

# India – a country of contrasts, dreams and nightmares

by Rita Reinheimer-Wolf



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In dieser Unterrichtseinheit setzen sich Ihre Lernenden mit den verschiedenen Facetten Indiens auseinander. Unter anderem mithilfe von Fakten, Texten, einem Film und einem Romanausschnitt erarbeiten sich die Lernenden Wissen über Geschichte, Alltag, Probleme, Herausforderungen und Zukunftsperspektiven des Staates. Hierbei trainieren und erweitern sie ihre Lese-, Schreib-, Analyse- und Sprechkompetenz. Auf spielerische Weise vertiefen die Schülerinnen und Schüler schließlich das Gelernte in einer fiktiven Fernsehtalkshow.

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## Competences and skills

By working with the material, students enhance their **reading comprehension**. They also improve their **writing skills** by writing a comment, a film review and a creative text. Additionally, they train their **viewing competences** by filling in a post-viewing questionnaire after having watched a film. **Speaking** is improved by giving a short speech on a topic. **Discussion skills** are enhanced when students participate in a discussion representing a protagonist from the material. Finally, the skills of working with a non-fictional text are practiced.

## Overview:

### List of abbreviations:

**A** Analysis

**D** Discussion/debate

**PR** Presentation

**T** Working with the text

**W** Writing

**C** Comment

**M** Mind map/visualising

**R** Research

**V** Vocabulary work

**CT** Creative Task

**PM** Placemat activity

**RC** Reading comprehension

**VC** Viewing comprehension

Topic	Material	Method
1: India – its past and present	M1–M3	C, PR, T, V, W
2: Slums and poverty	M4	M, PR, VC, W
3: Human trafficking	M5–M6	A, PR, R, RC, V
4: <i>My Name ist Khan</i>	M7	PR, VC, W
5: <i>(Un)arranged Marriage</i>	M8–M9	A, CT, PM, PR, RC
6: Bangalore – India's Silicon Valley	M10–M11	D, T, V

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## Facts

### Milestones in India's past

For more than 300 years (1526–1857), most of the Indian subcontinent was under the control of Mughal (or Mogul) Emperors who were Muslims but ruled a country marked by a large Hindu majority. Mughals, however, spread Islam, Muslim arts and culture all over South Asia. The economy in the age of the Mughal Empire was characterised by agriculture and trade. The control of most of the Indian subcontinent was successfully realised by a highly centralised administration with a single currency throughout the Mughal Empire. At the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the British showed interest in India and the British East India Company (BEIC) was founded. This enterprise of nearly unique historical and economic dimension not only managed to establish a number of trading posts in India but also represented the beginning of the colonisation process. The Company was chartered by Queen Elizabeth I in order to enable the British to trade with Asia. Consequently, the main goal was of an economic nature. Ambitious and power-seeking traders took control of huge swaths of India. Thus, by the year 1856, the British East India Company was in control of most of India. One year later, however, the so-called Indian Mutiny took place when Indian soldiers employed by the British army started a revolt against racial injustice and the lack of equal rights. This rebellious spirit also took hold of civilians. The East India Company was then dissolved and India was directly governed by the Crown. So, in 1857, the British Rule (Raj) started. In 1885, the Indian National Congress was founded and developed into one of the largest political parties in the world. This was a major force in the struggle against British rule in India. In the 1920s, the Indian National Congress adopted Mahatma Gandhi's concept of non-violent civil disobedience and resistance. The Quit India Movement was created as a consequence and also presided by Gandhi. The year 1947 marks a decisive milestone

## Language



2. Read the text *A brief history of India*. Collect all the terms from the text that relate to the British Empire. Choose five expressions from your list and explain them using your own words.

## Working with the text

3. Choose the most decisive events or incidents mentioned in the text and explain why they are essential.



4. Take a look at the *Facts and figures about India's present*. Write a brief factual and informative text on the basis of the data. In order to improve the style of your text, use some of the following connectives and adverbs:

<b>Listing arguments/facts:</b>	<b>Comparing facts:</b>
to begin with in the first place last but not least	likewise similarly in the same way compared with ...
<b>Adding arguments:</b>	<b>Summarising/concluding facts:</b>
furthermore moreover in addition to	in conclusion briefly it follows that taking everything into account
<b>Giving reasons:</b>	<b>Emphasising facts or arguments:</b>
because of consequently for this reason on account of that explains why	absolutely entirely seriously thoroughly utterly

## Topic 4: *My Name Is Khan*

### M7 Worksheet: *My Name Is Khan*

#### Pre-viewing activity

1. Bollywood – what do you associate with the term? Collect ideas on your own first and then share your associations in small groups.
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#### Working with the film



2. Watch the film *My Name Is Khan*. Analyse it with the help of the questions below. Choose 3 questions from the list. Your teacher will make sure that all questions are covered.
    - a) Describe a key scene of the film *My Name Is Khan* (What is the main conflict? Who? What? Where? When? How? Why?)
    - b) Is there anything that surprised or annoyed you about the film? If so, why?
    - c) Characterise the protagonist Khan.
    - d) Characterise Khan's wife Mandira.
    - e) Summarise the message of the film.Use the grid below for your notes.
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#### Speaking



3. In a group of four students, think of questions you could ask Khan about his situation in society. Decide who of you represents Khan, the protagonist of the film. Act out a hot seat activity with Khan in front of the class.
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#### Writing



4. Write a film review on *My Name Is Khan*. Consider the guidelines below when writing your text.

## Topic 5: (Un)arranged Marriage

### M8 (Un)arranged Marriage – excerpt



*The teenager Manjit – who lives in England with his parents from India, has always been very unwilling to be married off to a woman he does not know at all. In this extract from the novel “(Un)arranged Marriage”, Manjit’s family brings up the topic of his wedding again and again.*

5 “It is about time you started thinking about your future, Manjit.” [...]  
 “Manjit, I am talking to you.” His voice [his father’s voice] was super-calm, which was a pleasant surprise. [...] “I have spoken to a friend of mine in India, about his daughter.” He paused for a moment. I think maybe he was waiting for me to say something. To react. But I just kept my eyes on the game and  
 10 wondered what he was going to say next, about what he had agreed with his friend in India. I knew that it had to be about marriage [...]. And there was no way that I was going to say ‘yes’ to marrying some girl from India just by looking at a photo of her. No way. [...] “I have told her father that you will marry her after next summer, when you are both seventeen. If we leave it any  
 15 longer there will be too many questions from the immigration people. Once you are married she will have the right to stay in this country and I will have my final daughter-in-law.” The look on my face must have said everything that I was thinking. My palms<sup>1</sup> were getting all sweaty<sup>2</sup> and I wanted to get out of the house. Just run. Be anywhere but where I was at that moment. I wanted  
 20 to scream at him and shout and swear. Hit him. But I couldn’t do anything. My legs felt like they were frozen, like two sausages waiting to be defrosted<sup>3</sup>. [...] My dad obviously saw my reaction because he changed his lecture to one about how it was my duty to uphold his honour, his *izzat*<sup>4</sup>. To protect the family name and all that. [...] “That is not why your mother and me brought  
 25 you on this earth. To ruin our name and to rubbish our *izzat*. We brought you up to be a good Punjabi, not a *gorah*<sup>5</sup>. You are not from this country, even if you were born here. These people are not the same as us. They are not the same. We have to protect our culture, Manjit. Our way of life.” [...]

*A few months later, Manjit’s brother Harry tells the teenager that he will go to*