

Lesson Plan: The Story of a subcontinent - From Raj to Partition

Materials Needed:

- Large sheet of paper or whiteboard
- Colored pencils, markers, or crayons
- A few small, interesting objects (e.g., a packet of tea, a piece of cotton fabric, a shiny button, a small old-looking key) to use as "artifacts"
- Access to the internet for a short video clip
- Modeling clay or play-doh (two different colors)
- A shoebox or small cardboard box
- Index cards or small slips of paper
- Glue or tape

1. Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to:

- Explain in their own words why Britain became interested in India (trade).
- Describe what "colonial rule" means by giving one positive and one negative example from the British Raj.
- Sequence the major events: British East India Company, the British Raj, the movement for independence, and the Partition.
- Empathize with the difficult choices and human impact of the Partition through a creative activity.

2. Introduction: The Time Traveler's Trunk (10 minutes)

Goal: To spark curiosity and introduce the topic in an engaging way.

1. Present the shoebox, decorated to look like an old trunk or chest. Say, "We've discovered a time traveler's trunk! Inside are artifacts from a very important time in the history of India. Let's see what we can learn from them."
2. One by one, take out the "artifacts" (tea, cotton, button, key). For each item, ask guiding questions:
 - **Tea/Cotton:** "What is this? Where do you think it comes from? Why might this be valuable to someone?" (Introduce the idea of valuable goods and trade.)
 - **Shiny Button (like a military uniform button):** "Who wears something like this? What might it represent?" (Introduce the idea of soldiers, government, and control.)
 - **Old Key:** "What do keys do? What could this key have unlocked? A home? A country's future?" (Introduce the idea of gaining or losing control/freedom.)
3. Explain that all these items tell a piece of the story of when Britain ruled India, and how India and a new country called Pakistan became independent.

3. Activity 1: The Spice Map - Why India? (15 minutes)

Goal: To understand the initial motivations for British involvement.

1. Take out the large sheet of paper. Sketch a simple world map, highlighting Great Britain and India.
2. Say, "A long time ago, Britain didn't have easy access to amazing things like spices, tea, and

fine cotton. They were incredibly valuable! A company called the British East India Company set sail to trade for these goods."

3. Have the student draw trade routes with a colored marker from Britain to India. Around India, they can draw pictures of the goods Britain wanted (tea leaves, spices, cotton plants).
4. Explain that at first, it was about trade. But over time, this powerful company gained more and more control, until eventually, the government of Britain took over completely. This was the start of the "British Raj," which is another word for British rule in India.

4. Activity 2: Two Sides of a Coin - Life Under the Raj (20 minutes)

Goal: To explore the complex reality of colonial rule.

1. On a new piece of paper or on the whiteboard, draw a large coin or a T-chart. Label one side "Things the British Built" and the other side "Ways People Lost Freedom."
2. Explain that colonial rule was complicated. The British did build some things that are still used today, but it came at a high cost to the Indian people.
3. Work together to fill in the chart. You can suggest ideas and let the student write or draw them.
 - **Things the British Built:** Railroads (draw train tracks), new legal systems (draw a courthouse), universities (draw a book), postal service (draw a letter).
 - **Ways People Lost Freedom:** Had to follow British rules, Indian industries (like weaving) were harmed, resources and wealth were taken to Britain (draw money with wings flying away), people were not treated as equals.
4. **Quick Discussion:** "Do you think the new railroads were worth the loss of freedom? Why or why not?" This encourages critical thinking, not just memorization.

5. Activity 3: The Line of Division - Understanding Partition (25 minutes)

Goal: To understand the concept and human cost of Partition in an age-appropriate, hands-on way.

1. Give the student the two colors of modeling clay. Say, "Let's create a community. This community has lived together for hundreds of years. The people have different religions and traditions (represented by the two colors), but they are neighbors and friends."
2. Have the student create a small village on the table. They should mix and marble the two colors together to build houses, a market, a school, a river, and fields. Emphasize that the colors are mixed everywhere because the people live together.
3. Now, explain the next part of the story: "After many years of asking for freedom, the British finally agreed to leave India. But a difficult decision was made. Leaders decided to divide the country into two new, separate nations: India (for the majority Hindu population) and Pakistan (for the majority Muslim population)."
4. Hand the student a ruler or a piece of string. "You must now draw a line and divide your village into two separate parts. You have to separate the colors as best you can. This line is called a 'partition'."
5. After they draw the line, ask reflective questions:
 - "What happened to the houses that had both colors? What about the school or the market?"
 - "Does anyone have to leave their home to be on the 'right' side of the line? How would that feel?"
 - "Look how the colors were all mixed together. Was it easy or even possible to create a perfect separation?"
6. Explain that this is what happened in 1947. The new border, the Partition line, cut through communities and millions of families had to leave their homes in one of the largest and most difficult migrations in human history. It was a very sad and painful time born from the joy of independence.

6. Assessment & Closure: The Museum Curator (15 minutes)

Goal: To summarize and articulate what has been learned in a creative format.

1. Bring back the "Time Traveler's Trunk" (the shoebox). Tell the student they are now a museum curator, and their job is to create an exhibit about this story.
2. Have them put the original "artifacts" (tea, cotton, etc.) back in the box.
3. They should also create labels for their exhibits on the index cards. They can create labels for:
 - The "Spice Map" they drew.
 - The "Two Sides of a Coin" chart.
 - A small piece of their partitioned clay village.
4. Once the "exhibit" is arranged in the box, have the student give you a "museum tour," explaining what each item is and what part of the story it tells. This serves as a fun, verbal assessment of their understanding.

7. Differentiation & Extension

- **For extra support:** Focus more on the hands-on activities (map and clay) and less on the writing. Use a pre-printed map and have the student trace the routes. Provide sentence starters for the museum labels.
- **For an extra challenge:** Watch a short, age-appropriate documentary clip about Gandhi's role in the independence movement. Research and write a short biography of either Muhammad Ali Jinnah or Jawaharlal Nehru. Read a story or a book excerpt about a family's experience during Partition (e.g., from a children's literature list on the topic).