



CLASS 8 SOCIAL SCIENCE · 2026-27

Company rule and the revolt of 1857

History

22

QUESTIONS

30

MINUTES

3

EXERCISES

This belongs to _____ Date _____

WHAT YOU'LL GET GOOD AT

- Places the main events of Company expansion in order
- Explains a colonial policy by the interest it served
- Gives both immediate and underlying causes of the revolt
- States what changed after 1857 and what did not

Take your time, and have a go at every one. If you get stuck, look at the orange box — Ollie has already done one for you.

Company rule and the revolt of 1857

History · 22 questions · tick each box as you finish

Exercise 1 of 3 · 5 questions Put these in chronological order and give the year for each. ☐

PUT IN ORDER

HERE'S ONE DONE FOR YOU

1757 and 1857 are the two anchors, exactly a century apart, and almost everything in this book sits between them. Plassey is where a trading company first becomes a political power; the revolt is where Company rule ends. A child who holds those two dates can place most of the rest by reasoning rather than by memory.

1) A. The Permanent Settlement is introduced in Bengal

2) B. The Battle of Plassey

3) C. The revolt begins at Meerut

4) D. The Battle of Buxar

5) E. The Indian National Congress is founded

Exercise 2 of 3 · 9 questions Name the policy, then say whose interest it served and how. ☐

WRITE THE ANSWER

HERE'S ONE DONE FOR YOU

The Doctrine of Lapse: a ruler without a natural heir could not adopt one, so the state lapsed to the Company. Notice that the answer explains what it achieved - annexation without a war. Naming the policy is a mark. Saying whose interest it served is the answer, and it is also how a child reconstructs the policy in an exam hall having half-forgotten the name.

1) The Subsidiary Alliance

2) The Doctrine of Lapse

3) The Permanent Settlement of 1793

4) Colonial education policy in English

5) The Ryotwari Settlement

6) The de-industrialisation of Indian handloom weaving

7) The Forest Acts of the colonial period

8) Recruiting Indian sepoys into the Company army

9) The building of railways from the 1850s

Exercise 3 of 3 · 8 questions Answer in three or four sentences.

WRITE THE ANSWER

HERE'S ONE DONE FOR YOU

The greased cartridges are the immediate cause, and the word 'immediate' is doing the work. Examiners ask this precisely to see whether a child can distinguish the spark from the fuel. A revolt of that size does not happen over cartridges; it happens over decades of annexation, revenue and interference, and the cartridges are what set it off. Getting that distinction right is worth more than any number of remembered dates.

1) What was the immediate cause of the revolt, and why was it only the immediate one?

2) Give three underlying causes of the revolt of 1857.

3) Why did the revolt fail despite spreading so widely?

4) What changed in the government of India after 1857?

5) Why did the revolt spread so quickly through north India in 1857?

6) Why did some Indian rulers and groups not join the revolt?

7) What role did rumour play in 1857?

8) Why is 1857 called different things by different historians?

**All done? How did that feel?**

Colour in a star. Three stars means you could teach it to someone else.



Tricky · Getting there · Easy now



Answer key

For grown-ups

Company rule and the revolt of 1857 · keep this page back until your child has finished.

1. Put these in chronological order and give the year for each.

1) B (1757), D (1764), A (1793), C (1857), E (1885). Plassey gave the Company its first real political foothold in Bengal; Buxar confirmed it; the Diwani followed in 1765.

2. Name the policy, then say whose interest it served and how.

- 1) Indian rulers who accepted it had to keep a British force and pay for it, and could not make alliances without British permission. It gave the Company control over a state's foreign policy and army without the cost of conquering it.
- 2) A ruler without a natural heir could not adopt one, so the state passed to the Company. It allowed annexation without fighting, and was used to take Satara, Jhansi and Nagpur among others.
- 3) Revenue was fixed permanently with zamindars, who owed a set amount whatever the harvest. It guaranteed the Company a predictable income and shifted the whole risk of a bad year onto cultivators and zamindars.
- 4) It was shaped by what the administration needed - clerks and officials who could work in English at low cost. It also carried the assumption that European learning was superior, which was part of its purpose rather than a side effect.
- 5) Revenue was collected directly from the cultivator. It served the Company, which got its money without a landlord in between, and it left the ryot bearing the whole risk of a failed harvest.
- 6) British machine-made cloth was let in cheaply while Indian cloth faced duties in Britain. It served British mill owners, and it destroyed the livelihood of weavers across India.
- 7) They reserved forests for state use and restricted grazing, hunting and shifting cultivation. They served the demand for timber for ships and railways, and they cut forest communities off from land they had always used.
- 8) It gave the Company a very large army at low cost. It served British expansion, and it left the sepoys poorly paid and subject to rules that ignored their customs - a grievance that fed 1857.
- 9) They carried raw cotton and other materials to the ports and British goods inland. They served British trade far more than Indian producers, though they did also connect distant parts of India.

3. Answer in three or four sentences.

- 1) The greased cartridges for the new Enfield rifle, which sepoys had to bite and which were rumoured to be greased with cow and pig fat. It was the immediate cause because it was the spark rather than the fuel - the discontent it set alight had been building for decades over annexations, revenue demands and interference in social custom.
- 2) Political: annexations under the Subsidiary Alliance and the Doctrine of Lapse left rulers dispossessed. Economic: heavy land revenue ruined cultivators, and Indian crafts declined under competition from British manufactures. Social and religious: reforms and missionary activity were widely felt as interference in custom and faith.
- 3) Because it had no single leadership or common plan - each centre fought under its own leader, and the rebels shared what they were against more than what they wanted instead. Large parts of the country did not join, several Indian rulers supported the British, and the Company had better organisation, communications and weapons.
- 4) The East India Company's rule ended and India came directly under the British Crown by the Government of India Act of 1858. A Secretary of State for India was appointed, the Governor-General became the Viceroy, and the Queen's Proclamation promised no further annexations and non-interference in religion - though the essential fact of foreign rule did not change.
- 5) Because grievances had built up for decades among sepoys, peasants, artisans and dispossessed rulers, so the cartridge issue set light to something already dry. Sepoys moved between garrisons and carried the revolt with them.
- 6) Because some had gained from British rule or feared losing what they had. Rulers such as the Sindhia of Gwalior and groups like the newly educated professional classes had more to lose than to gain from a Mughal restoration.
- 7) A very large one. Stories that the government intended to convert Indians to Christianity, and the specific rumour about the greased cartridges, gave scattered grievances a single shared meaning and made action seem urgent.
- 8) Because what people call it reflects what they think it was. Colonial writers called it a mutiny to reduce it to a military matter; Indian nationalists called it the First War of Independence; many historians now treat it as a series of linked revolts with different aims in different places.

WHILE YOUR CHILD WORKS

- Ask 'whose interest did this serve?' after every policy. It turns a list of acts into something reconstructable.
- Immediate cause and underlying causes are different questions. Children answer both with the cartridges, and lose the second.
- This chapter returns in Class 10 almost unchanged. Learning it properly now is doing two years' work at once.

**Spotted a gap while marking?**

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