SIGHTS of WONDER

HOME ACTIVITIES

VICTORIANS IN EGYPT

Artworks and artefacts can give us a glimpse into the past. The photographs in the *Sights of Wonder* exhibition can tell us about the countries that Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, visited in 1862. They can also tell us about the relationships between Britain and these countries during the time of the Victorians.

In this resource we'll think about the reasons why the prince made this journey and we'll also explore Britain's relationship with Egypt in the 19th century.

Key Stage 2&3 | Suitable for ages 9-14 | History Curriculum

THE BARBER INSTITUTE OF FINE ARTS

ROYAL COLLECTION TRUST

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

WHERE IS EGYPT?

Egypt is an African country in the North of the continent. It is a large country measuring 387,000 square miles.

The River Nile, the world's longest river, flows through Egypt on its way to the Mediterranean Sea. Most of Egypt's population live along the Nile Valley.

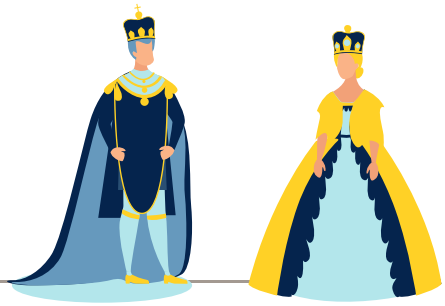
Egypt has a mainly hot, dry climate. Two famous deserts are located in Egypt- the Sahara and the Libyan.

DID YOU KNOW?

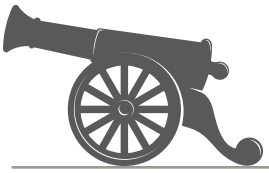
Egypt is one of the world's oldest civilisations, dating back over 6000 years. The Egyptians invented ink, paper, writing, solar calendars and toothpaste!

THE VICTORIANS, EMPIRE & EGYPT

An Empire is a group of countries that are ruled by the same head of state, this could be a King, Queen, President, Emperor or Empress. The British Empire began to grow after 1583 when Humphrey Gilbert arrived at an island off the coast of North America. He declared it part of the British Empire and renamed it Newfoundland.



The British Empire went through many changes during its history. The British set up colonies and traded all over the world. Expanding the Empire was achieved through engaging in battles with other European countries and indigenous peoples in the countries the British sought to colonise. From the 1700s the British increasingly used military force to gain the land and resources of other countries.



Key dates that you can research further

1775 – 83	The American War of Independence
1777	Captain Cook arrives in Australia at a place that he names Botany Bay
1787	The first English prisoners are deported to Australia
1848 – 49	First Sikh war of independence in Punjab
1858	The India Act puts India under the control of Britain.
1861	Lagos on the coast of Nigeria becomes a British Colony
1882	Riots against Western powers in Alexandria, Egypt, result in many deaths and provoke a British invasion
1895	Joseph Chamberlain became the UK Colonial Secretary
1897	The British burn down Benin City, in modern day Nigeria
1906	Mahatma Ghandi launches a programme of national resistance in India

The above selected dates show examples of invasion, militarisation and indigenous resistance.

'My ambition is much higher than independence. Through the deliverance of India, I seek to deliver the so-called weaker races of the Earth from the crushing heels of Western exploitation in which England is the greatest partner.'

Mahatma Ghandi, Leader of the Indian Nationalist Movement, 1928

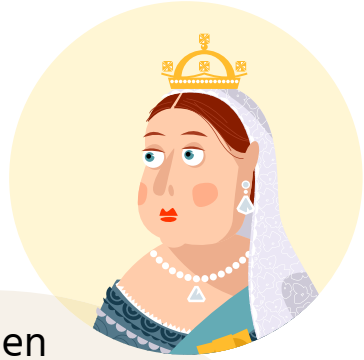
After the Second World War more and more countries around the world wanted independence from the British Empire. These included India, Malaya and Ghana.

In 1959 Queen Elizabeth II established the Commonwealth. Today the Commonwealth has 54 countries including the United Kingdom, Canada, Nigeria and Pakistan.

DID YOU KNOW?

You might have heard of the Commonwealth Games. This is a sporting competition that all nations in the Commonwealth participate in. **The Commonwealth Games are coming to Birmingham in 2022!**

The Victorians were fanatical about growing the British Empire. Through growing their Empire they could increase trade and wealth. The British Empire covered around 25% of the world's surface at its height between 1815 and 1915. Large areas of North America, Australia, Africa and Asia were all part of the British Empire.



Queen Victoria was the head of the British Empire. Her son, the Prince of Wales was heir to the throne. As part of his broad education he was sent on a four-month tour of the Middle East in 1862, planned by his parents. It is likely that Queen Victoria gave him the task of making close friends with the Wali (Governor) of Egypt, to help Britain develop trade in the area.

In 1869 the Egyptians opened a new canal called the Suez Canal. This became one of the most important routes for trade in the world as it linked Europe and Asia.

DID YOU KNOW?

Other empires include the Roman Empire (27 BCE-476 CE) and the Ottoman Empire which lasted from 1299-1924 and included Egypt from 1517–1867.

LOOK CLOSELY

The painting below by Jemima Blackburn shows the Prince of Wales being gifted a small mummy in Thebes. This really happened! Normally, the Egyptian government didn't allow this but they made a special exception for the prince.

Jemima Blackburn (1823-1909), *The Prince of Wales at Thebes, 18 March 1862,* Thebes, Egypt, 1862. Watercolour, 227 x 288 mm.
Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2020

It is still common today all over the world for Royal Family members and heads of state to visit other counties to build relationships. They often present each other with gifts.

THINK ABOUT...

Do you think that the mummy should have been given as a gift or should it have remained in the tomb? What do you think the Egyptian people would have thought about the prince being given this gift?

LOOK CLOSELY

This photograph is over 150 years old. On the left we see a stone carving of a Sphinx which is over 20 metres high. A Sphinx is a mythical creature with a human head and the body of a lion. If you visit today you will see the body of the lion as the sand level is now lower.

Francis Bedford (1815-1894), *The Sphinx, the Great Pyramid and two lesser Pyramids, Ghizeh,* Giza, Egypt, 4 March 1862. Albumen print, 231 x 295 mm
Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2020

Behind the Sphinx we can see the Great Pyramid, the oldest of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. Most pyramids were built as tombs for Pharaohs. This pyramid is believed to have been built to house the body of Pharaoh Khufu.

ACTIVITY

1

What is happening in this photograph?
What are your first impressions of this image?

2

Imagine you're on a journey to Egypt...
how would you record what you saw?

3

In the photo can you see the people resting in the shade on the stone Sphinx?

Can you put yourself in their shoes?
Imagine what it would be like to be them.
Try writing a diary entry as one of these people.

To find out more take a look at:

Horrible Histories
Vile Victorians

British Museum
Ancient Egypt

BBC Bite Size
KS2

The Oxford Reference Timeline: The British Empire

WORDS IN THIS RESOURCE

Canal	A man-made waterway.
Civilisation	A civilisation is an advanced stage of human development and organization.
Colonial Secretary	Had control of numerous colonies, but not of India nor Canada.
Colony	A country or area under the control of another country and occupied by settlers from that country.
Commonwealth	A group of equal nations which used to be part of the British Empire.
Continent	The world's largest spaces of land are grouped into the continents: Europe, Asia, Africa, North and South America, Australia, Antarctica.
Deported	The act of removing a resident or an intruder from a country.
Empire	A large area under the control of one ruler (often an emperor), often including many separate countries.
Exploitation	The act of treating someone unfairly in order to benefit from their work.
Fanatical	Obsessively concerned with something.
Head of State	The head of a country, such as a president or monarch, who may also be the head of government.
Independence	An independent country rules itself rather than being ruled by another country or as part of an empire.
Pharaoh	Egyptian head of state until Egypt became part of the Roman Empire in 30 BCE.
Wali	Governor of Egypt under the Ottoman Empire.