

Teacher Overview Objectives:

Response to Imperialism: Sepoy Rebellion

NYS Social Studies Framework Alignment:

Key Idea	Conceptual Understanding	Content Specification
10.4 IMPERIALISM: Western European interactions with Africa and Asia shifted from limited regional contacts along the coast to greater influence and connections throughout these regions. Competing industrialized states sought to control and transport raw materials and create new markets across the world. (Standards: 2, 3, 4; Themes: MOV, TCC, GEO, GOV, EXCH)	10.4b Those who faced being colonized engaged in varying forms of resistance and adaptation to colonial rule with varying degrees of success.	Students will investigate one example of resistance in Africa (Zulu, Ethiopia, or Southern Egypt/Sudan) and one in China (Taiping Rebellion or Boxer Rebellion and the role of Empress Dowager CiXi).

Objective	Guiding Question and Activity Description
Explain the causes and effects of the Sepoy Rebellion, then evaluate whether the revolt moved Indians closer to or further away from independence.	Did the Sepoy Rebellion move Indians closer to or further away from independence? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • secondary source analysis

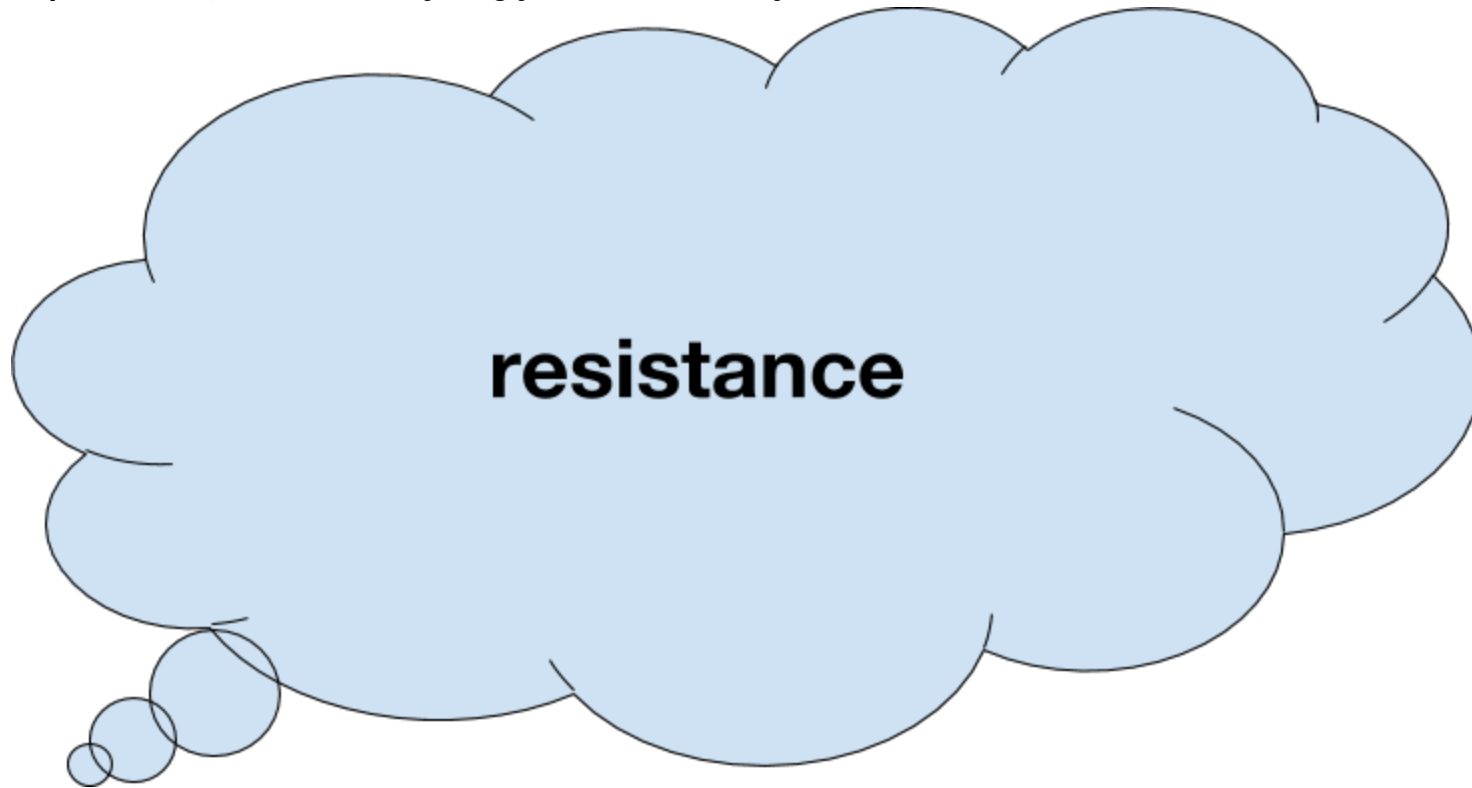
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Did the Sepoy Rebellion move Indians closer to or further away from independence?

Objectives: Explain the causes and effects of the Sepoy Rebellion, then evaluate whether the revolt moved Indians closer to or further away from independence.

Introduction

Directions: In the space below, write down anything you think of when you hear the word “resistance.”




What would make you resist against your government?

Review of British Imperialism in India

Describe the action taken by the British in India that might have made the Indians resist colonization.	Explain why that action might lead to resistance.

The Sepoy Rebellion (1857-1858)


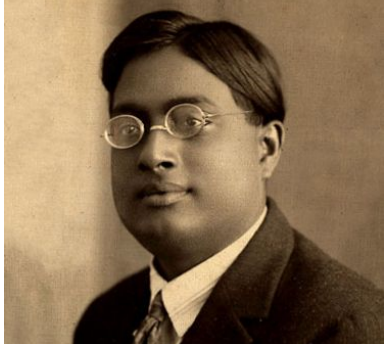
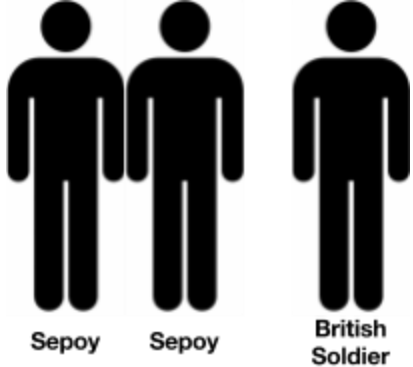
 Watch [this video entitled “Sepoy Mutiny- Revolt of 1857.”](#) then read the information below and answer the accompanying questions.

The Sepoy Rebellion, also known as India’s First War of Independence, the Great Rebellion, the Indian Mutiny, the Revolt of 1857, and the Indian Rebellion of 1857, was a revolt of soldiers employed by the British East India Company against the Company. The rebellion was a major turning point in colonial India. As a result, the British government replaced the Company as the rulers of India and India became an official colony of Great Britain.

Since the 1600s, the British East India Company had operated trading posts in India and employed Indian soldiers, known as sepoy, to protect the Company's interests. The Company’s influence and power in India grew over the next two centuries. They took control of land through military conquest and by the 1700s could arguably have been considered a “nation” within India.

1. Who were the sepoy?	2. What was the role of the British East India Company in India?

Long-Term Causes of the Sepoy Rebellion

<p style="text-align: center;">①</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Expansion of British Power in India</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">British Indian Army soldiers, 1895.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Source</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">②</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Westernization</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Photograph of Indian physicist, Satyendra Nath Bose, 1925. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:SatyenBose1925.jpg</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">③</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sepoys Outnumbered British Troops</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">Sepoy Sepoy British Soldier</p>
<p>The British East India Company took control of a large amount of India through force and through treaties that Indian princes who had no choice but to sign. Whenever possible the British replaced India rulers with British officials.</p>	<p>Westernization, the process of changing a culture to be more “western” or European/American, was promoted by the British in India. They proposed changes to laws regarding Hinduism and the caste system, introduced a British education system, and British fashions became popular.</p>	<p>The British held all of the positions of power in the British East India Company, but they were not the majority of the Company’s soldiers. Two out of three soldiers working for the Company were Indian.</p>

Short-Term Causes of the Sepoy Rebellion: The Spark

The immediate cause for the revolt was the introduction of the new Enfield rifle to the British Indian Army. To load it, the sepoy had to bite off the ends of lubricated cartridges that held the gunpowder for the rifle. A rumor spread among the sepoy that the grease used to lubricate the cartridges was a mixture of pigs’ and cows’ lard. This was a problem because it was a violation of Hindu and Muslim religious practices to have contact with pig (Muslims) and cow (Hindu) products. There is no conclusive evidence that either of these materials was actually used on any of the cartridges in question. However, the perception that the cartridges were tainted added to the larger suspicion that the British were trying to undermine Indian traditional society. For their part, the British did not pay enough attention to the growing level of sepoy discontent. Disrespected, the soldiers reacted by arming themselves against their commanders, killing many of them, and taking control of military compounds and weapons.

3. Explain what led to the start of the Sepoy Rebellion.

The Rebellion: Why were the sepoys unsuccessful?

At first, the sepoys successfully took control of a number of Indian cities including Delhi, but their lack of organization and lack of widespread support in the face of the British colonial system was not enough to retain control of India and drive out the colonizers. The sepoys did not have a clear leader or a command structure. Instead, they fought independently to defend the areas they controlled from the British. They also struggled to gain widespread support from Indians because of religious division. For example, when one of the leaders of the rebellion, a Muslim named Bahadur Shah Zafar declared himself Emperor of India, Sikhs from the Punjab region of India who had fought against Islamic rule under the Mughals refused to support him. In addition, the sepoys were only able to get support from some regional princes. Others, who had comfortable positions under British rule, supported the East India Company. Eventually, British reinforcements arrived with new supplies and weapons like siege guns needed to defeat the sepoys encamped in cities. The last rebels were defeated in Gwalior on June 20, 1858 and the warring parties signed a peace treaty on July 8, 1858 ending the war.



"The Capture of the Cashmere Gate, 14 Sept. 1857" an engraving published in London.

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Attack1857.jpg>

4. Identify and explain three reasons why the sepoys were unable to free India from the British.

Effects of the Sepoy Rebellion

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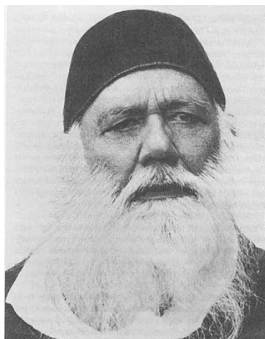
British Government Takes Control in India



Queen Victoria of England became the official ruler of India.
Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Queen_Victoria_by_Bassano.jpg

2

Representation for Indians, but Little Power



Photograph of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, one of the Indian representatives on the Legislative Council.
Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Syed_Ahmed_Khan.jpg

3

Continued Modernization and Westernization of India



British men and women posing for a photograph with Indian men.
Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:British_men_and_women_posing_for_a_photograph_with_Indian_men.jpg

As a result of their inability to control India, the British East India Company was replaced by the British government. India became an official British colony and was known as the “jewel in the crown” of the British Empire. The British government continued to administer India as the Company had, with strict control. They also exiled the last Mughal ruler and executed his sons.

The British realized that one of the reasons for the rebellion was that they did not consult with Indians on the policies they enacted in India. After 1861, an Indian-nominated group or representatives held seats in the Legislative Council, though they were “non-official members” and had little power.

The British continued the process of expanding their education system in India and public works programs (roads, railways, telegraphs, and irrigation). The British built up a communications and transportation network to prevent another rebellion like the one led by the sepoys. In addition, westernization continued, threatening traditional Indian society and the caste system.

Sources: New World Encyclopedia, “Indian Rebellion of 1857.” http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Indian_Rebellion_of_1857; *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. “Indian Mutiny”, accessed December 18, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/event/Indian-Mutiny>.

5. Based on the reading, do you think the Sepoy Rebellion moved Indians closer to or further away from independence?

6. Based on the reading, do you think the Sepoy Rebellion moved Indians closer to or further away from independence?

Claim:

Evidence to Support Your Claim

Reasoning: Explain how your evidence supports your claim.