

HISTORY ACTIVITY SIX: THE COMMONWEALTH CONTRIBUTION

LINK TO GEOGRAPHY 3, 4, 6

Learning Objectives

- To understand how Empire building made the Great War “ The First **World War**”;
- To understand the connections between national and international history, economic, military, political, religious and social history;
- To explore issues of racism and prejudice experienced by black and Asian soldiers.

Resources

- [Historical Context 1 The British Empire](#)
- [Historical Context 5 The Indian Army](#)
- [Historical Context 6 The British West Indies Regiment](#)
- [Historical Context 16 The Indian Army/BWIR experience](#)
- [Historical Context 20. The Aftermath of War](#)

MAIN TASKS

1. Look at the reasons why men joined the BWIR or Indian Army and the allegiance they felt to King George. Can students understand why they felt compelled to sign up rather than feeling it had nothing to do with them?
2. Explore and list the differences between both countries and armies (e.g. the fact that the Indian Army existed and the BWIR was formed specially, the BWIR weren't really allowed to fight etc).
3. Discuss the issues of racism and prejudice encountered by both groups of men. Include prejudice experienced by black British soldiers such as Norman Manley who gave up being a non-commissioned officer because white soldiers resented taking orders from him. Compare it to the positive experiences of Walter Tull who was respected as a footballer. [BBC Walter Tull](#). Look too at the Race Riots in Liverpool experienced by soldiers who remained in Britain.
4. Look at how different Britain is today and discuss the growth and impact of multi-culturalism.