



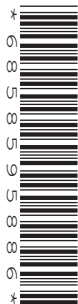
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

## A Level History A

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

**Friday 9 June 2017 – Morning**

**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 answer to each question on the Answer Booklet.
- 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 as an explanation of the East India Company's expansion and rule in India in the eighteenth century. [30]

### Passage A

When the English East India Company made its bid for political power in the mid-eighteenth century, first in the eastern and southern parts of India, the Mughal Empire that once exercised control of the greater part of the subcontinent had been reduced to a shadow. Several regional powers, some of which still owed formal allegiance to the Emperor and even paid revenue to him, were fighting for supremacy and the company entered the fray to secure and enhance their commercial gains. The Indian Empire was acquired, not in a fit of absent-mindedness, as has sometimes been alleged, but in the words of a British historian, in pursuit of the public and private greed of the Company's servants. Hilaire Belloc advised a child that it should, "always keep a hold of nurse for fear of finding something worse". Similar claims have been made for British rule in India, probably correctly. But the initial experience of the conquest was horrendous both in Bengal and southern India. The Company's servants indulged in an orgy of loot and this systematic plunder was at least one major cause of the famine of 1770. Although there are reasons to question the accuracy of claims that the famine wiped out a third of Bengal's population, the ruinous effects on the region's economy are not in doubt. The wars in the south, where Haidra Ali, the ruler of Mysore, devastated territories under British control, produced similar consequences. And taxes collected from the Company's subordinate Indian 'allies' funded the military machine for the conquest of more territories and the consolidation of empire.

Adapted from T. Raychaudhuri, 'British Rule in India, An Assessment' in *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire*, published in 1996.

### Passage B

The sense of the innumerable and lasting benefits that have been conferred by the East India Company on this country [India], appears most unaccountably to be forgotten in a sense of the imaginary injuries brought upon it by their sovereignty. The evils, if they be substantial, as they are in some instances, are of too minor a character to be cast into the scale against the blessings of tranquility, abundance and happiness, which have replaced anarchy, poverty and misery; and liberty and security which have replaced slavery and want; while at the same time, a multitude of other blessings which can improve human life and make life valuable, now fill the land where before disorder and violence had spread their terrors. And for all these benefits, do the Company deserve nothing but the severest disapproval? Had they done nothing else except open the way for the introduction of Christianity in these regions, India would have gained, but it is largely indebted to them for many benefits which it has reaped from its links with Great Britain. The just and equitable administration of law, the security of persons and property, and the enjoyment of other privileges, must reconcile the inhabitants of India to the overthrow of their own power, and the establishment of British influence. It must be something strange that can induce a man to disregard all the good that is produced and focus on casual and unpremeditated evil, which may have been unintentionally and unthinkingly committed.

Adapted from The East India Company, *Considerations on the renewal of the East India Company Charter*, published in 1829.

**SECTION B**

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

- 2\*** 'Individuals were more important than trading companies in driving imperial expansion.' How far do you agree with this view of the British Empire in the period from 1558 to 1783? **[25]**
- 3\*** 'The American colonies brought Britain the greatest economic benefit of all its colonies in the period from 1558 to 1783.' How far do you agree? **[25]**
- 4\*** How far was the development of the British Empire responsible for the outbreak of wars involving Britain in the period from 1558 to 1783? **[25]**

**END OF QUESTION PAPER**

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