Your notes

KS3 History: revision notes

Empire and the slave trade

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The British Empire

- At its height in the early 1900s, the British **Empire** covered about a quarter of the world's land and people.
- India was called the "jewel in the crown". It was controlled by the East India Company and then ruled directly by Britain from 1858 (the Raj) until independence in 1947.
- In the late 1800s, European countries raced to take over Africa (the Scramble for Africa). The **Empire**'s effects are still debated: it brought wealth to Britain, but through conquest, violence and control of other peoples.

The transatlantic slave trade

- The **triangular trade**: ships took goods (guns, cloth) from Britain to West Africa, took enslaved Africans across the Atlantic to the Caribbean and the Americas, and brought sugar, cotton and tobacco back to Britain.
- About 12 million Africans were forced across the Atlantic. British ports such as Liverpool, Bristol and London grew rich.
- On the **Middle Passage**, enslaved people were chained and packed below deck with little food or air, and many died. On **plantations**, they faced brutal work and punishments.

Resistance and abolition

- Enslaved people resisted by rebelling, running away, working slowly and keeping their culture. In Haiti, a revolution led by Toussaint Louverture ended slavery and created an independent country in 1804.
- Campaigners included Olaudah Equiano (who had been enslaved and wrote about it), Thomas Clarkson, Granville Sharp and William Wilberforce, who led the campaign in Parliament. People signed petitions and boycotted sugar.

- The Slave Trade Act of 1807 ended the British slave trade. The Slavery **Abolition** Act of 1833 ended slavery in most of the British **Empire**. Slave owners were paid £20 million in **compensation**; the people who had been enslaved received nothing.

Your notes

Key terms

Empire	A group of countries or lands ruled by one country.
Triangular trade	The trade route between Britain, West Africa and the Americas.
Middle Passage	The journey of enslaved Africans across the Atlantic.
Plantation	A large farm where enslaved people were forced to grow crops such as sugar.
Abolition	Ending something by law, such as slavery.
Abolitionist	Someone who campaigned to end slavery.
Resistance	Actions taken to fight back against slavery.
Boycott	Refusing to buy something as a protest.
Compensation	Money paid to make up for a loss.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. What was the triangular trade?
2. What was the Middle Passage?
3. About how many Africans were forced across the Atlantic in the slave trade?
4. Which British ports grew rich from the slave trade?
5. Who was Olaudah Equiano?
6. Who led the campaign to end the slave trade in Parliament?
7. When was the British slave trade abolished?
8. When was the Slavery Abolition Act passed?

Answers

1. Goods to Africa, enslaved Africans to the Americas, and sugar and cotton back to Britain
2. The journey of enslaved Africans across the Atlantic
3. About 12 million
4. Liverpool, Bristol and London
5. A formerly enslaved man whose autobiography helped the campaign for abolition
6. William Wilberforce
7. 1807
8. 1833

What to do next

Practise 13 questions on this topic

Try 4 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

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