

# The British Empire – The Largest Empire In History

by Carina Krieger, Manuel Peters, Kamil Sowinski and Paul Liedgens

The territ



## "First British Empire" 1583-1783:

- 1578: Queen Elisabeth I. gave order to Sir Humphrey Gilbert to sail to the West Indies
  - engage in piracy and set up a colony in North America
  - expedition failed before it had crossed the Atlantic
- 1583: second attempt (now: to explore Newfoundland)
  - H. Gilbert didn't survive the return journey to England
- 1584: Walter Raleigh (half-brother of Gilbert) got the same order
  - he founded the colony Roanoke (in nowadays North Carolina)
  - they hadn't enough supplies/it failed
- 1603: James VI of Scotland became king of England
- 1604: he negotiated the Treaty of London ending hostilities with Spain
  - started to found colonies
- 1607: foundation of Jamestown (first English permanent settlement)
- religious persecution drove many "English would-be colonists" to sail to America
  - Plymouth (1620/Puritans); Maryland (1634); Rhode Island (1636); Connecticut (1639)...
- BE started to take shape with the English settlement of North America and smaller Islands of the Caribbean
- triangular trade: Africa (slaves) → America/Caribbean (sugar, tobacco, cotton) → England (manufactured goods) → Africa
- English/British East India Company: established to trade with India and China
  - came to rule large areas of India
- First British Empire until they lost 13 colonies after the United States Declaration of Independence

## Rise of the "Second British Empire" 1783–1815:

- 1760s and 1770s: relations between the Thirteen Colonies and Britain became increasingly problematic.
  - Britain wanted to govern and tax American colonists without their agreement.
  - "No taxation without representation"
- 1775: the American War of Independence began.
- 1776: Declaration of Independence
- 1783: The colonists won the revolutionary war
- Britain focuses on Asia, the Pacific, Australia and later Africa

- Shift from "first" to "second" Empire
- War against napoleonic France:
  - 1805: Battle of Trafalgar (decisive British naval victory/ Lord Horatio Nelson)
  - France was defeated at the battle of Waterloo (General Wellington)
  - France ceded the Ionian Islands and Malta (Mediterranean sea), Seychelles, Mauritius, St. Lucia and Tobago
  - Spain ceded Trinidad; the Netherlands Guyana and the Cape Colony (South Africa).
- Britain returned:
  - Guadeloupe, Martinique, Goree, French Guyana and Réunion to France
  - Java and Suriname to the Netherlands.

### **British Empire 1815 – 1914:**

- imperial century of British dominance
  - Area: 10 Mio. miles<sup>2</sup> (≈700000\*Germany)
  - ≈ 400 Mio. people
- 1815: Napoleon/France was defeated at the battle of **Waterloo**
  - Russia was left to be the sole serious rival
- "**Pax Britannica**"/"**Splendid Isolation**":
  - unchallenged at sea (strong royal navy)
  - dominated world trade
    - informal empire (Caribbean, Latin America, China...)
  - no intervention in European affairs
- conflicts in Asia:
  - India (most important colony) was controlled by the **British East India Company**
  - Company exported opium to China as balance for the Chinese tea exports to Britain
  - opium trade was outlawed by China
  - 1839: China seized 20000 chests of opium
    - Britain attacked China
    - 1839-1842: **First Opium War**
- "the Great Game":
  - rivalry in Eurasia between the British and Russian Empire
  - **Crimean War** (1853 – 1856)
    - Mainly Britain and France fought for dominance in central Asia against Russia
- Dominion status:
  - **self – government** for white settler colonies of the Empire
    - Canada, Newfoundland, Australia, New Zealand and later South Africa...

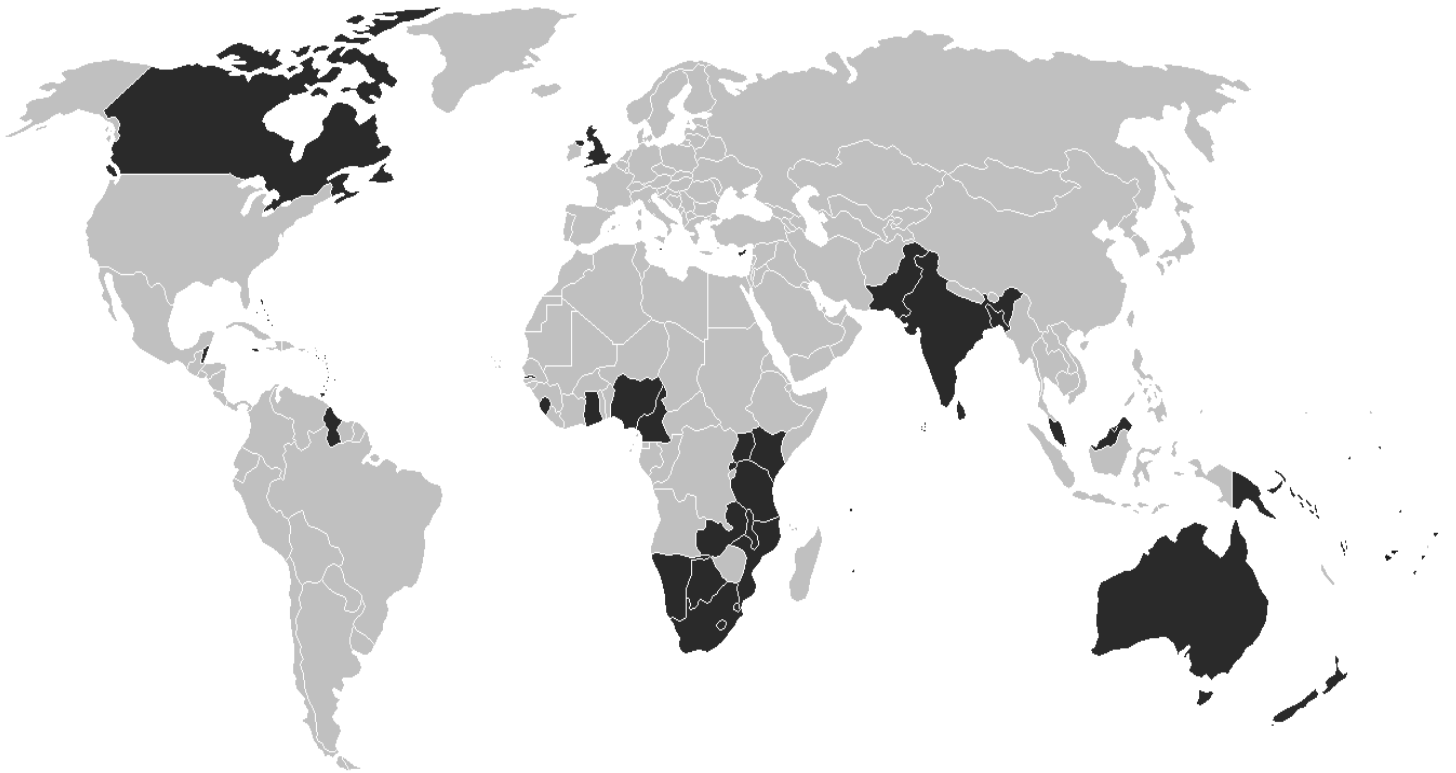
### **The World Wars and the decline of the Empire 1914 - ...:**

- WWI: Colonies helped to fight against Germany (about 2.5 Million "colonists" served in the military)
  - impacted their future independence
- The Empire reached its greatest extent after the war
- Independent movements in dominions and colonies like India
  - 1931: dominion (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa...) became independent
- WWII: Britain struggled to defend the whole empire.
  - Britain was nearly bankrupt after the war
- Until 1997 basically all the colonies got their independence
  - Britain made sure to leave stable anti-communistic governments

### **Sources:**

- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British\\_Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Empire)
- Engineering an Empire – Great Britain: movie
- <http://www.zdf.de/ZDFmediathek/content/9602?inPopup=true>: Imperium: Kampf um die Weltmacht

## Commonwealth of Nations



<b>Headquarters</b>	Marlborough House, London, United Kingdom
<b>Official Language</b>	English
<b>Membership</b>	54 sovereign states
<b>Head of the Commonwealth</b>	Queen Elizabeth II (since 6 Feb. 1952)
<b>Secretary General</b>	Kamlesh Sharma (since 1 Apr. 2008)
<b>Chairperson-in-Office</b>	Patrick Manning (since 27 Nov. 2009)
<b>Area</b>	total 31,462,574 km <sup>2</sup>
<b>Population (2005)</b>	1,921,974,000

## **Objectives and activities**

-The Commonwealth's objectives were first outlined in the 1971 Singapore Declaration: the institution of world peace, promotion of representative democracy and individual liberty; the pursuit of equality and opposition to racism; the fight against poverty, ignorance, and disease; and free trade.

-The Commonwealth's current highest-priority aims are on the promotion of democracy and development, as outlined in the 2003 Aso Rock Declaration, which built on those in Singapore and Harare and clarified their terms of reference, stating, "We are committed to democracy, good governance, human rights, gender equality, and a more equitable sharing of the benefits of globalisation." The Commonwealth website lists its areas of work as: Democracy, Economics, Education, Gender, Governance, Human Rights, Law, Small States, Sport, Sustainability, and Youth.

-Through a separate voluntary fund, Commonwealth governments support the Commonwealth Youth Programme, a division of the Secretariat with offices in Gulu (Uganda), Lusaka (Zambia), Chandigarh (India), Georgetown (Guyana) and Honiara (Solomon Islands).

## **Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting**

-The main decision-making forum of the organisation is the biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), where Commonwealth Heads of Government, including (amongst others) Prime Ministers and Presidents, assemble for several days to discuss matters of mutual interest. CHOGM is the successor to the Meetings of Commonwealth Prime Ministers and earlier Imperial Conferences and Colonial Conferences dating back to 1887. There are also regular meetings of finance ministers, law ministers, health ministers, etc. Members in Arrears, as Special Members before them, are not invited to send representatives to either ministerial meetings or CHOGMs.

# **The Monarchy in Great Britain:**

## **General Information:**

- constitutional monarchy of the United Kingdom and its overseas territories
- The present monarch Elizabeth II since February 6th 1952
- various official, ceremonial and representational duties
- ultimate executive authority over the government
- powers are only used according to laws enacted in Parliament or within the constraints of convention and precedent → Advices from the prime minister
- kings of the Angles and the early Scottish kings
- Some information: Even head of state in Australia
- “kissing hands” nomination of the prime minister
- Sign legislations

## **The Queen as a symbol:**

- Figurative character for many Britons
- On banknotes, stamps , etc.
- Very important for the whole country → proudness /patriotism
- „God save the queen“
- Soldiers swear an oath on the queen

## **Pros:**

- Monarchy acts as a guardian of a nation’s heritage, a living reminder of the events and personalities that have shaped it.
- Constitutional monarchy is a very effective political system
- Undemocratic?
- a powerful focus for loyalty and a source of strength in times of crisis, for example World War II, and a reminder of enduring values and traditions
- Monarchy can lead public opinion. Although above party politics, modern monarchs have proved able to raise important and sometimes unpopular issues that would otherwise have been ignored

## **Cons:**

- Royal families have become national embarrassments; are no longer able to maintain the mystique which once set them apart from the common man. → even mortal
- Monarchs no longer have divine right to rule. For centuries the main justification of royal authority was a religious one → no man has religion at all!
- The costs of monarchy are unjustifiable.
- presence sustains the traditional class system, sending out a message that who you are born matters more than what you make of yourself

# The Political System of Great Britain: Constitutional Monarchy

## **1: Constitution**

- Is not written down
- Consists of: Documents, habits, resolutions -> products of evolution
- Flexible / can change
- Historical convention -> parliament can change parts of the constitution

## **2: Monarch: Functions**

- No real political power but a representative power
  - Head of state but not head of government
  - Chooses / appoints Prime Minister (leader of the strongest party)
  - Head of the church of England
  - Acts on the advice of the PM
  - Part of the executive + legislative („King In Parliament“)
  - Appoints members of Parliament
  - Representative job abroad
  - Can dissolve the parliament
- 

## **3: Parliament**

### **a) House of Lords:**

- British nobility and high-ranking clergy
- Hereditary; mandate for life
- 735 members
- No democratic legitimation (no elections)
- Law lords / law peers: supreme court/judiciary

### **b) House of Commons:**

- Elected by the people
- 646 members (=constituencies)
- Define and pass laws

## **4: UK election**

- constituencies
- “the winner takes all”
- Election every 5 years
- Doorstep-canvassing: door-to-door campaign to get known

## **5: Cabinet**

- The ministers
- Chosen by the PM
- Responsible for carrying out the policies agreed on by the government

## **6: Prime Minister**

- Coordinates government policy
- Chooses cabinet members
- Head of government
- Leader of the majority party
- Appoints bishops
- Queen's private advisor
- Chief spokesman at international meetings

## **8: Parties**

- Two party system
- Conservative party (party of the right): industrial / commercial sector
- Labour party (party of the left): socialism
- Other parties like the liberal democratic party are not important in GB

## **Vocabs/Keywords:**

Countenance divine	Göttliches Angesicht
Ceasefire/armistice	Waffenstillstand
ascension/rise (of Christ)	Aufstieg (Auferstehung)
gentle sounds	Einfühlsame/milde Töne
tranquil tone	friedlich/ruhig Stimmung
woe/grief	Trauer
patriotism	Patriotismus/Vaterlandsliebe
jingoism/chauvinism	Extremer Nationalismus
conscientious objector	Kriegsdienstverweigerer
carnage	Blutbad
staccato rhythm	Abgehackter Rythmus
trenched warfare	Stellungskrieg
panegyric poetry	Lobpreisende Dichtung
conscription	Wehrpflicht
splendid/magnificent diction	Prunkvolle Wortwahl
prosody	Analysis of metre/meter and rhyme
change/breach of pattern	Strukturbruch
colony	Kolonie
religious persecution	Glaubensverfolgung (Puritans etc.)
triangular trade	Dreckshandel (GB – Africa – America)
British East India Company	British trading company in India
Battle of Trafalgar	1805: Horatio Nelson
Battle of Waterloo	1815: End of napoleonic wars
Pax Britannica	
Dominion	Self government status of a colony (intermediate step to independance)
Commonwealth of Nations	
Constitutional Monarchy	Konstitutionelle Monarchie
House of Lords	Oberhaus
House of Commons	Unterhaus
Cabinet	Kabinett

## **Rhyme scheme/pattern:**

pair rhyme:                a a b b

cross rhyme/  
alternating rhyme:    a b a b

embracing rhyme:    a b b a

## **Prosody (analysis of meter/metre and rhythm)**

Iamb/ iambic foot:            x  $\acute{x}$     (unstressed/stressed syllable)

Trochee/ trochaic foot:        $\acute{x}$  x

Dactyl/ dactylic foot:        $\acute{x}$  x x

Anapest/ anapestic foot:    x x  $\acute{x}$

3 feet: trimeter

4 feet: tetrameter

5 feet: pentameter

## **History – Quiz: British Empire**

- 1) Who was Walter Raleigh?
- 2) What is Jamestown?
- 3) Briefly explain the triangular trade between England/Africa/America.
- 4) Which company was established to trade with India and China?
- 5) When did England lose its 13 colonies in America?
- 6) Name two decisive victories of the British over Napoleon.
- 7) What does the term “Pax Britannica“ refer to?
- 8) What were the reasons for the First Opium War?
- 9) What is a Dominion?

## **Stylistic Devices / Literary Terms**

### **Alliteration** (Alliteration, Stabreim)

Repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of neighbouring words

Example: O wild west wind, ...;

Full fathoms five thy father lies, ..

Effect: sound device, musical effect

### **Allusion** (Anspielung)

A reference to a famous person or event; may be literary, historical, biblical, ...

Example:

Effect: emphasis, to give credibility, to show off one's education

### **Anaphora** (Anapher)

The same word or expression is repeated at the beginning of 2 or more lines or sentences

Example: Did he smile his work to see?

Did he who made the lamb make thee?

Effect: emphasis

### **Anticlimax**

Often surprising descent from the important to the unimportant, normally in a series of statements

Example: He pawned his life, his watch and his word.

Effect: surprise, humour

### **Antithesis** (Gegenüberstellung zweier Gedanken)

Contrasting statements are balanced against each other.

Example: To err is human, to forgive divine.

Effect: to create emphasis

### **Assonance** (Gleichklang)

The repetition of the same or similar vowel sounds within stressed syllables or neighbouring words

Example: fate and lake

Effect: musical

### **Asyndeton** (unverbundene Reihung von Satzgliedern)

Words are not linked by conjunctions; they are separated only by commas

Example: .. another poster, torn at one corner, flapped fitfully in the wind, ... covering...

Effect: staccato-like

### **Chiasmus** (Überkreuzung)

The syntactic structure is criss-crossed; inversion in second phrase of order in first phrase

Example: to stop too fearful, and too faint to go

Effect: emphasis

### **Climax**

Words are arranged according to the value of their importance; the most important word is the climax.

Example: We strive for the good, aim for the better, and seize the best.

Effect: to increase tension, emphasize importance

### **Enjambment** (Zeilensprung)

A sentence runs across 2 lines

Example: I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills

Effect: fluent, flowing

### **Epipher**

Repetition of one or more words at the end of two or more lines or sentences

Example: Whirl your pointed pines,  
Splash your great pines

Effect: emphasis (front and end positions are always emphasized)

### **Euphemism** (Euphemismus)

A direct, unpleasant statement is replaced by an indirect, more pleasant one to avoid bluntness.

Example: to put an animal to sleep, instead of: to kill it because it is ill

Effect: to avoid bluntness, to be polite

### **Hyperbole** (Übertreibung)

Example: Sue is extremely rich. She is rolling in money.

I haven't seen you for ages!

Effect: used for exaggeration; to attract the reader's attention; to emphasize statements

### **Inversion** (Umstellung von SPO)

Example: away they fly; up go the windows, out run the people, ...

Effect: to emphasize or dramatize an event

### **Irony**

A meaning is expressed that is the opposite of the intended one.

Example: the noble Brutus

Effect: ridicule; often didactic

### **Litotes**

Understatement, often ironical, expressing an affirmative by the negative of its contrary

Example: she is not stupid (= she is quite clever)

Effect: emphasis

### **Metaphor**

A figure of speech that implies more of a comparison than a direct impression (Without "as" or "like"!!)

Example: You are the wind beneath my wings.

Effect: emphasis; appeals to our imagination; creates a vivid picture in the reader's mind

### **Metonymy**

A word is substituted by another with which it is associated.

Example: crown stands for monarchy

Effect: visual effect

### **Onomatopoeia** (Lautmalerei)

Word whose sound tries to imitate its meaning

Example: hum, buzz, crash, swish, cuckoo

Effect: sound device, creates an especially vivid impression

**Oxymoron** (scheinbarer Widerspruch)

Two contradictory terms are used together in a phrase.

Example: sweet death; wise fool; cruel love

Effect: provokes thoughts; emphasis

**Paradox**

A statement which is obviously absurd or contradictory, but has a deeper meaning

Example: The King is dead! Long live the King!

So fair and foul a day I have not seen.

Effect: thought-provoking

**Parallelism**

Arrangement of phrases, sentences or paragraphs, so that structure and/or meaning are similar; a form of repetition

Example: Cannon to the right of them,

Cannon to the left of them,

Cannon behind them

Volleyed and thundered.

Effect: impresses the reader

**Personification** (Vermenschlichung)

Attributes a human quality to animals or inanimate things

Example: Justice is blind; dancing daffodils

Effect: to emphasize similarity

**Portmanteau word** (Kontamination)

Two words are used to form a new one.

Example: breakfast + lunch = brunch

**Pun** (Wortspiel)

A humorous play on words that sound similar, but have different meanings

Example: These sausages are unidentified frying objects.

Is life worth living? That depends on the liver.

Effect: humour, fun

**Repetition** (Wiederholung)

Words or phrases are repeated.

Example: water, water everywhere

Effect: to emphasize; can seem monotonous

**Rhetorical question**

Asked for rhetorical effect, not expecting an answer

Example: A simple child, ... What should it know of death?

Effect: emphasis

**Rhyme**

Similarity or identity of vowels (several types: end-rhyme, cross-rhyme, embracing rhyme)

Example: In the drinking-well

Which the plumber built her

Aunt Eliza fell,

We must buy a filter.

Effect: musical

**Simile** (Vergleich mit „like“ oder „as“)

Example: He runs like the wind.

Effect: conveys a vivid picture to the mind by linking up unrelated objects

**Syllepsis** (Zeugma)

One word modifies or governs others although it fits with only one.

Example: He took leave and his hat.

Effect: comical

**Synaesthesia**

Words describing different sensations (e.g. colour, smell, vision)

Example: murmuring light; cold colour

Effect: poetic; provokes thoughts; strikes as unusual

**Synecdoche**

Uses a part of something to refer to the whole

Example: He was sent behind bars (= prison)

Effect: vivid impression

**Tautology** (synonyme Wortwiederholung)

Superfluous repetition of words that does not clarify a statement

Example: to divide into four quarters

Effect: for emphasis