

TITLE

BENGAL FAMINE OF 1943: REANALYZING RELATIONS BETWEEN INDIA AND BRITAIN IN THE 20TH CENTURY

GRADE LEVEL: MIDDLE SCHOOL - 6TH-8TH GRADE

DISCIPLINE: Social Studies

TOPIC: Bengal Famine of 1943

STANDARDS: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2 | CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.6
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7 | CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4

OBJECTIVES: THE STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO...

- Understand the context leading up to the Bengal Famine of 1943 and its causes
- Understand the role of imperial policies and practices in the greater context of India's history and world history
- Strengthen analytical and investigative skills through discussion and interpretation of primary sources.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- Why is it important to discuss the true causes of the Bengal Famine of 1943?
- What role did racist beliefs play in the denialism policy of the British government on the Bengal Famine?
- Why is the Bengal Famine is not often discussed in today's world?

KIT INCLUDES:

Teacher Introduction slideshow Deck
Student Notes Outline
Discussion Questions
Comparison Analysis Activity
Homework or Extra Credit Activity
Additional Resources

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Teacher Introduction
- Slideshow Deck
- Student Notes Outline
- Discussion Questions
- Comparison Analysis
- Activity Homework or Extra Credit
- Activity Additional Resources

CLASSROOM HOURS NEEDED: Minutes

FINAL ASSESSMENT TYPE: Discussion Jamboard & Comparison Activity

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RESOURCES:

- [*Teacher Introduction Resource*](#)
- [*Difficult Conversations Webinar*](#)
- [*Student Notes Outline*](#)
- [*Bengal Famine of 1943 Slide Deck*](#)
- [*Discussion Guide*](#)
- [*Comparison Analysis Activity*](#)
- [*Homework or Extra Credit Activity*](#)
- [*Additional Resources*](#)
- [*Glossary of Terms*](#)

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND:

The history of India and Britain's relationship is very important to understand what imperialism is and how it has impacted the world. It is also critical to understand the impact that colonial decisions and policies had on Indians; this history coincides with other key events including World War II. In this lesson, we will specifically discuss the Bengal Famine of 1943, which is a tragedy that occurred when India was still under British control. This event is a culmination of many aspects, perspectives, and failures of history, so we will spend some time learning about the causes, effects, and current impacts. For more background knowledge, please consult the Teacher Introduction Resource. To prepare for the discussion, teachers may want to consult the Difficult Conversations Webinar.

**ACTIVITY 1:
(10 MINUTES)**

- Students should use the first 10 minutes of class to participate in a Think-Pair-Share using the first 3 questions on the student notes handout.
- Students should be given time to complete the questions independently, then share with a partner or small group.
- To facilitate a classroom-wide foundation of prior knowledge, students could also share with the class and KWL chart could be completed as a whole.

**ACTIVITY 2:
(45 MINUTES)**

- During the main lecture portion of the lesson, use the slide deck with provided teacher notes to introduce students to the topic and the causes and effects of the Bengal Famine of 1943.
- Students should utilize the Student Notes Handout throughout this portion of the lesson.
- This includes prompting questions related to the primary sources within the Slide Deck.

ACTIVITY 3:
(20 MINUTES)

- In order to connect this lesson back to other relevant past events or events in today's world, the follow-up activity for the lecture and discussion is using the Comparison Analysis Activity to find an example that is similar to Britain's policy of denialism during the crisis of the Bengal Famine or their racial motivations behind imperialism. This example should exhibit similarities and differences to be analyzed.
- For example, this topic could be connected back to colonization in the Americas. A similar ideology was used by white settlers to displace Indigenous peoples for economic exploitation.

ACTIVITY 4:
(20 MINUTES)

- Either during the lecture, or after the lecture - in small groups, pairs, or as a class - have students participate in the Discussion Guide based on the Bengal Famine of 1943.
- This can also be completed in an online format through a JamBoard or FlipGrid in a virtual setting or as a take home assignment.

ACTIVITY 5:
(TAKE HOME
OR EXTRA
CREDIT)

- Using the Homework or Extra Credit Activity Guide, have students find an appropriate photograph (primary source) that relates to the Indian experience during the period of British control. In addition, the student should include an explanation of the context, point of view (or perspective/ purpose), how it connects to the in-class lesson, and a



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