

## **Year 8 HT 2 – The British Empire**

The British Empire was the dominant global power from the late 16th century to the mid-20th century. Its peak was during the Victorian era, from the mid-19th century to the early 20th century. The British Empire was a vast territory spreading across five continents and comprising one-fifth of the world's population.

The War of Independence, also known as the American Revolutionary War, took place between 1775 and 1783.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, also known as Mahatma Gandhi, was born in India on October 2nd, 1869, and died on January 30th, 1948. Gandhi was a major figure in the Indian independence movement against British colonial rule, and his nonviolent approach to activism inspired people around the world.

Below is a detailed explanation of concurrent historical events in the UK and key historical events that were happening around the world during the British Empire's period:

1. **The Industrial Revolution:** This period marks the start of the 19th century and correlates with the rise of the British Empire. The inventions such as steam engines and textile manufacturing revolutionised life in Britain and increased productivity in agriculture and manufacturing.
2. **The abolition of slavery:** The Anti-Slavery Society was established in Britain in 1823, and it campaigned for the abolition of slavery in Britain and its colonies. The opposition to the slavery practice led to its abolition in the British Empire in 1833.
3. **Victorian Era:** The period was characterised by the reign of Queen Victoria, from 1837 to 1901. It was characterised by an era of expansion for the empire, where the British extended control in India and Africa.
4. **Crimean War:** This was between 1853 and 1856, and it saw Britain and France join forces to fight against Russia. The event became significant as it marks the first use of modern technology like railways, the telegraph, and photography in war.
5. **The Boer War:** This took place from 1899 to 1902 and was fought between the British and the Dutch in South Africa. The British eventually won the war, resulting in the formation of South Africa as a Union.
6. **World War I:** This was a global war that lasted from 1914 to 1918, and it involved many nations across the world. The event became significant as it marks the end of the British Empire and the start of the decline in British power.

### **Further reading:**

Fiction:

"A Little Princess" by Frances Hodgson Burnett - This heartwarming story follows the life of Sara Crewe, a wealthy young girl who is sent to a boarding school in London while her father serves in the British Army in India. When her father dies, Sara must adapt to her new circumstances and learn to find happiness amid hardship.

Non fiction:

"Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World" by Niall Ferguson - This comprehensive history of the British Empire provides an in-depth analysis of how British imperialism shaped the modern world. It covers everything from the expansion of the empire to its impact on politics, economics, and culture.