

An academic interpretation



'British brains, British trade and British money changed India. Many bridges, 40,000 miles of railway, and 70,000 miles of roads show how hard the British worked. They brought water to vast areas of farmland. They built sewers, gave good wages, built canals and handed out food. As a result, famines almost ended.'

Adapted from '*The English in India*' by J.A.R. Marriott (1932)

Task: Read through the following timeline of Indian history. Colour code it to show evidence that supports or challenges Marriott's interpretation.

SUPPORTS MARRIOTT



CHALLENGES MARRIOTT



1600	British trading stations in India were run by a British company called the East India Company. They made a lot of money trading silk, coffee and spices. Indian princes and British business men made lots of money.
1700-1750	The East India Company began to take over land because it had its own private army and navy.
1757	The Battle of Plassey took place, in which the East India Company defeated the ruler of Bengal. The unrest allowed the East India Company to take over Bengal, which was one of the richest parts of India. The Company also fought other European nations too and took over their trading posts. This made them very powerful.
1760-1850	Between these decades, the various Indian princes and rulers were either beaten in battle or played off against each other. The East India Company was in control of large amounts of India by this point.
	The British people who worked for the East India Company lived in luxury. They brought lots of British customs and systems with them. For example, roads, railways and bridges were built, and legal systems and the Indian Civil Service were set up. Queen Victoria called this 'civilising the natives'.
	Huge amounts of British troops were stationed in India to 'protect' the people who worked for the East India Company. The soldiers who were employed were often Indian. They were called Sepoys. Tension rose between them and the British because they tried to dictate how the Sepoys should live and practise their religious beliefs.

Was J.A.R. Marriott right about the British in India?

1857	<p>Sepoys shot a number of British people living in the north of India because they were asked to use bullets that used beef and pork fat as a greasing agent. This was offensive to Hindus and Muslims as it went against their religions. 85 Sepoys refused to use the new bullet cartridges. They were sentenced to jail for ten years. Days later, other Sepoys rose up in support of them.</p>
	<p>Sepoys massacred 200 British people at Cawnpore. In retaliation, 70,000 British troops were sent to deal with the 'rebels'. Some Muslim mutineers were sewn into pig skins and hanged; others were killed by being strapped to cannons that were then fired.</p>
1858	<p>Peace was declared on 8 July 1858. The British still wanted India to be part of the Empire as they could still trade valuable goods. However, the East India Company was replaced and India was ruled by the British Government. A Viceroy was put in charge to rule on behalf of Queen Victoria.</p> <p>Historians disagree about what to call this event - some say the Indian Mutiny, others say the First War of Independence. What is clear, though, is that the British interfered less with religious matters and started to allow more Indians to have a say in how the country was run. Yet this was very limited. By 1900, 9/10 government jobs were still held by British people.</p>
1860-1901	<p>Although roads, railways and canals continued to be built, British customs were forced on the local people at the expense of their own. Indian workers were often exploited, the country's raw materials were taken back to Britain, and their land was seized. Resistance was put down quickly by the British Army. India was known as the 'Jewel in the Crown' of the British Empire during this period because the British were so proud of their influence there.</p>
1901-1914	<p>Many educated Indians started to believe that India should be free from British control. A group called the Indian National Congress was formed to try to make this happen. The British ignored them. Indians fought alongside British soldiers in the trenches during WW1.</p>
1919	<p>The British made slight changes to the way that India was governed. Councils were set up in the provinces, but laws and taxes were still controlled from London. Some Indians thought that this was a step in the right direction; others thought that this did not go far enough. A demonstration took place in Amritsar as a peaceful protest. 379 Indians were fired upon and killed. This made calls for independence fiercer.</p>
1930	<p>Mohandas Gandhi was a holy man and very clever politician. He told Indians to make life hard for the British without using violence. He encouraged strikes, demonstrations and boycotts. His famous campaign against the salt tax took place in this year. The British forbade Indians from making salt at home and charged them a lot of money to buy it. Ghandi took people to the sea to make salt. After putting 100,000 people in prison, the British got rid of the salt tax.</p>

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1935	After many years of protests, the Government of India Act gave Indians the right to control everything except the army. They were still part of the Empire and ruled by a Viceroy. Calls for independence continued.
1939-1945	Indians fought in the Second World War as they were still part of the British Empire. The British knew that they couldn't hold on to a country that wanted to be independent so badly. War weariness also meant that the British were less keen to hold onto the Empire. Tensions were rising between Hindus and Muslims and the country was becoming increasingly difficult to manage.
1947	On 15 August 1947, Britain stopped ruling India and the whole sub-continent was divided into Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan. There were massacres on both sides as people tried to migrate to ensure that they were in the 'right' country.
1947-Today	As a result of the violence of 1947, many Indians sought safety in Britain. Their families have settled here and help to make the culturally diverse country that we live in today.

Now write an answer to the question:

Is J.A.R. Marriott right about the British in India?

Overall, I agree/disagree with Marriott because

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