




BY AIR MAIL
PAR AVION



*The story of the largest
mass migration in the
history of the world.*

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NUTKHUT



never set eyes on the land **LEARNING TOOLKIT**

The story of the largest mass migration
in the history of the world.



“

‘The train that we were supposed to go on, somehow we couldn’t go on that train. Next day we heard, it came into the news, that train arrived into Lahore fully slaughtered... not a single person survived. Our relations came to see us at Lahore, to receive us, and they couldn’t find us. For them, we were just gone – finished.’

– Mr Malik
Oral history interviewee

”

Never again we say.

Then it happens again, and we are not stopping it.

– 'Never set eyes on the land' installation visitor

Our approach

We aim to bring art and heritage together to make history more accessible. We're passionate about the power of creativity to promote a deeper understanding of complex past events through a cross-curricular approach wherever possible. In our experience the seeds of emotional engagement are first sown through art, drama or creative writing. Without this initial hook, young people are less likely to see the relevance of the subject matter to their own lives.

'Emotional engagement is a feature of effective teaching of controversial issues. i.e. students have to want to care enough about the issues to arouse both their curiosity and their willingness to engage fully with the questions that are likely to require hard thinking and problem-solving.'

– T.E.A.C.H. (*Teaching Emotive and Controversial history*), A Report from The Historical Association, 2007

'Growing up half Pakistani and half Indian, I was always taught the values the two countries shared but never looked into the history. It is heart breaking to learn of the struggles our ancestors faced and I hope to teach my children the history of their roots and embrace the values and culture of both people. It is important to remember our similarities and love for each other.'

– *Never set eyes on the land*
installation visitor

A note on this toolkit

This toolkit is inspired by the memories that partition survivors from all four corners of London so generously shared with us.

Partition continues to be an emotive and controversial subject, particularly among people whose families were directly affected by it. Teachers should be aware that there may be disparities between the contents of this toolkit and the way that this period of history has been shared in families and communities. Please approach it sensitively.

Much of this toolkit focuses on the partition experience in Punjab, largely because this reflects the experience of the survivors we interviewed. This should in no way diminish the experience of those displaced elsewhere in India, particularly Bengal, where over 300,000 people were forced to cross the border between east and west.

never set eyes on the land...

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What is never set eyes on the land?

'Never set eyes on the land' is an arts project starting a conversation about the largest mass migration in the history of the world – triggered by the partition of India in 1947. Over several months in 2018 we met with community groups, schools and partition survivors to research and explore this defining moment in world history. This toolkit provides a legacy for the project. We aim to promote awareness about the devastating human cost of this event and its relevance to young people living in Britain today.

Who is this toolkit for?

It's mainly designed for KS2 and KS3 teachers. However, anyone interested in the partition of India or migration will find it useful.

What will I find in this toolkit? You'll find:

- A brief overview of the partition of India.
- Accompanying British Values, English, History and Drama-based activities to complete with your class.
- A list of resources to help you find out more.

How does this toolkit link to the curriculum?

The British Empire is first covered in Key Stage 3 of the current History curriculum.

At KS3 India appears three times as a non-statutory example in three key areas described by the National Curriculum:

- The development of church, state and society in Britain 1509-1745.
 - The first colony in America and first contact with India.
- Ideas, political power, industry and empire: Britain, 1745-1901.
 - The development of the British Empire with a depth study (for example, of India).
- Challenges for Britain, Europe and the wider world 1901 to the present day.
 - Indian independence and end of Empire.

National curriculum in England: history programmes of study, Published 11th September 2013

"It is an important experience to see and feel and hear their stories. This is what humanity is about. We all shape what we become and it is important that we share that together."

– 'Never set eyes on the land' installation visitor

There are also links to the British Values, Drama and English curricula.

The activities in this pack could form the basis of a cross-curricular post-SATS project for Year 6 students at KS2.

How should I use the toolkit?

However is most useful to you!

We've designed it as a springboard from which to explore the partition story, rather than a stand-alone resource.

Feel free to use the suggested class activities as they are or expand on or alter them. You might like to use the resource list at the back of the toolkit to conduct some more in-depth research with your class, focusing particularly on areas that interest them.

Who are we (Nutkhut)?

Nutkhut (Sanskrit for mischievous) is an ideas-led, art-focused performance company creating work mixing performance, dance, film and participation. We are often inspired by historical people and places and tell universal stories that bring people together in unexpected ways. We're London-based and led by co-Artistic Directors Ajay Chhabra and Simmy Gupta.

What did we do?

In 2018 we started to explore the partition of India through a comprehensive public engagement programme including:

- A training programme for a group of committed community volunteers.
- Oral history interviews with partition survivors.
- A series of exploratory creative workshops with community groups and schools throughout greater London.
- An immersive installation in a shipping container that travelled around some of the biggest South Asian festivals in the capital – including London Mela, Greenwich & Docklands Festival and Croydon International Mela.
- A short film brought to life with an original soundtrack and animation highlighting the personal testimony of our partition survivors alongside our archival research.

Why did we do it?

We decided to launch the Never set eyes on the land project because these stories are too important to be forgotten. The more we found out about what happened in India in 1947, the more we felt compelled to share what we learnt with as many people as we could.

'So distressing when mass migration 70 years later is still the narrative of our time.'

– Never set eyes on the land installation visitor

'The silence around partition spoke of the trauma and pain of this global event and I wanted to ensure that this period of history was not forgotten or swept under the carpet, like many aspects of British colonial history.'

– Ajay Chhabra, Artistic Director, *'Never set eyes on the land'*

Twenty-seventeen marked the 70th anniversary of the independence of India and Pakistan. Most partition survivors are now rapidly approaching old age. If we don't reach out and listen now, the opportunity to hear their voices will be gone forever.

We're also convinced of the need to raise the profile of this tragedy as the world faces a global refugee crisis on a scale not seen since the Second World War. Unfortunately the events we touch on here continue to have a chilling resonance today.

An untold story?

For many who lived through it, partition remains too painful to discuss. The children and grandchildren of partition survivors are often left with a sense that a lot remains unsaid.

The events of 1947 are unlikely to be familiar to many living in the UK today, as learning about them is not a statutory requirement of the national curriculum. Adding to all this is the fact that the events are complex, unwieldy, contentious and deeply harrowing. This painful event in our collective memory seems distant and unexplored. We hope this work will make some small inroads into ensuring these stories find their way out of the silence and back into our collective consciousness.

Why never set eyes on the land?

'Never set eyes on the land' is a phrase taken from W.H. Auden's scathing poem Partition. The poem focuses on Cyril Radcliffe, the British judge asked to draw the boundary lines for the new India and Pakistan. Radcliffe arrived in India for the first time on 8 July 1947. The borders were finalised on 12 August, just five short weeks later. Then he left the country, never to return. Radcliffe refused his fee for the work, burned all associated papers and maps and refused to talk to anybody, even his family, about what happened. You can find the full text of the poem below.

Partition, W.H.Auden, 1966

**Unbiased at least he was when he arrived on his mission,
Having never set eyes on the land he was called to partition
Between two peoples fanatically at odds,
With their different diets and incompatible gods.**

"Time," they had briefed him in London, "is short. It's too late
For mutual reconciliation or rational debate:
The only solution now lies in separation.
The Viceroy thinks, as you will see from his letter,
That the less you are seen in his company the better,
So we've arranged to provide you with other accommodation.
We can give you four judges, two Moslem and two Hindu,
To consult with, but the final decision must rest with you."

Shut up in a lonely mansion, with police night and day
Patrolling the gardens to keep the assassins away,
He got down to work, to the task of settling the fate
Of millions. The maps at his disposal were out of date
And the Census Returns almost certainly incorrect,
But there was no time to check them, no time to inspect
Contested areas. The weather was frightfully hot,
And a bout of dysentery kept him constantly on the trot,
But in seven weeks it was done, the frontiers decided,
A continent for better or worse divided.

The next day he sailed for England, where he could quickly forget
The case, as a good lawyer must. Return he would not,
Afraid, as he told his Club, that he might get shot.

Glossary

Mutual reconciliation: Restoring respect on both sides

Contested: Causing an argument

Dysentery: Infection of the intestines causing severe diarrhoea

Club: A private social club for British upper-class men



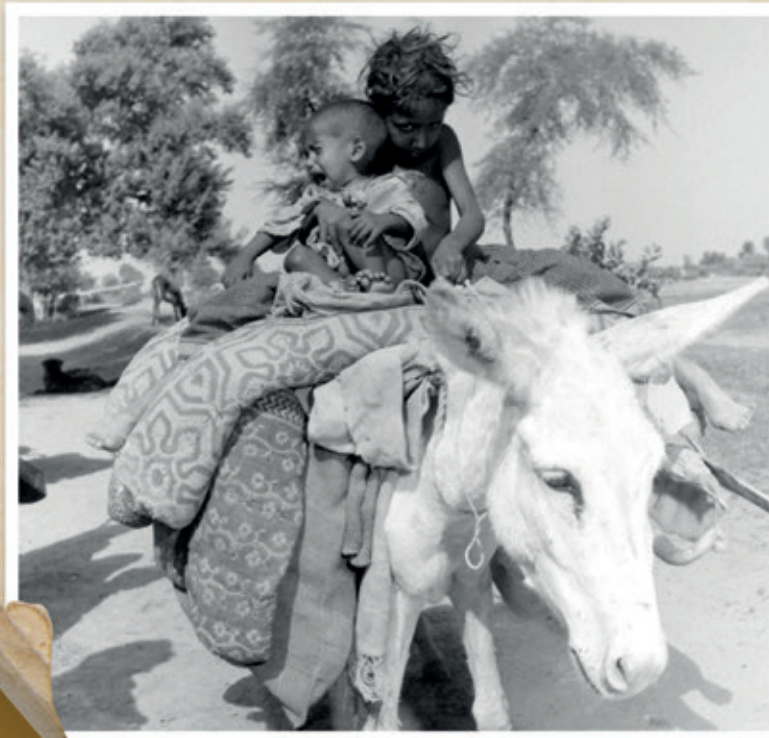
What is partition?

On the stroke of midnight on 14-15 August 1947 British India was split into two new independent nation states – Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan. After almost 200 years the British had decided to leave. Pakistan was a single country split across two different areas that were over 1000 miles apart. East Pakistan has since become Bangladesh.

Sixteen million people decided to migrate across the newly formed borders, most by train or foot. Up to a million died or were killed on the way.

'At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom.'

– Jawaharlal Nehru, first Prime Minister of India



Why were the British in India?

British interests in India date back to the early 1600s, when British merchants began regular maritime trade with the 'East Indies'. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the British dominated India, extracting revenues and resources and recruiting a large army from among the Indian population. India had become "the jewel in the crown of empire".

What was life like under British rule?

British rule in India always depended on local allies and supporters. For some Indians, British rule provided opportunities. For many others, it brought poverty, hunger and suffering. The vast majority of Indians had little access to education or to the comforts of modern technology. When the British left in 1947, 99% of India's villages had no electricity. Indian babies born in 1947 could expect to live, on average, for just 32 years.

'As long as we rule India, we are the greatest power in the world. If we lose it, we shall drop straight away to a third rate power'

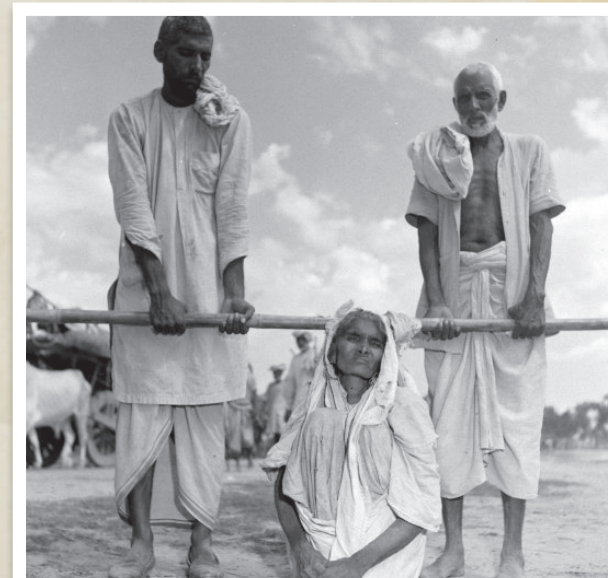
– George Curzon, Viceroy of India 1899-1905



What were the causes of partition?

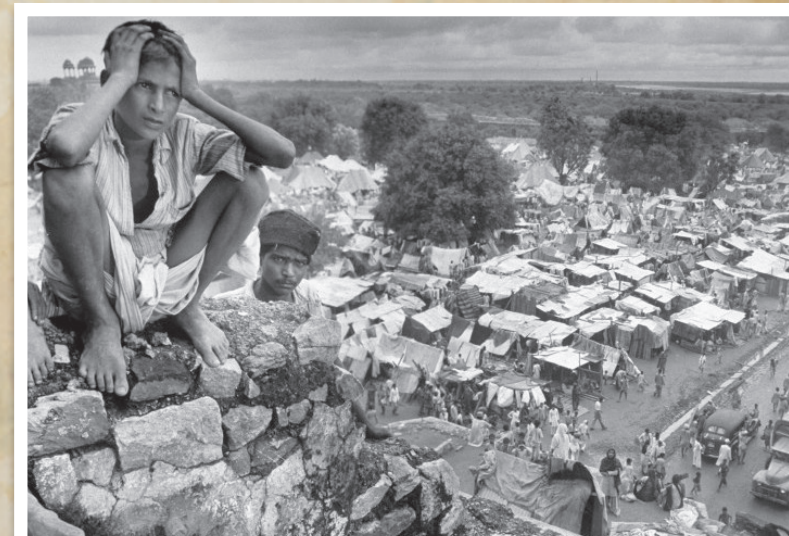
A lot of Indians opposed British rule and wanted to govern themselves. Many felt let down by the British, who they thought were using their country for its wealth and for soldiers to fight British battles, like the Second World War (1939-1945).

Non-violent activist Mahatma Gandhi launched the 'Quit India' campaign in 1942 to try to put pressure on the British to leave. After the war, escalating tensions between India's politicians, and rioting in the mixed provinces of Punjab and Bengal, added a sense of urgency. As disorder spread, the British wanted out – and quickly.



How did people decide how to divide the country?

A British judge, Cyril Radcliffe, was sent to India to decide how to split it up. The idea was that Muslim-majority areas would be joined together to form a new Muslim homeland. However, partition was easier in principle than in practice. Radcliffe had never visited India before and the census returns and maps he was given to work from were often inaccurate. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were dispersed across Punjab. The situation was so complex that Radcliffe's advisors, sent to him to provide local expertise, couldn't agree on the best way forward.



What happened once the new borders were announced?

Nobody involved in the process could have guessed just how many families would be forced to cross the new borders, and how many communities would be cut in two. The provinces of Punjab, in the Northwest, and Bengal, in the northeast, were divided to create West and East Pakistan.

In Punjab, millions of Muslims crossed into Pakistan, and millions of Hindus and Sikhs attempted to move the other way into India.

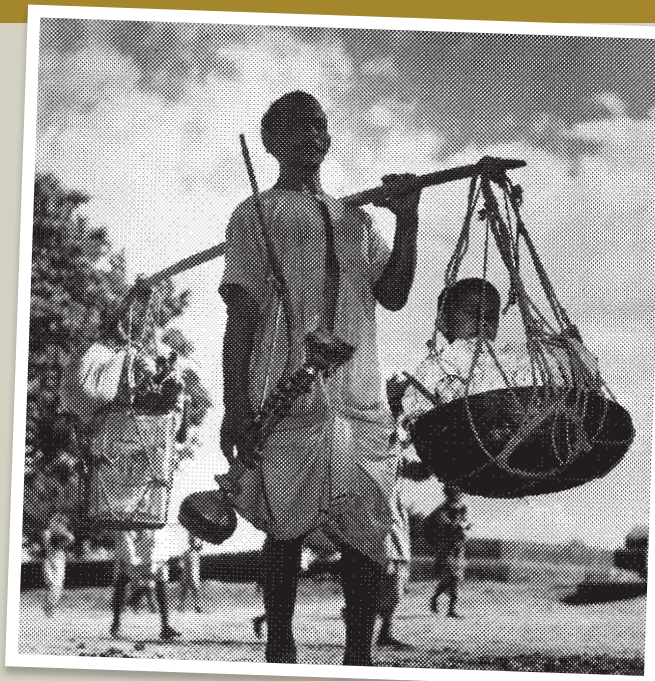
There was widespread panic. Horrific violence occurred on both sides, with people of all backgrounds becoming both victims and aggressors. Family homes were looted or set on fire, sometimes before the last people had left. Massacres happened on a huge scale – with trainloads of bloody corpses arriving at stations and whole villages ambushed and burned to the ground.

Special refugee trains, filled to bursting when they set out, suffered repeated ambushes along the way. All too often they crossed the border in funereal silence, blood seeping from under their carriage doors.'

– Nisid Hajari, author of *Midnight's Furies: The Deadly Legacy of India's Partition*.

What criticisms do people have of partition and the way it was carried out?

- The borders were drawn up using out of date maps and census returns – so Radcliffe had incorrect information about the people and territory he was dividing.
- The British left the country very quickly, and there were many issues that were not properly sorted out before they went.
- There were insufficient troops to keep order during the partition, and most British soldiers in India were confined to barracks. Only seven British lives were lost in their retreat, compared to hundreds of thousands of Indian lives.
- Many people see the British government as out of touch and uncaring.



How are the effects of partition still felt today?

India and Pakistan are still deeply divided, and went to war in 1965, 1971 and 1999.

The border between them is still one of the most difficult in the world to cross. Some families torn apart by events in the 1940s are unable to reunite even today.

Tension still simmers between the countries, with governments and the military deliberately stirring up emotions on both sides about the events of 1947. They disagree about who should rule Kashmir, in the north of India. You're even unable to fly direct from the capital of India, Delhi, to the capital of Pakistan, Islamabad.

People are particularly worried as India and Pakistan both have nuclear weapons. Some have even pointed to partition as a contributing factor for the growth in religious extremists on both sides and related terrorism and violence. Seventy years later, the after effects of 1947 linger on.

Partition helps us to see how connected communities in South Asia and in Britain are – and to remind us of the dangers of dividing communities.

– Dr Gavin Rand, *Principal Lecturer in History, University of Greenwich*

How is all this relevant to a child living in Britain in the 21st century?

There are few families of Indian or Pakistani origin in the UK that are untouched in some way by this event. In fact, most of the migration from South Asia to the UK in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s can be traced back in some way to partition and its catastrophic effects.

Children without links to India and Pakistan can also engage with partition's universal themes – survival, difference vs. similarity and what constitutes home.



Partition Timeline

20th February
1947

British Prime minister Attlee states that they intend to grant independence not later than June 1948

March
1947

Violent clashes between Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus in Lahore and Amritsar

15th April
1947

Gandhi, leader of the 'Quit India' movement, and Jinnah, leader of the All India Muslim League, appeal for peace

3rd June
1947

The plan to partition India is made public via radio

1st July
1947

The Partition Council is formed

8th July
1947

Cyril Radcliffe, British judge asked to draw up the new boundary, arrives in India for the first time

14th August
1947

Independence Day in Pakistan

15th August
1947

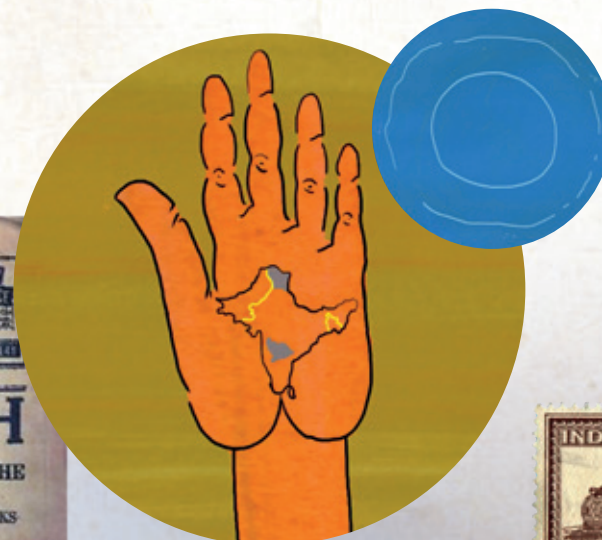
Independence Day in India

17th September
1947

First British Troops sail from Bombay

21st November
1947

More than eight million people leave Punjab



"The National Archives holds a wealth of material covering the period up to and including Partition. Nutkhut's Never Set Eyes on the land has created a unique opportunity for people to access this extraordinary but largely hidden history through the National Archive's collection. We are delighted to have been able to support this exceptional project."
Iqbal Husain, The National Archives



"The partition has often been studied as a key moment in South Asian history but its global significance is sometimes overlooked - not least in Britain. Partition is rarely taught in schools and few people understand how the events of 1947 were shaped by British imperialism, or how the partition and its after-effects influenced patterns of migration to Britain."
Dr Gavin Rand, University of Greenwich

Who's who in Partition

Lord Louis Mountbatten

Born: 25 June 1900,
Windsor, England
Died: 27 Aug 1979 – aged 79
Religion: Christian

Involvement in partition:

- Former soldier who was Viceroy of India* at the time of partition.
- Brought the date of partition forward by ten months, to August 1947.

Did you know?

- Mountbatten had connections to the British Royal family – he was the great grandson of Queen Victoria. Prince Louis, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's third baby, is said to be named after him.
- Mountbatten was felt by many, including Jinnah, to be over-friendly with Nehru and congress.

I have faith in the future of India and am proud to be with you all at this momentous time. May your decisions be wisely guided and may they be carried out in the peaceful and friendly spirit of the Gandhi Jinnah appeal.

– Mountbatten radio broadcast on partition, June 4, 1947



*The Viceroy was the highest-ranking government official in British India – they were in charge of the country

Sir Cyril Radcliffe

Born: 30 March 1899,
Llanychan, Wales
Died: 1 Apr 1977 – aged 78
Religion: Christian

Involvement in partition:

- British Judge paid to decide where to draw the dividing line on the map between India and Pakistan.
- Arrived in India for the first time just five weeks before he had to submit his final plan to carve up a country that was home to almost 400 million people.
- Never returned to India to see the devastating effects of his decisions.

Did you know?

- Radcliffe burned all his partition-related paperwork and refused his £3000 fee from the British government.
- The line he drew on the map in 1947 is still known as the Radcliffe line.



Jawaharlal Nehru

Born: 14 November 1889,
Allahabad, Northern India
Died: 27 May 1964 – aged 74
Religion: Hindu

Involvement in partition:

- Wanted India to be free of British rule and to become a secular, modern country.
- Became first Prime Minister of India.

Did you know?

- Nehru studied Law at Cambridge University.
- On Nehru's birthday every year Indians celebrate Bal Diwas (Children's Day) – which promotes the rights, care and education of children.

The achievement we celebrate today is a step, an opening of opportunity, to the greater achievements that await us. Are we brave enough and wise enough to grasp this opportunity and accept the challenge of the future?

– Nehru's speech to the Constituent Assembly of India, August 14, 1947

Muhammad Ali Jinnah

Born: 25 December 1876,
Karachi, present-day Pakistan
Died: 11 Sept 1948 – aged 71
Religion: Muslim

Involvement in partition:

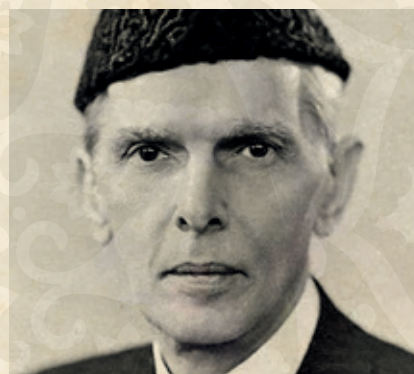
- Leader of the All-India Muslim League.
- Wanted Muslims to have their own secular, modern country once the British left.
- Became first Governor-General of Pakistan.

Did you know?

- Jinnah loved Shakespeare when he was younger and wanted to be a professional actor, but had to give it up because his father didn't like the idea.
- When he was twenty Jinnah became the youngest Indian ever to pass his English law exams.

A division had to take place. On both sides, there are sections of people who may not agree with it, who may not like it; but in my judgement there was no other solution, and I am sure future history will record its verdict in favour of it.

– Jinnah's first Presidential Address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, August 11, 1947



Mahatma Gandhi

Born: 2 September 1869,
present-day Gujarat,
North Western India
Died: 30 Jan 1948 – aged 78
Religion: Hindu

Involvement in partition:

- Former leader of the Indian National Congress political party.
- Wanted India to be free of British rule.
- Set up a movement of non-violent protests called the 'Quit India' campaign.
- Wanted all faiths to live peacefully side by side.

Did you know?

- Gandhi was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize five times.
- Gandhi's birthday is a national holiday in India as well as the International Day of Non-violence.

In the democracy which I have envisaged, a democracy established by non-violence, there will be equal freedom for all. Everybody will be his own master. It is to join a struggle for such democracy that I invite you today. Once you realise this you will forget the differences between the Hindus and Muslims, and think of yourselves as Indians only, engaged in the common struggle for independence.

– Gandhi speech to supporters at Gowalia Tank Maidan park in Bombay (now Mumbai), 8 August, 1942



Mridula Sarabhai

Born: 6 May 1911
Died: 26 Oct 1974
Religion: Jainism

Involvement in partition:

- Worked alongside Gandhi in the Indian National Congress political party.
- Wanted India to be free of British rule.
- Rushed to the Punjab once she heard of the riots breaking out and attempted to keep the peace.
- In charge of helping women who ended up on the wrong side of the new border after independence was declared.

Did you know?

- As a child of ten she worked with the Vanara Sena (or Monkey Army) – a group of child activists – and persuaded lots of people not to buy British goods.
- She was put in jail by the British for walking in the Salt March – a 24 day march in 1930 pointing out how unfair British taxes were.
- She was famous for wearing men's clothing and her short, boyish haircut.

Suitcase Detective

Link to *Never set eyes on the land* We believe in the power of objects to tell stories.

'My grandfather's rice bowl, the only surviving heirloom from Sargodha, the ancestral home and lands from which my father's family lived for centuries, became the catalyst for this project. Seven metals were used to make this bowl... iron, copper, zinc, brass, mercury, gold and silver, over 100 years old, it is a symbolic reminder of the past.'

– Ajay Chhabra, Artistic Director, *Never set eyes on the land*

We used specific objects as the basis of creative work with both school and community groups. We did this in the project's exploration phase. It was a fruitful way to start discussing complex historical events.

Curriculum focus: Introductory activity

You will need Object image cards – either cut out or displayed on whiteboard.

What to do

Explain that all the objects the students are about to see were found in an old-fashioned brown leather suitcase. In pairs ask the students to decide:

- **What** are these objects?
- **Who** did the suitcase belong to?
- **Why** did they pack it?
- **When** did they pack it?
- **Where** they were going?
- **How** they were travelling?



Ask for volunteers to talk through how they arrived at their ideas. Explain that the suitcase represents what a refugee finding themselves on the wrong side of the Radcliffe line might have packed to cross it during the partition of India in 1947. Use the rest of this pack to introduce the basics. Alternatively, this BBC animation provides a useful overview:

www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/40848391

More ideas

Ask students to write their own list of what they might pack if confronted with a similar journey. It might be useful to set up some ground rules here. For example, everything must fit in a small suitcase you can comfortably carry, or no tech/gadgets allowed.

Ask if anybody would like to share any migration stories of their own or that they know of from their families.



Trouble Brewing

Link to *Never set eyes on the land*, The events of 1947 are complex and contentious. For younger people they can sometimes feel dusty and irrelevant. By giving a (fictional) name to those involved, and inviting students to step into their shoes, we hope to create empathy and make partition seem more relevant to their everyday lives.

🔍 Curriculum focus: History

You will need Debate Character Cards (See overleaf)

One - What to do

Set the scene: a group of young people living in the Punjab, in North West India, come together in the spring of 1947 to debate the idea of independence and partition.

Two

Split into eight pairs or groups (or work alone if you have a small group). Take some time to read over your character card. If you like try to find a prop in the room that in some way represents your character or make yourself a name label.

Three - Time to debate!

a. Take it in turns to introduce your character to the room and read out your key information. What are the group's initial thoughts? Who do you agree with? Who do you disagree with?

b. Take it in turns to read out your fact. Does it change the way anybody thinks?

c. Ask your question to another character of your choice.

Four

Discuss as a group what surprised you about the activity (if anything) and if your initial ideas have developed or changed.

Five

Look up where your character lives on a pre-partition and post-partition map (widely available online). What do you think is most likely to have happened to your character after 14 August 1947? Share your findings with the group.

More ideas

Use your character card to write a diary entry or letter from your character exploring their views on partition more fully.

*Frances Wilkinson***Age:** 13**Living in:** Malout

About: I have lived in India since my father moved here to work as an engineer when I was two. I love our servants and the sunny veranda shaded by a mango tree. I overheard my parents talking about Indian independence last night. It worried me because they said if it goes ahead there won't be as many jobs and we would have to go back to England. I can't even remember what England looks like and I would miss the hot weather and all my friends. India is my home!

Fact: The British have been in India for almost two hundred years. Nobody in this room has even met anybody who was around before they came.

Question: Why do you have more of a right to call India your home than I do?

*Mandeep Sandhu***Age:** 11**Living in:** Lahore

About: I have lived in the middle of Lahore all my life. My family is Sikh and we have Muslim and Hindu neighbours. We all play together in the street. We make a good living from our fruit and vegetable shop. People are saying that because Lahore is mostly Muslim that soon Sikhs like us won't be welcome here.

Fact: People of all faiths have been living peacefully side-by-side in Lahore for many years.

Question: The children on my street are saying that the British government will draw the dividing line between the new India and Pakistan. How will they ensure they get it right when they don't know India like we do?

*Amira Shah***Age:** 14**Living in:** Shimla

About: I am a Muslim girl with a good job here in the kitchens of the Viceregal Lodge, where I work with my mother. My father was a soldier who died in the Second World War. Shimla is where all the rich and important British people in India come to holiday in the summer. If they leave I don't know what will happen to Shimla, or to me and my mother.

Fact: British rule gave some Indians opportunities and brought some technological advances to the country, including the railways.

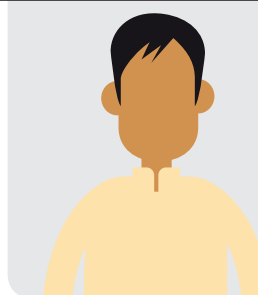
Question: Everybody is talking about getting the British out of India, but what will happen to all the Indians who are employed by them when they leave?

*Devinder Brar***Age:** 10**Living in:** Rawalpindi

About: I live with my family in a big house. Last week there were raids on nearby villages and I could see the fires raging from my bedroom window. Me and my younger brothers are not allowed to go outside and play by ourselves any more. Our parents don't want to talk about it, but we are scared about what might happen next.

Fact: In March 1947 clashes between Muslims and Sikhs in the Rawalpindi area resulted in many Sikh homes being looted and burned to the ground.

Question: I don't have a problem with anybody from any background. Why should I be forced to move from my home just because of a bunch of politicians and protestors?

*Surjila Kapoor***Age:** 15**Living in:** Ludhiana

About: At school we sing songs that Gandhi wrote when he was in prison. He is an inspiration to me and I share his vision that all faiths can live side-by-side in peace. I want the British to 'Quit India' and give us a chance to do things our own way. They do not care about us and have no place here.

Fact: In this country an Englishman who shoots dead an Indian servant gets six months in jail and a small fine. An Indian convicted of trying to rape an Englishwoman gets twenty years.

Question: What business do the British have in India anyway? All they do is take our money and try to stir up arguments between us.

*Harpinder Singh***Age:** 22**Living in:** Karachi

About: I am a Sikh but fought for the British alongside my Muslim and Hindu brothers in the Second World War. We became very close. Many of my friends will choose to serve the new Pakistani army after independence. But as a Sikh I will probably be forced to join the Indian army and leave my home in Karachi. I will miss my friends and my British Commander hugely.

Fact: Two-and-a-half million Indian soldiers of all faiths fought for the British in the Second World War.

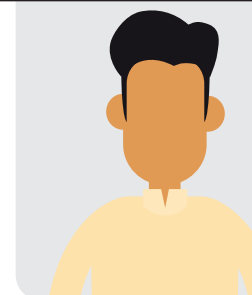
Question: After all the upheaval of the Second World War isn't it time to think about coming together peacefully – not drawing new lines to divide us?

*Sanjay Kapoor***Age:** 19**Living in:** Lahore

About: I am a Hindu studying politics at university. I have been on 'Quit India' demonstrations and refuse to buy anything made by the British. India needs to move with the times and look to a modern independent future. Jinnah's vision for Pakistan sounds forward-thinking and exciting. However I am worried about dividing a country up based on people's religion – can it really work? Is there a better way to do it?

Fact: Since the British took over in 1770, famine has killed 35 million people.

Question: How can we be sure that the British government will put our safety first when implementing their independence plan? They haven't shown us any respect in the last 200 years!

*Karim Malik***Age:** 17**Living in:** Amritsar

About: There are more and more fights between Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims now. I can't see what choice we have other than to split India in two. But I'm worried about it being fair. As most people who live in Amritsar are Muslim people say the city will go to Pakistan once the borders are announced. I hope they are right or as a Muslim my life will be in danger here.

Fact: In the 1946 elections almost 90% of Muslims voted for the party that were pushing for a new independent state of Pakistan.

Question: If Muslims are unsafe in India what choice do we have other than to have our own new country?



Drawing the Line

Link to *Never set eyes on the land* Cyril Radcliffe, who's often seen as a hapless civil servant, had an impossible task. It inspired our title, *Never set eyes on the Land* – taken from a W.H. Auden poem about partition. How do you begin to fairly divide a country that is home to almost 400 million people? As well as protecting people's safety, how do you ensure that physical resources, skills and knowledge are correctly allocated?

Curriculum focus: Geography

You will need

Copies of the Punjab map, red pens.

What to do

Could you do a better job than Cyril Radcliffe, the British judge asked to draw the dividing line between two new independent countries?

One

Look at the map of the contested area of the Punjab, in the north west. What do you think you should take into consideration when deciding where to draw your line to make it fair to all sides?

Two

Work in pairs to draw your own line through the province.

Three

Present your line and reasoning to another pair or the rest of the class. Who do you think would be happy with your decision? Who would be unhappy? Why?

Four

Take a look at the Radcliffe line. Does anything surprise you about his decision? Do you think he had an easy job?

More ideas

The Punjab is known as the 'bread basket' of India as it produces a large proportion of the country's wheat and rice. Can you identify which natural features make the ground so fertile?

The border between India and Pakistan is almost 2000 miles long and runs through the Indian states of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab and the disputed territories of Jammu and Kashmir. Imagine walking the border from the southern end, on the Arabian sea, to the northern end, in the foothills of the Himalayas. What different landscapes and features would you pass on your way?



Survivor Stories

Link to *Never set eyes on the land* The oral history interviews with partition survivors we conducted form the backbone of the entire project. We feel privileged to have had the opportunity to capture these unique and valuable voices and hope the following extracts from the transcripts will give your students a personal insight into the tragic events. As well as raising some interesting questions about the nature of how we record and understand the past, we hope these will prove useful stimulus for drama-based activities. At Nutkhut we believe that performance can be a powerful way to explore difficult themes.

Curriculum focus: Drama, History

You will need

Oral history summaries.

One - What to do

Assign each pair an Oral history summary sheet to read through.

Two

Ask the pair to write a list of further questions they would like to ask the interviewee, and to brainstorm potential responses.

Three

Join up with another pair with the same summary sheet and take it in turns to hot seat in your role answering the other pair's questions.

Four

Ask for volunteer pairs representing all three interviewees to perform a section of the imagined interview to the room.

Five

Discuss as a whole class what you've learned about partition from the exercise.

More ideas

Watch the Nutkhut *Never set eyes on the land* film, which combines the oral history interviews with music, animation and archive material about partition – <https://vimeo.com/294343308>. Ask students to jot down any images, colours, words and sounds they notice, and use these as the basis of a short poem about the subject.

An oral history is a personal account of the past, usually told to an interviewer. How reliable is it? Is it useful? What ethical questions does it raise? Are there any questions that should be off limits? What advice would you give an oral history interviewer?

From this exercise you can develop a one-minute scripted dialogue piece for performance.



Mr. Malik

Oral history summary 1

I can still close my eyes and picture my old house, my street... if I was an artist I could paint it.

Mr Malik was a six-year-old boy living in Delhi at the time of partition. His father was a Superintendent of the Federal Court of India in Delhi during the British Raj. The family would spend six months of the year in Delhi and the other six months in the cooler climate of Shimla, in the hills, when the heat of the city became too much to bear. Mr Malik moved to Stoke Newington in England in 1962, where he found work with an accounts department. He now lives in Tottenham, where he enjoys train spotting and photography.

Born: December 1938

Religion: Muslim

Home before partition: Delhi, capital of India

Home after partition: Karachi, largest city in present day Pakistan

Distance travelled: 677 miles

Life before partition

'Next door we had Hindu neighbours... it was just like one big family. I still remember they used to have Diwali and other functions. We used to have Eid and other functions and we used to join together. It was just so nice.'

Finding out about partition

'The next-door neighbour, I don't remember his name, was a Hindu. He came to see my father and said "Mr Malik, I think it's time for you to leave. My suggestion is there's going to be a lot of trouble in this area...things are going to be different very soon." My father then decided that we should go.'



The journey

'The train that we were supposed to go on, somehow we couldn't go on that train. Next day we heard, it came into the news, that train arrived into Lahore fully slaughtered... not a single person survived. Our relations came to see us at Lahore, to receive us, and they couldn't find us. For them, we were just gone – finished.'

'All the ladies on the train changed themselves out of burkas and into sarees so they looked like Hindus. Karachi took us four days to reach. On the way there was a lot of hassle, I still remember that. They used to stop the train in the middle of the night, in the pitch dark and people used to make noise – shouting... we were scared, me and my cousins...that feeling was unbearable really. We didn't know what was going to happen the next moment.'

Life in his new home

'They took us off the train. We had nowhere to live... We lived in a camp for three days – queuing up for food and everything. My father used to tell me that he felt so embarrassed that we had to stand in this queue to get food.' 'Then we started off our life in Martin Road in Karachi. We found other families as well my father knew from Delhi.' 'We missed... the good life really. Old friends, school, the neighbours, family friends – we missed all that. We had to start a new life – new friends, new neighbours, everything new, everything strange. It took us time to settle down... my father never enjoyed living there. He still missed Delhi, but that was how life was.'



Mrs. Knight

Oral history summary 2

I was extremely unhappy about leaving all my friends.

Mrs Knight was a thirteen-year-old girl living in Delhi at the time of partition. She moved to England in 1959 to study at the institute of education. She lived in Queensway and made a living while studying by doing dishes at a student hostel. In 1961 she got a job teaching biology and chemistry at a comprehensive school. Mrs Knight married Lionel, a British history teacher with a love of India. They have children and grandchildren together and live in Finchley, North London. They travel to India every year. Mrs Knight speaks five languages.

Name: Mrs Knight

Born: September 1933

Religion: Christian

Home before partition: Delhi, capital of India

Home after partition: Allahabad, India – later moved to Calcutta

Distance travelled – 435 miles

Life before partition

'My father converted to Christianity when he was a student. So my first cousins were Hindus. I was the youngest of three so my parents were more relaxed. I was playing around with the street children as well as other professors' children... we never had a lot of money – ever. A professor's salary is quite limited. But we had everything to make us happy.'

Deciding to leave

'We had three dogs. That was the saddest thing. We brought the youngest, Prince. But King and Queen had to be left and I was broken hearted for them. I said to my parents that we would never have left our own brothers and sisters and that



these dogs, particularly King, had given us such good service.'

'I had a Bible and it was totally mine in the sense that my parents couldn't read Urdu and my brother and sister both did Hindi. I was totally secure in the feeling that it was mine only. And I had to leave it behind.'

The journey

'In the event we were trying to take as much as possible, and we were in a truck – I wish I had a photograph of it – and I was wearing all my mother's jewellery. I wore it all and I was in a chador* so I was covered completely, sitting on the back of the truck with all our trunks and things... we looked quite poor but if they had found out I had all that jewellery there would have been a problem. We never went back.'

Life in her new home

'They resented anyone not with a Muslim name. They had suffered you see. They didn't want to know if you were a Christian if you looked Hindu enough, and your name was Hindu.'

'What I was horrified at... some of my very good Muslim friends when the trains were coming from Jammu with dead bodies of Hindus. Their mothers were dressing up in burkas and going to the railway station to look at those bodies, because they said our relatives have also suffered. I think people just completely forgot about their feelings – they were enraged and angry. Seeing it all around you, you are affected by it.'

*Chador – a large piece of cloth wrapped around the head and body, leaving only the face showing.

Mrs. Husain

Oral history summary 3

We were always asking "why are they fighting?" Children don't understand. He was a friend yesterday and now he is an enemy.



Mrs Husain was a ten-year-old girl living in Rawalpindi, in present day Pakistan, at the time of partition. She met her husband, a Muslim, on the boat over to England in 1960. Though she was Sikh they were immediately drawn to each other through a mutual love of traditional music and singing. They entertained their fellow passengers by performing on tabla* and harmonium** together. Mrs Husain studied art and design at the prestigious Heatherley School of Fine Art, and went on to work as a designer for the Oriental Carpet Manufacturers company. She lives with her husband in Lewisham, and they have a son – Iqbal – together.

Name: Mrs. Husain

Born: December 1936

Religion: Sikh

Home before partition: Rawalpindi, present day Pakistan

Home after partition: Dehra Dun, India

Distance travelled: 370 miles

Life before partition

'We were happily living in a very big house in Rawalpindi.'

Finding out about partition

'The riots started in October 1946... everybody started coming to our house and we were told not to go out. From the upstairs windows we could see the burning. Fire – all the houses – and lots of shouting. They were shouting "Allahu Akbar". There were lots of bodies. We were frightened.'

'My grandfather was all the time stuck to the radio – the news and all that, what is happening...how many people have been killed, dead bodies – all that. It was frightening.'

'My grandfather made up his mind and we took all our belongings... we went by train...'

Life in her new home

'Dehra Dun was beautiful – lots of trees and lychees, mangoes, all of that. We were children, we were just playing – but we knew there were refugees, there was a shortage of food – there was all rationing – that I remember. There was not enough wheat.'

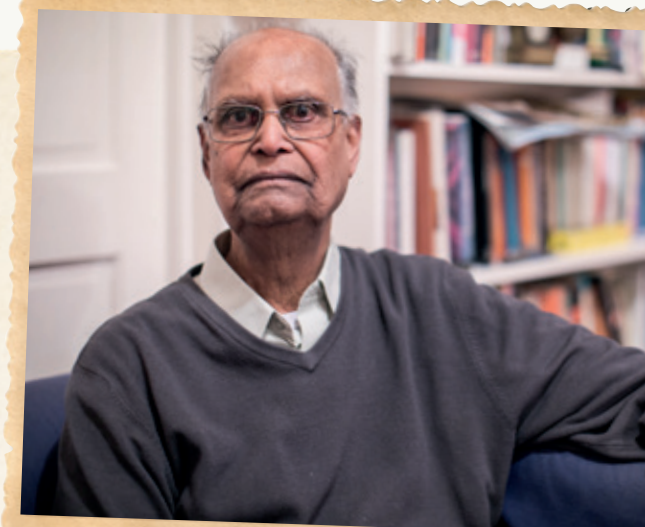
***Tabla:** small hand drums.

****Harmonium:** a keyboard instrument in which the notes are produced by air driven through metal reeds by foot-operated bellows.

Mr. Husain

Oral history summary 4

The only thing I knew was that the name Gandhi was very prominent, the name Jinnah was very prominent. We knew there was going to be a partition, but we never knew what that meant.



Mr Husain was a sixteen-year-old boy living in Badaun at the time of partition. He met his wife, a Sikh, on the boat over to England in 1960. Though he was Muslim they were immediately drawn to each other through a mutual love of traditional music and singing – and they entertained their fellow passengers by performing on tabla* and harmonium** together. He lived in Shepherd's Bush and took a job at Selfridges, where he worked for 35 years. Mr Husain has always been a keen traveller – and has lots of stories from travelling all over Europe on his Vespa in the 1960s and an ambitious family road trip to Pakistan in 1975 in a little Skoda car. He still loves to sing and play music. He lives with his wife in Lewisham, and they have a son – Iqbal – together.

Name: Mr Husain

Born: December 1931

Religion: Muslim

Home before partition: Badaun, India

Home after partition: Lahore, present-day Pakistan

Distance travelled: 374 miles

Life before partition

'My father had all these Hindu friends – we had food together, we had drinks together – just like one. They used to play cards.'

Finding out about partition

'The first time I realised that things were not right was when there was rioting between Hindus and Muslims. One day somebody told me, near our

house, that night Hindu people would be coming in to attack us – to attack the whole area: "So there are vigilantes around to protect you but you will hear a lot of sounds. Don't get disturbed." In the night we did hear the noises coming from outside. They didn't allow the Hindus to come inside the area at all, so the real fight was outside, but that's when I realised that things were bad.'

Life in his new home

'We reached Lahore and we went to this flat there. In that flat there was nothing inside. No chairs, no benches – nothing. We went to the local market and bought some mats made of tree bark – and we sat on that.'

'The problem was that the culture was so different – we came from Uttar Pradesh and we spoke Urdu. There they spoke Punjabi. If you go to the market, you have to ask them in Punjabi. Only my mother could speak Punjabi, so she had to go with us everywhere we wanted. We thought the people were very rude. The way they talk, it looks like they're fighting or they're not very happy about it, so it seemed very rude for somebody new like me! It was a completely different culture.'

Abia: small hand drums.

Harmonium: a keyboard instrument in which the notes are produced by air driven through metal reeds by foot-operated bellows.

Vespa: an Italian scooter brand associated with the mod movement from the 1960s.

In their Shoes

Link to *Never set eyes on the land* An eerie silence filled the room when we saw the powerful and provocative iconic photographs of American photojournalist Margaret Bourke White. We use them here to inspire poetry, another subject close to our hearts. In fact, the title of our project, *Never set eyes on the land*, is a quote from W.H. Auden's poem *Partition*, which you can find on page 6 of this toolkit.

Curriculum focus: English

You will need

Margaret Bourke White image cards, slips of plain paper.

One - What to do

Give each pair a Margaret Bourke White image card from these pages

Two

Ask each pair to pick a person from the image and imagine being in their place

- **What** can you see?
- **What** can you hear?
- **What** can you smell?
- **What** can you feel?
- **What** can you taste?

Ask pairs to write as many responses to these questions as they can on slips of paper, and place in an envelope on the table

Three

Ask the pairs to swap their picture cards and word slips with another pair

Four

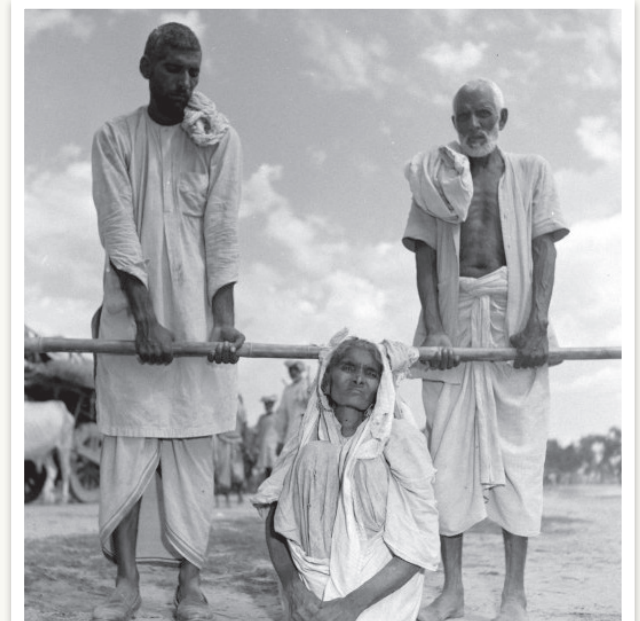
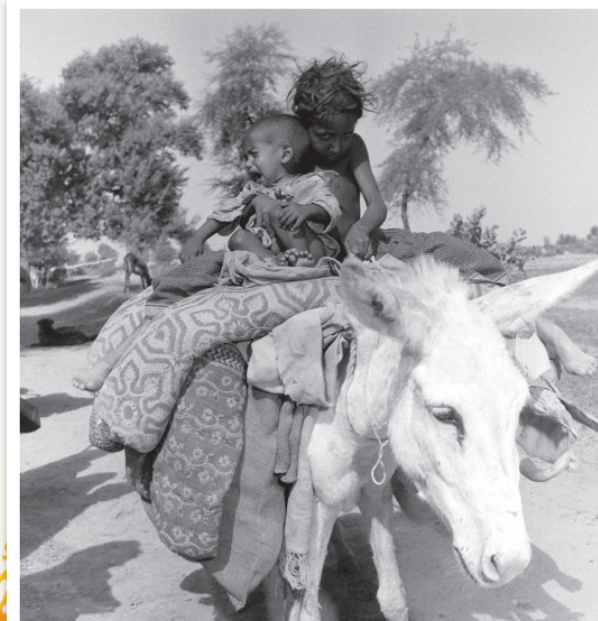
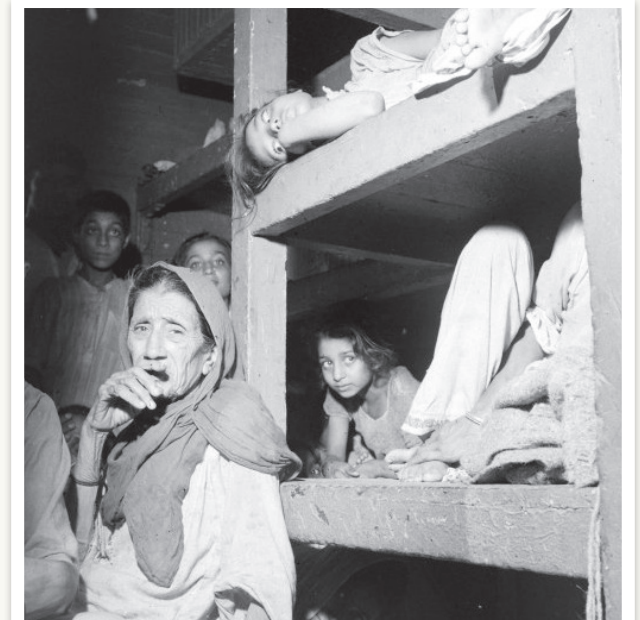
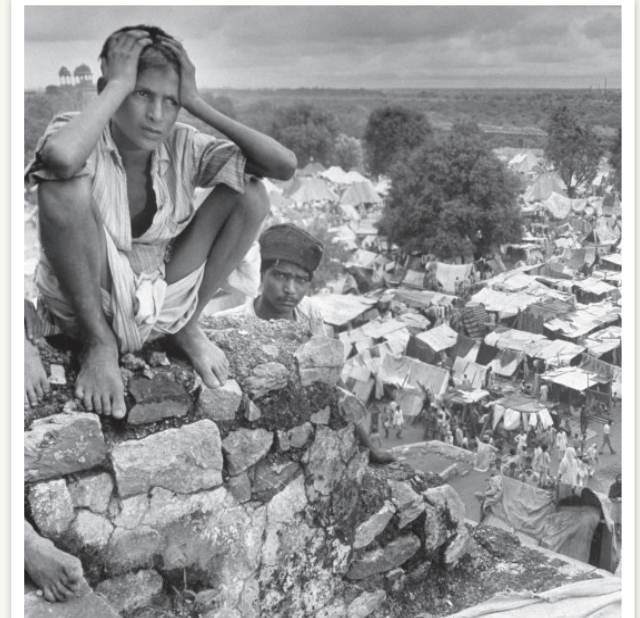
Use the new picture cards and word slips to write a poem or a short piece of descriptive writing.

More ideas

One Add some slips featuring words from W.H. Auden's *Partition* on page 6 or other poems and prose that deal with the subject, such as Sujata Bhatt's poem of the same name.

Two Read through the full text of W.H. Auden's *Partition* and do some whole class discussion around the following questions

1. How does Auden draw attention to Radcliffe's status as an outsider?
2. What do you think Auden thought about Radcliffe and his role in the process?
3. How do you think Radcliffe felt about this poem and the way Auden has chosen to present him?



Take a Stand

Link to *Never set eyes on the land* We feel passionately that partition is a story for now. As hundreds of thousands of people worldwide make the decision to pack up and embark on treacherous journeys towards new unknown futures, we are forced to ask ourselves important questions about what kind of world we want to live in. We hope the last activity in this pack will encourage students to explore their feelings on this and generate discussion and debate.

Curriculum focus: British Values, History

You will need

Debate statements.

One - What to do

Ask for volunteers to come and argue in support of one of the following statements. After one minute ring a bell to signal that they should now start arguing against it. You might want to set some ground rules about mutually acceptable language before you begin.

Two

Read out each of the following statements in turn and let people find their position

In a line that runs across the classroom running from 'absolutely agree' to 'don't agree at all'.

Debate it Statements

- We should all be free to live where we choose
- Your home is the country you were born
- People should live and work in the country they are born in
- A diverse population is good for a country
- If governments didn't interfere, people of all kinds could get along peacefully together
- There should be more help available for people adapting to a new country

Three

Watch the following short animation addressing some of the concerns people have about EU immigration from the National Institute of Economic and Social Research on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HpLvw8au1AI>. Write down five benefits of immigration stated in the film. Has anything about this surprised you, or made you change your mind?

More ideas

Gather a selection of headlines from British newspapers relating to immigration and place on a line from 'positive' to 'negative'. Discuss differences in tone and terminology for example the different meanings of 'illegal immigrant' 'refugee' and 'asylum seeker'. Ask half the class to write a pro-immigration article and the other half to write an anti-immigration article. Share and discuss.

Create a display celebrating all the things that immigration has brought to Britain in terms of music, food, books, clothing and leisure activities.



A Living Legacy

Partition lives on not just in the memories of people that experienced it first hand, but in their children, who grew up in its shadow, and in their Grandchildren, who are often taught so little about it. You don't have to look far in London and beyond to find families who have been touched by this tragic episode in our history. Read the stories of three of them below.

Second generation story – Mrs Kiran Thapar

Until recently I have never connected my own life with partition until I was invited to contribute towards the project *Never Set Eyes* ...

This engagement awakened a curiosity into my own past: the experience of my grandparents and parents as they endured and no doubt suffered the pain caused by partition simply because they were uprooted from the place of their birth, Sialkot.

Typically, as a second generation child of the partition, I have taken all I have for granted and never really reflected on how things came to be.

I was born in 1958 and am the fifth child of six. My parents, like those around us, were struggling to establish themselves. My grandfather was very ambitious and had tried hard to set up businesses, unsuccessfully, as did my father. Connections with Malaysia and business opportunities led my father to pursue a home for his family in England.

Like many others, he compromised his own ambitions to give his family a secure future by slowly saving up for his children to enter England. First my two older brothers, and then my mother, my 9 year old sister and myself aged 8, arrived in the UK. Finally my third brother joined us at the age of 16 years. It had taken my father nearly --- years to get us all here.

Our experience was not unique in the early days with struggling and making ends meet, but there was real sense of feeling secure, feeling settled and feeling hope.

My older siblings were disadvantaged simply because of their age, they went to work in factories and took up apprenticeships, formal education was acquired for a purpose. My sister and I were fortunate because we were young enough to take advantage of the British Education system.

We did not speak English and despite having been in school in Delhi, we were placed, as was the practice at the time in the Remedial Class where we spent a great deal of time drawing and copying and learning nothing more.

I don't know when ambition set in, but I always had to work hard to get the best grades in school. My sister and I were part of Enoch Powell's policy to prevent ethnic groups forming ghettos, so we were picked up by coach and taken to a secondary modern school for girls in a different area of the city, where we were the only 'brown'

girls. This was a great advantage as we were a 'fascination' for our English counterparts 'exotic' even.

We managed to do really well at school and were both encouraged by our teachers who loved our motivation, we had ambitions and a reason to catapult ourselves out of our circumstances. We were taken to factories as we reached 14 years as potential employment for the future. I think it was then I decided it was not for me.

Despite difficulties I managed to complete a degree and decided to become a teacher. I have been successful in my teaching career rising to deputy headship and to headship for the last 19 years.

We all need to take stock of our past and explore how it can be the reason why we are successful. I have a latent sense of my past, which remaining suppressed for so long has been awakened through my involvement with the *Never Set Eyes*.

Third generation story – Diren & Aneya Chhabra

We were both born in England and our late grandparents and late great grandparents were affected by Partition.

Aneya - 'My face appears as part of *Never Set eyes*. My daddy wanted to show how children can become separated from their families and from the past.'

Diren - 'As part of the 70th anniversary of Partition, me, my father and my grandfather were invited to a live BBC News show to talk about how three generations of my family view partition.'

Our Dada -ji (father's father) Sham Sundar Chhabra was born on the banks of one of Punjab's greatest rivers, the Jhelum, in the 1920's, in Sargodha, British India (now Pakistan).

From the stories we hear from our family, due to the links he had with the Quit India Movement (he attended rallies and demonstrations where Nehru and Gandhi would be key speakers, against the British) and he was instrumental in helping many of our extended family and others in the wider community, evacuate and leave the place which they had called home.

Our mothers Dada ji, Krishan Lal, was born in Sialkot, British India (now Pakistan) in 1929. On the cusp of Partition, he moved to Delhi and in the mid 1950's he moved to Malaysia and then in the early 1960's he moved to England.

It's important to remember who we are and where we come from. It must have been a very difficult time for many of our family members and we should never take things for granted. If we remember the past we can build a better future.

Find out more

You can find out more about the Never set eyes on the land project online at our website, **nutkhut.co.uk**. We would love to hear from you if you have further questions, comments or ideas. Get in touch at **connect@nutkhut.co.uk**

Find out more about the partition of India online

Aik Saath Partition project – Women's Voices
<https://partitionwomensvoices.com/>

Al Jazeera Partition resources

<https://www.aljazeera.com/topics/events/india-pakistan-partition.html>

BBC Newsround – what was the Partition of India?

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zp6fmsg>

BBC Partition Voices

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b090rr10>

British Library – Partition and Independence of India 1947

<https://www.bl.uk/projects/partition-and-independence-of-india-1947> <https://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/indian-independence>

Child of the Divide – activity pack

https://polkatheatre.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Child-of-the-Divide-Education-Pack_UK-Tour-2017.pdf

India Partition by Stanford History Education Group – US based resources for teaching Partition

<https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/india-partition-6364474>

Nations Divided: how to teach the history of partition – Runnymede Trust report

<https://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/Partition%20History%20Project%20Evaluation.pdf>

Orality and the Archive: Teaching the Partition of India through Oral Histories

<https://radicalteacher.library.pitt.edu/ojs/index.php/radicalteacher/article/view/274/187>

The Partition Archive – thousands of collected interviews of Partition survivors, based in Berkeley Project Dastaan Politics and Partition – activity sheets

<https://www.rgs.org/CMSPages/GetFile.aspx?nodeguid=6018d580-b16a-40a7-9243-97eac55db016&lang=en-GB>

The Road to Partition 1939-1947 – The National Archives

online classroom resources
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/the-road-to-partition/>

South Asia Citizens Web

<http://www.sacw.net/partition/index.html> and <http://www.sacw.net/rubrique20.html>

Why Was British India Partitioned in 1947? Royal Geographical Society Key Stage 4 resource

<https://www.history.ox.ac.uk/files/teachingresourcewhywasbritishindiapartitionedin1947pdf>

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Special thanks to all our partition survivors who shared memories and stories of life, family and friendship. Without you this story could not have been told.