UNTERRICHTS MATERIALIEN

Englisch Sek. II



The British Empire and Brexit

Den Zusammenhang zwischen Großbritanniens imperialer Vergangenheit und dem Brexit untersuchen

VORANSICHT

RAABE
KLASSE SCHULE

Survey of topics and methods

Main focus	Working with a map	Discussion	Working with charts	Working with the text	Working with pictures	Research and presentation	Mediation	Language analysis	Cartoon analysis	Material
■ Extent of the British Empire	•	•								Topic 1.1 ■ World map: "The British Empire at its peak"
■ Present-day views on the empire		•	•							Topic 1.2 ■ Charts: "Public pride in imperialism and colonialism"
■ Two different views on the British Empire ■ Positive and negative aspects of British imperial history ■ The role of the empire in the development of British identity ■ Traces of the empire in South Africa				•	•	•				Topic 3 ■ Newspaper article from *The Telegraph*: "Our empire was an amazing thing" ■ Newspaper article from *The Guardian*: "Wake up, Britain. Should the empire really be a source of pride?" ■ Photos: Monuments from colonial times in South Africa

VORANSICHT

The British Empire and Brexit

Why did the British vote for Brexit? Since the referendum there have been many attempts to answer this question. There is no simple answer, although in the course of the Brexit campaign some topics, such as immigration, were given more attention than others. In reality, there is a variety of factors ranging from economic problems to cultural issues that influenced the outcome of the referendum.

In this unit, we will deal with the question how Brexit is linked to Britain's past. It seems that in connection with Brexit, Britain's "glorious past" has regained new importance. People are proud of the time when Britain was a sovereign, global power, ruling over a worldwide empire. Understanding the role of this era for British identity will help to explain the difficulties that many British people – especially the older generation – have with the European Union and why they want to leave it.

Present-day views of the empire

The British Empire at its peak in the 1920s comprised one quarter of the world population, with some 200 colonies worldwide. Over many years, Britain was a world power. In the course of the 20th century the empire declined and by the late 1960s, most colonies had become independent. What persisted was an "imperial feeling", especially among the generation that grew up in the forties and fifties. In their childhood and youth the empire still played an important role in all areas of life. In recent years, this special feeling seems to have come back into fashion, it is now sometimes termed "colonial nostalgia" or "postcolonial melancholia". The results of two YouGov polls from 2014 and 2016 show that most British people still have a favourable view of the empire. They think that British colonialism was something to be proud of and that the empire was a good thing. Some politicians even go so far as to project the past into the future and evoke an "Empire 2.0", calling for special trade relationships with Britain's ex-colonies after Brexit.

VORANSICHT

The British Empire – then and now

The British Empire at its peak



■ = countries that were part of the British Empire in 1921

Working with the map

1. The map shows the British Empire at its territorial peak in the 1920s. Describe and explain the map. How many of the countries that were once British colonies can you identify?

2 Today there are only a few small overseas territories left of the empire. Can you imagine that Britain's imperial past is still of importance to British people today? Discuss in class.

VORANSICHT