor and oppressed by their own leaders before the British arrived, and that British rule was less harsh on ordinary Indians than rule by Indian princes.

Perhaps the main reason why the arguments are so heated and so complex is that India was very different from the other territories that made up the empire. North America and Australia, for example, were sparsely populated and their populations were less economically developed than Britain. India, however, had a huge population and was just as developed as Britain in the 1700s when the British arrived.

The British were able to take control of India mainly because India was not united. The British signed treaties and made military and trading alliances with many of the independent states that made up India. The British were very effective at infiltrating these states and gradually taking control. They often left the local princes in charge of the various parts of India. These local princes were effective at maintaining British rule and gained much from being loyal to the British.

### ☀ The Indian Mutiny/Rebellion, 1857-58



The largest rebellion against British rule took place in 1857-58. It was known in Britain as the Indian Mutiny. This was because it began with a rebellion by Indian troops (sepoys) serving in the army of the British East India Company. British rule in India was handled by the East India Company. Indian historians dislike the term 'mutiny' because it suggests that only Indian troops were involved. In fact, once some of the Indian troops did revolt, the rebellion against British rule spread rapidly and involved many local Indian leaders who had a wide range of complaints against British rule. The British preferred to think of the rebellion as a mutiny because this word disguised the huge scale of the rebellion. The word mutiny also covered up the involvement of ordinary Indians. The British preferred to keep this quiet as it suggested that British rule was not widely accepted in India.

The rebellion lasted about 18 months. It was brutal and vicious. The rebels committed many atrocities. They were, however, disunited and badly organised. Gradually British troops, along with the forces of Indian rulers who sided with the British, overcame them. There is a lot of evidence that the great majority of ordinary Indian peasants tried as hard as they could to stay out of the rebellion. They thought (probably rightly) that their lives would change little if they were ruled by the British or by the Indian leaders who were trying to get rid of the British. Eventually the British forces defeated the rebels. Their revenge was just as vicious as the rebels had been, and the British and their allies committed many atrocities. The rebellion/mutiny left a lasting legacy of mistrust, fear and hatred between the British and Indians, which continued throughout the British time in charge of India. After the rebellion the British government took direct control of India away from the East India Company.

### ☀ British rule - the Raj



British rule from the time after the mutiny is often called the Raj. During this period a tiny number of British officials and troops (about 20,000 in all) ruled over 300 million Indians. This was often seen as evidence that most Indians accepted and even approved of British rule. There is no doubt that Britain could not have controlled India without the co-operation

of Indian princes and local leaders, as well as huge numbers of Indian troops, police officers, civil servants etc.

Other historians point out that British rule of India was maintained by the fact that Indian society was so divided that it could not unite against the British. In fact, the British encouraged these divisions. The better-off classes were educated in English schools. They served in the British army or in the civil service. They effectively joined the British to rule their poorer fellow Indians. There are huge arguments about whether the British created or enlarged these divisions in Indian society (British society was deeply divided by class), or whether the British simply took advantage of divisions that were already present in Indian society. For much of the 1800s the average Indian peasant had no more say in the way he or she was ruled than did the average worker in the United Kingdom.

The British view tended to portray British rule as a charitable exercise - they suffered India's environment (eg climate, diseases) in order to bring to India good government and economic development (eg railways, irrigation, medicine). Modern admirers of British rule also note these benefits.

Other historians point out that ruling India brought huge benefits to Britain. India's huge population made it an attractive market for British industry. In the 1880s, for example, about 20% of Britain's total exports went to India. By 1910 these exports were worth £137 million. India also exported huge quantities of goods to Britain, especially tea, which was drunk or exported on from Britain to other countries. Then there were the human resources. The Indian army was probably Britain's single greatest resource. Around 40% of India's wealth was spent on the army. This army was used by Britain all over the world, including the wars in South Africa in 1899-1902 and the First and Second World Wars. It was the backbone of the power of the British empire. In 1901, for example, the British viceroy (governor) of India, Lord Curzon, said 'As long as we rule India, we are the greatest power in the world. If we lose it we shall straightway drop to a third rate power'.

Did India gain or lose from British rule? Some recent research suggests that British rule did little for India in economic terms. Britain gained hugely from ruling India, but most of the wealth created was not invested back into the country. For example, from 1860 to about 1920, economic growth in India was very slow - much slower than in Britain or America. India's population only grew by about 1% per year, which also suggests there was not much economic growth. India actually started importing food under British rule, because Indians were growing 'cash crops' like cotton and tea to be sent to Britain.

It is extremely important not to forget the terrible famines that devastated India. These were partly the result of weather, but partly caused by British policies. Food shortages came about because Indians were growing cash crops. When famine struck in 1876-77 and 1899-1900 the British system of government was completely overwhelmed and could not organise a big enough relief effort. As well as these massive famines, there were many other smaller, more localised famines.

On the other hand, research suggests that from about 1870 to 1930 Britain took about 1% of India's wealth per year. This was much less than the French, Dutch and Germans took from their lands. The British invested about £400 million in the same period. They brought in an irrigation programme, which increased the amount of land available for farming by 8 times. They developed a coal industry, which had not existed before. Public health and life expectancy increased under British rule, mainly due to improved water supplies and the introduction of quinine treatment against malaria.

Big landowners, Indian princes, the Indian middle classes all gained in terms of job opportunities, business opportunities and careers in areas like the law. Ordinary Indians gained little, but the argument still continues about whether British rule made much difference to their lives. Many historians think that the majority of Indians would have remained poor even if they had been ruled by Indians.

Now answer these questions:

1. Summarise the debate *for* British rule in India and summarise the view *against*
2. Why was India so different to the other territories of the British Empire?
3. Explain how the British were able to take control of India

The Indian Mutiny/Rebellion, 1857-58

4. What was the East India Company?
5. Who rebelled against British rule in 1857-58?
6. Why did the British prefer to call the uprising a 'mutiny' whereas Indians called it a 'rebellion'?
7. Why did the Indian rebellion fail?
8. How did most ordinary Indian peasants feel about their rulers?
9. What were the main outcomes of the rebellion?

British Rule- the Raj

10. What was the Raj?
11. Give 2 reasons why the British were able to rule 300 million Indians.
12. What do historians argue about regarding divisions in Indian society?
13. Give 3 examples of how ruling India benefitted Britain.
14. What does recent research suggest about the impact of British rule on the Indian economy? (Give details)
15. How did the British help cause famines?
16. What are the arguments for the British helping India?
17. Which argument do you find more convincing and why?

Further background reading:

Ian Copland, *India 1885–1947: The Unmaking of an Empire* (Routledge, 2001)

Tim Leadbeater, *Britain and India 1845–1947* (Hodder, 2008)

Lawrence James, *Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India* (Abacus, 1998)

## **Task 5 (optional) – How did the British impact India? (1 hour)**

Shashi Tharoor is an Indian politician and writer. He was born in London but raised in India. He speaks around the world, educating people about the cruelty with which the British acted in India, and the lasting harmful effects of their rule.

Watch this video, showing him discussing the impact of Britain on India:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2SEPPnd3380>