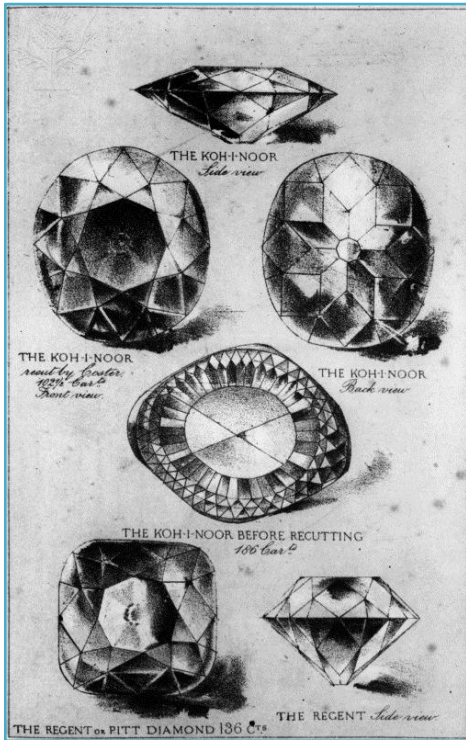


The Koh-i-noor diamond should remain in Britain



The Koh-i-Noor is a one hundred and five carat diamond which is one of the largest in the world.

Previously it belonged to various rulers in India; today it is in the hands of the British royal family and is part of the Crown Jewels. It is set in the crown of the late Queen Mother and is on display in the Tower of London.

The diamond was presented to Queen Victoria under the British Empire's rule in 1849. Britain's then colonial governor-general of India arranged for the huge diamond to be presented to Queen Victoria by the last ruler of the Sikhs, Duleep Singh, after the British annexed (took control of) the Punjab region.

It is one of the world's largest diamonds and some Indians – including independence leader Mahatma Gandhi's grandson, Tushar Gandhi – have demanded its return to atone (make up) for Britain's colonial past.

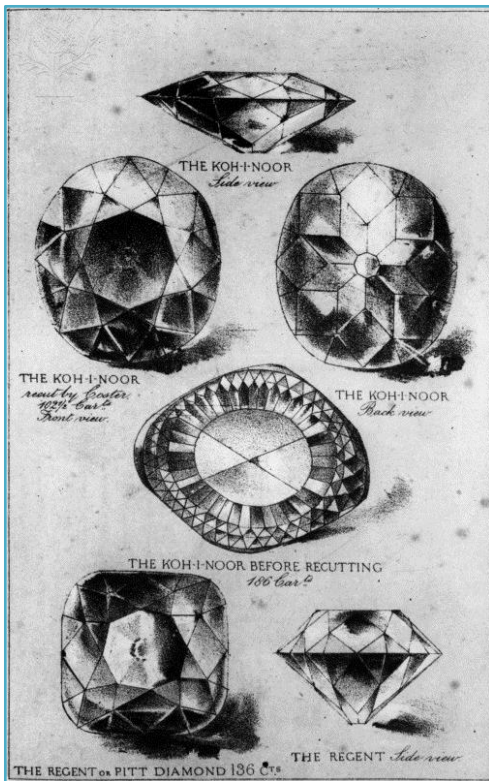
In 2010 David Cameron said the Koh-i-noor diamond would not be returned to India.

He said: 'The right answer is for the British Museum and other cultural institutions to do exactly what they do, which is to link up with other institutions around the world to make sure that the things which we have and look after so well are properly shared with people around the world.'

'It is the same question with the Elgin Marbles,' he said, referring to the classical Greek marble sculptures that Greece has long demanded be given back.

If the Duchess of Cambridge becomes queen consort she will wear the crown holding the diamond on official occasions. It has only been worn by female royals, including the Queen Mother and Queen Mary, because it is said to be unlucky for men to do so.

The Koh-i-noor diamond should be returned to India



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It previously belonged to various rulers in India. Today it is in the hands of the British royal family and is part of the Crown Jewels.

Legend says that the diamond is five thousand years old and was referred to in Sanskrit writings as the Syamantaka jewel. But the first document that records the existence of the Koh-i-Noor dates back to 1526 when the Indian conqueror Babur had it in his possession. He mentioned that the diamond was owned by the Raja of Gwalior in the 13th century.

The diamond belonged to various Indian and Persian rulers who fought bitter battles over centuries. The Koh-i-Noor was mounted on the Peacock Throne, the Mughal throne of India. It is said that Shah Jahan, the ruler who commanded the building of the throne and that of the Taj Mahal was imprisoned by his son and he could only ever see the Taj Mahal again through the reflection of the diamond.

The British came across the gem when they conquered Punjab in 1849, and Queen Victoria was given it in 1850. The stone was one hundred and eighty six carats at that point, because it was not yet cut.

The name means 'Mountain of Light' in Persian.

Many Indians say that the diamond was stolen from its true home in India and are demanding that the UK Government returns it. The stone is 'one of the many artefacts taken from India under dubious circumstances', according to David de Souza from the Indian business group Tito's. Souza claims the British colonisation of India resulted in theft and destruction.

Bollywood star Bhumicka Singh, said: 'The Koh-i-noor is not just a 105-carat stone, but part of our history and culture and should undoubtedly be returned.'

<p>The stone is ‘one of the many artefacts taken from India under dubious circumstances’, according to David de Souza from the Indian business group Tito’s.</p>	<p>The first document that records the existence of the Koh-i-Noor dates back to 1526 when the Indian conqueror Babur had it in his possession.</p>	<p>The Koh-i-Noor was mounted on the Peacock Throne, the Mughal throne of India.</p>
<p>Some Indians say that the one hundred and five carat diamond was stolen from its true home in India and are demanding that the UK Government returns it.</p>	<p>Bollywood star Bhumicka Singh, said: ‘The Koh-i-noor is not just a 105 carat stone, but part of our history and culture and should undoubtedly be returned.’</p>	<p>The Koh-i-Noor diamond was presented to Queen Victoria by the last ruler of the Sikhs, Duleep Singh, after the British annexed (took control of) the Punjab region.</p>
<p>The diamond is set in the crown of the late Queen Mother and is on display with the Crown Jewels in the Tower of London.</p>	<p>If the Duchess of Cambridge becomes Queen Consort she will wear the crown holding the diamond on official occasions.</p>	<p>Some Indians – including independence leader Mahatma Gandhi’s grandson Tushar Gandhi – have demanded its return to atone (make up) for Britain’s colonial past.</p>
<p>In 2010 David Cameron said: ‘The right answer is for the British Museum and other cultural institutions to do exactly what they do, which is to link up with other institutions around the world to make sure that the things which we have and look after so well are properly shared with people around the world.’</p>	<p>Satish Jakhu, of law firm Rubric Lois King, said they would make their claim under the common law doctrine of ‘trespass to goods’, arguing that the government had stolen the diamond. He added that they would be taking their case to the International Court of Justice.</p>	<p>Historian Andrew Roberts said: ‘Those involved in this should recognise that the British Crown Jewels is the right place for the diamond, in recognition for over three centuries of British involvement in India, which led to the modernisation, development, protection, linguistic unification and democracy of the sub-continent.’</p>
<p>Displayed in London at the Great Exhibition in 1851, the traditional rose-cut of the diamond failed to impress visitors who expected more sparkle.</p>	<p>This legendary diamond passed through the hands of conquering Mughal princes, Iranian warriors, Afghan rulers and Punjabi Maharajas before coming to Britain.</p>	

Teaching notes

The information above could be deployed in various ways including a class debate, scaffolded writing or a cut and stick task. The below is a suggestion for how the information might be used over approximately one lesson.

1. Give one half of the class one of the accounts on pp.1-2 to read, and the other half the other account. Don't tell students that they are reading different accounts (they look very similar so no one should guess!). Ask for a vote on the question 'who should have the Koh-i-Noor?' Can your students work out why they hold different views?
2. Introduce the grid on p.3 as further evidence. Some of the information is derived from the original reading, so that all students become familiar with both sides of the argument. Some is new evidence. First ask students to divide the information into each side of the argument, either by highlighting or physically rearranging.
3. Ask students to decide on their own view and write a paragraph supporting it. They should use supporting evidence from the cards.
4. Hold a class debate. You may wish to allocate each student to a side and encourage some to argue the 'devil's advocate'.

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