



India

Recommended year group: Year 8

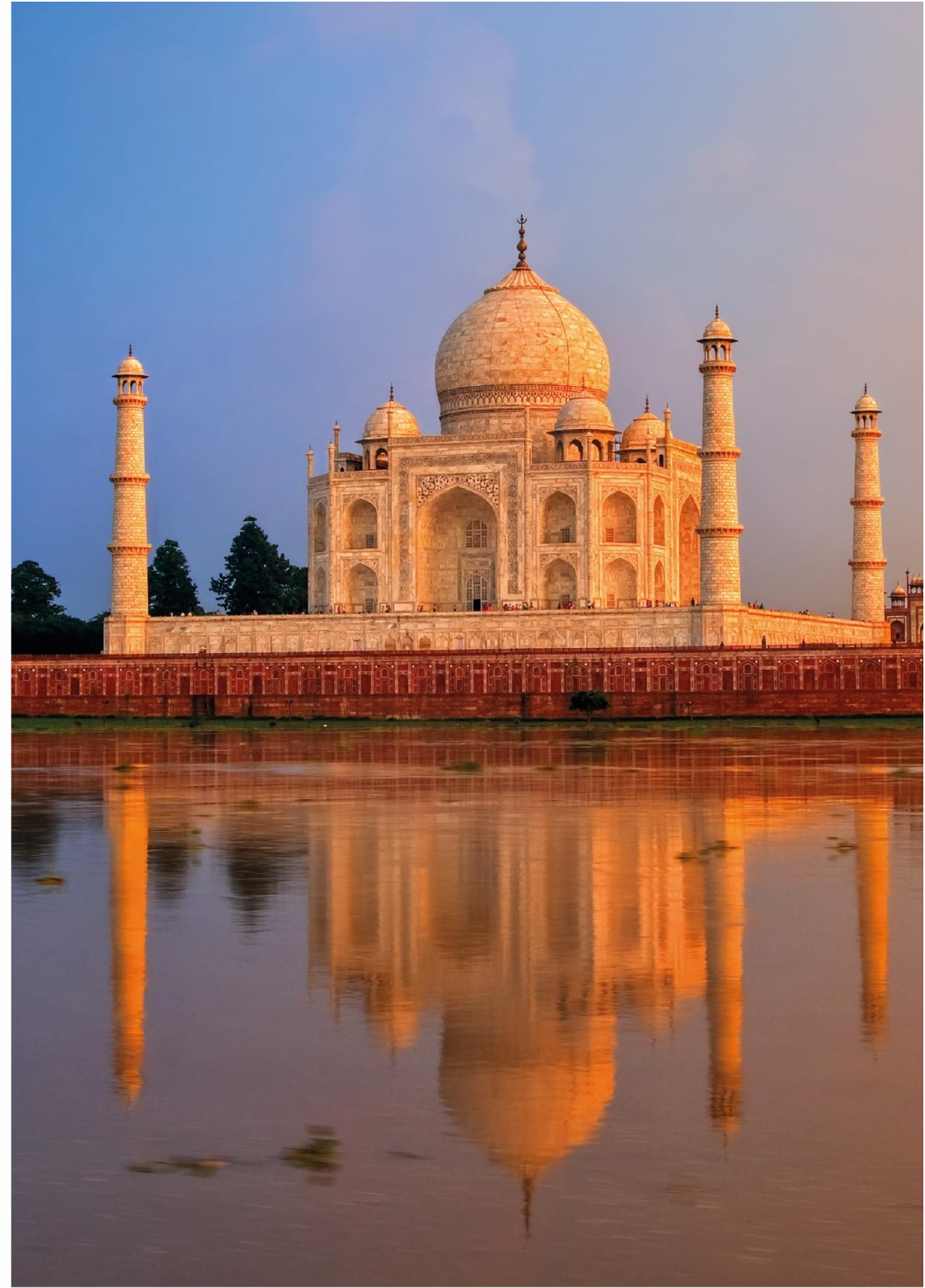
Subject focus: Art, Drama, English, Geography, History, RE

Driving Question

What made India the country it is today?

Introduction

India is one of the world's most diverse and influential countries, shaped by thousands of years of history, culture and belief. In this theme, students explore India from multiple angles to understand **what made the country what it is today**. They begin with India's unique geographical features—from soaring mountain ranges to dense forests and bustling megacities—before travelling through major moments in its past. Students discover the achievements of the **Mughal Empire**, the impact of the **British Raj**, and the powerful story of **India's independence** led by figures such as **Mahatma Gandhi**. Alongside history, they explore the richness of Indian culture through **Hinduism and Sikhism**, **Bollywood**, **art**, **traditional celebrations**, and **modern life**. By the end of the theme, students will understand how India's people, places, religions, creativity and global connections have shaped a vibrant nation whose influence is felt across the world.



Learning Checks

Lesson 2: What religions have their origin in India ?

“Hinduism and Sikhism are very similar religions because they both believe in rebirth and teach people to live a good life.” To What Extent Do You Agree?

Lesson 4 - Why and how did the British control India? How useful are sources for an enquiry into what life was like in India under the British Raj?

Lesson 8 Big Write

Descriptive Writing of India in the 21st Century

Cultural capital suggestions

- **Read:** *A Fine Balance* by Rohinton Mistry This book offers an interpretation of the changes in society in India after independence
- **Look:** *Slumdog Millionaire, 2008* This film is based on the book, *Q and A* by Vikas Swarup, 2005
- **Listen:** *Jana Gana Mana* by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore and *Maa Tujhe Salaam* | *Vande Mataram* by A.R. Rahman *Jana Gana Mana* is the national anthem of India. *Maa Tujhe Salaam* was written to commemorate 50 years of Indian independence in 1997.

Key vocabulary

Ahimsa, Apprenticeship, Ashram, Atman, Brahman, Chronology, Colour Theory, Commerce, Convention, Diwali, Direct Employment, Ecosystem, Empire, Expansion, Exaggerate, Formulaic, Ganges, Genre, Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Nanak, Gurpurbs, Gurdwara, Harijans, Holi, Indirect Employment, Interpretation, Maharaja, Mahatma, Mandir, Melodrama, Moksha, Mughal, Mukti, Noun Phrases, Personification, Physical Geography, Prepositions, Puja, Qualifications, Raj, Rangoli, Rapid urbanisation, Region, Relief, Reincarnation, Satyagraha, Sangat, Sepoy, Sensory Language, Stock Characters, Symmetry, Ten Gurus, Tourism, Trimurti, Vaisakhi

Extended learning opportunities

Students could use these ideas to explore different features of the theme.

Careers

These ideas can be used alongside the careers lesson from the theme in order to discover career pathways associated with key elements of learning from this theme.

Explore careers in travel and tourism

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/job-categories/travel-and-tourism>

Places to visit

This section offers a selection of virtual trips which support knowledge of key areas and attractions from the lessons

[Virtual tour of an Indian slum](#)

[Virtual tour of the Taj Mahal](#)

[Virtual tour of the Golden Temple](#)

[Victoria and Albert Museum](#)

[Tate Modern](#)



People, Place and Time

The 'People, Place and Time' resources provide support to key knowledge throughout the theme. More specifically:

- **People:** fact files on key people who have had an influence in this theme. Students can use these to research information, or they can be used as WAGOLs for fact files.
- **Place:** ten places where India has had an impact on the world which allows students to appreciate the influence India has had on a global scale.
- **Time:** highlights of Indian History from earliest times to today. Students explore some of these in more detail during the lessons. Others provide them with further context and depth of the history of India.

Family learning opportunities

The 'Cricketiquette' and 'More than Masala' activities allow students to complete quests with friends, family or guardians outside of the classroom environment. These activities are engaging and provide additional context to the lessons studied in the theme.

Ideas for discussion at home:

- Can you compare the history of other places with that of India?
- What makes any country like it is?
- What are the features of a country or area that make it attractive to visit?
- Should you go on holiday to a place where there is extreme poverty?

1. *The Night Diary* – Veera Hiranandani

A moving novel set during Partition in 1947, told through diary entries of a young girl fleeing from danger.

2. *City of the Sun* – Juliette Wade

A vivid story exploring life in crowded urban India, linking well to rapid urbanisation and contrasting environments.

3. *The Tiger Rising* – Kate DiCamillo

A gentle, symbolic story that connects to India's wildlife and themes of belief, loss and hope.

4. *Asha & the Spirit Bird* – Jasbinder Bilan

A magical-realism adventure across Himalayan landscapes—perfect for supporting physical geography learning.

5. *Born Behind Bars* – Padma Venkatraman

A powerful story of resilience and inequality set in modern India.

6. *The Wheel of Surya* – Jamila Gavin

A beautifully written family saga beginning in pre-Partition India and connecting to themes of empire and migration.

7. *Tiger Boy* – Mitali Perkins

A mystery-adventure set in the Sundarbans showing rural Indian life, climate challenges and community.

8. *India: Everything You Need to Know* – Anita Ganeri

A colourful and accessible introduction to India's geography, festivals, food and history.

9. *Gandhi: The Story of My Experiments with Truth* Mahatma Gandhi

A simplified edition of Gandhi's autobiography.

10. *Eyewitness India* – DK

Bright, visual, and full of facts—links well to art, religion, geography, and history.

Lessons

Lesson title	Subject	Essential knowledge/concepts	Competencies	National curriculum coverage
Lesson 1: What is India like?	Geography	Identify different geographical features of India Describe these different features on a map	SE.GE.01 Demonstrate knowledge of locations, places, environments and different scales	Geography • develop contextual knowledge of the location of globally significant places - – including their defining physical characteristics and how these provide a geographical context for understanding the actions of processes. • extend their locational knowledge and deepen their spatial awareness of the world's countries using maps of the world to focus on India, focusing on their environmental regions, including polar and hot deserts, key physical and human characteristics, countries and major cities. • understand the processes that give rise to key physical geographical features of the world.
Lesson 2 What religions have their origin in India?	RE	Describe the core beliefs of a religion Explain the core practices of a religion Compare how two religions understand God, worship, and life goals.	SE.RE.01 Make sense of religious beliefs SE.RE.02 Make connections between religious beliefs and practices	NATRE guidelines Students should extend and deepen their knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global context.
Lesson 3: Who were the Mughals and what did they achieve?	History	Describe the major events and people of the Mughal Empire. Compare events and culture of the Mughal Empire with that of Britain at the same time. Challenge interpretations of different Mughal	SE.HS.02 Making historical connections (similarities and differences) SE.HS.05 Writing historical arguments	History Know and understand significant aspects of the history of the wider world; the expansion and dissolution of empires and characteristic features of past non-European societies.
Lesson 4: Why and how did the British want to control India?	History	Describe how the East India Company controlled India and what life was like during the British Raj. Explain why Britain wanted to control India and the effects of	SE.HS.03 Using historical sources	History Know and understand significant aspects of the history of the wider world; the expansion and dissolution of empires and characteristic features of past non-European societies.

		British rule on different groups. Evaluate the impact of British rule on India.		
Lesson 5: How significant was Gandhi in India becoming independent?	History	Identify key facts about Mahatma Gandhi and his importance to India. Explain why the Indian people wanted independence in 1947. Describe the process of Partition. Evaluate the impact of independence on India.	SE.HS.02: Making historical connections	History Know and understand significant aspects of the history of the wider world; the expansion and dissolution of empires and characteristic features of past non-European societies.
Lesson 6: Bollywood and the Bard	Drama	Identify key elements of the melodrama genre. Explore what stock characters are and how they are used. Devise and perform a melodrama in the style of a Bollywood film.	C.DR.01: Use a range of dramatic or choreographic conventions to explore ideas, texts, movement and contextual issues (shaping the performance). C.DR.02: Performing to an audience (performance skills).	English Speak confidently and effectively, improvising, rehearsing, and performing play scripts and poetry to generate language and discuss language use and meaning, using role, intonation, tone, volume, mood, silence, stillness, and action to add impact.
Lesson 7: Indian artists	Art	Describe Rangoli patterns and their cultural role in India. Create an individual Rangoli-inspired design using colour and symmetry. Contribute to a team project to produce a large-scale Rangoli artwork.	C.RS.01: To identify and explore relevant contextual artist research and to express thoughts and ideas through written analysis. C.RS.02: Respond to contextual research within a practical	Art Use a range of techniques to record observations in sketchbooks, journals and other media as a basis for exploring ideas; use a range of techniques and media, including painting; increase proficiency in the handling of different materials; to analyse and evaluate own work, and that of others, in order to strengthen the visual impact or applications of own work; learn about the history of art, craft, design and architecture, including periods, styles and major movements from ancient times up to the present day.

			context; analysing, recording and evaluating findings.	
Lesson 8: The Real India Big Write	English	Retrieve key learning from Year 7 descriptive writing and build on it. Collect vocabulary to describe a culture rich India. Vary sentence lengths, using – ing endings to create rhythm in our writing.	CL.WP.04 : Varying sentences for clarity, purpose and effect (Sentence Fluency)	English Writing for a wide range of purposes and audiences, including well-structured formal expository and narrative essays; stories, scripts, poetry and other imaginative writing; notes and polished scripts for talks and presentations and a range of other narrative and non-narrative texts, including arguments, and personal and formal letters.
Lesson 11: Careers	Careers	Identify the different careers in tourism. Compare the tourism industry on a regional, national and global scale, and identify why there may be differences. Research different careers in the tourist industry.	PD.CA.02: Experiencing the world of work	Gatsby benchmark 4 Linking curriculum learning to careers. All teachers should link curriculum learning with careers. STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of future career paths.