



Summary

In the 1500s Europeans began to settle in the Americas. Their large farms or plantations needed a lot of workers and so they began to import slaves from Africa. This slave trade was very profitable but inhumane and brutal for the slaves. Slavery was abolished in Britain in 1807. By the 1600s the British had begun to trade in India, eventually India became a British colony which provided cheap raw materials for British factories. Later on the British claimed land in South Africa but the discovery of diamonds there led to conflict between the British, the Zulu tribes and the Dutch Boers. Finally, in 1788 Captain Cook 'discovered' Australia which the British used as a colony for punishing criminals. By the 1800s the British Empire covered 25% of the world's land and included 25% of the world's population. The British Empire



Key Figures

Olaudah Equiano	A former enslaved African who bought his freedom and wrote an autobiography showing the horror of slavery
William Wilberforce	British politician who led the movement to abolish slavery.
Captain Cook	English explorer and map maker who sailed the Pacific Ocean and 'discovered' Australia.
Cetshwayo, Zulu King	Formidable Zulu King who fought the British and tried to negotiate with them for the return of his territory.
John Newton	English vicar who supported the abolition of slavery and wrote the song 'Amazing Grace'

Key Vocabulary

Slave Trade	The capture, transportation and sale of African people
Plantation	Large, profitable farms that produced crops like sugar, tobacco and cotton
Abolition	To stop or get rid of something. Often a law.
Empire	A group of countries ruled over by one other country.
Colony	A country that is part of an empire. Ruled from somewhere else and often exploited.
War of Independence	When a group of people rebel against their rulers to achieve self government
Mutiny	When soldiers or sailors illegally rebel against the orders of their superior officers.
Boer	Dutch settlers in South Africa
Zulu	Powerful tribe in South Africa
Convict	Someone who has been found guilty of committing a crime. A criminal
Aborigine	The native people of a country—often used in relation to the people of Australia

Challenge— Should the British be expected to pay compensation for those affected by the legacy of slavery? Explain.

Is it appropriate to commemorate the British Empire in a positive way? Is it right that children learn about it in school?

Other Resources

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zf7fr82/revision/1>

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