



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

A Level History A

Y311/01 The origins and growth of the British Empire
1558–1783

Wednesday 6 June 2018 – Afternoon

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes



You must have:

- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet
(OCR12 sent with general stationery)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Use black ink.
- Answer Question 1 in Section A and any **two** questions in Section B.
- Write your answers in the Answer Booklet. The question number(s) must be clearly shown.
- Do **not** write in the barcodes.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is **80**.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets [].
- Quality of extended responses will be assessed in questions marked with an asterisk (*).
- This document consists of **4** pages.

SECTION A

Read the two passages and then answer Question 1.

- 1 Evaluate the interpretations in **both** of the two passages and explain which you think is more convincing about the actions of Robert Clive in India. [30]

Passage A

We still talk about the British conquering India, but that phrase disguises a more sinister reality. It was not the British government that seized India at the end of the eighteenth century, but a dangerously unregulated private company headquartered in one small office, five windows wide, in London, and managed in India by an unstable sociopath* – Clive.

In many ways the East India Company (EIC) was a model of corporate efficiency: 100 years into its history, it had only 35 permanent employees in its head office. Nevertheless, that skeleton staff executed a corporate coup unparalleled in history: the military conquest, subjugation and plunder of vast tracts of southern Asia. It almost certainly remains the supreme act of corporate violence in world history.

Bengal's wealth rapidly drained into Britain, while its prosperous weavers and artisans were coerced 'like so many slaves' by their new masters, and its markets flooded with British products. A proportion of the loot of Bengal went directly into Clive's pocket. He returned to Britain with a personal fortune – then valued at £234,000 – that made him the richest self-made man in Europe. After the Battle of Plassey in 1757, a victory that owed more to treachery, forged contracts, bankers and bribes than military prowess, he transferred to the EIC treasury no less than £2.5m seized from the defeated rulers of Bengal – in today's currency, around £23m for Clive and £250m for the Company.

No great sophistication was required. The entire contents of the Bengal treasury were simply loaded into 100 boats and punted down the Ganges from the Nawab of Bengal's palace to Fort William, the Company's Calcutta headquarters. A portion of the proceeds was later spent rebuilding Powis [*Clive's home*].

Later, Clive, hounded by envious parliamentary colleagues and widely reviled for corruption, committed suicide in 1774 by slitting his own throat with a paperknife.

* *sociopath* = someone who behaves in an extremely antisocial way and/or holds very antisocial attitudes

Adapted from W. Dalrymple, *The East India Company: The Original Corporate Raiders*, published in 2015.

Passage B

Robert Clive came to India as a clerk in the East India Company. He showed such a remarkable military genius that he became Commander-in-Chief. It cannot be denied that his services to the British Empire in India were great. Robert Clive was responsible for the capture and defence of Arcot in 1751. In collaboration with Lawrence he was able to frustrate all the designs of Dupleix. Clive's capture of Arcot proved to be the turning point in the contest between the French and English. Clive has therefore been called the 'hero of Arcot', in the history of India. He laid the foundation of the British power in Bengal and provided the basis for further expansion into the interior of the country. The period of second governorship of Bengal of Lord Clive is remarkable for the successful handling of the political and administrative problems which confronted the Company in 1765. His masterly handling of the situation silenced all opposition and created an atmosphere of calm and quiet at least for some time. During this period he established Oudh as a buffer state. He was not only a great warrior but also a great administrator and statesman. In the administration of Bengal he did a lot for the improvement of the Company. It goes without saying that Lord Clive was the founder of the British Empire in India.

Adapted from N. Jayapalan, *History of India from 1206 to 1773*, published in 2001.

SECTION B

Answer **TWO** of the following three questions.

- 2*** 'Britain brought little benefit to its colonies in the period from 1558 to 1783.' How far do you agree? **[25]**
- 3*** To what extent did the reasons for opposition to British colonial rule change in the period from 1558 to 1783? **[25]**
- 4*** To what extent was the development of the British Empire hindered by rivalry with France in the period from 1558 to 1783? **[25]**

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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