Activity Introduction

What’s up? [Name] here and today we’re going to be taking a look at India and China. At the turn of the nineteenth century, these countries were experiencing a lot of changes.

The western policies of imperialism and industrialization began to have significant impacts on India and China, affecting the futures of both.

Let’s take a closer look at how these policies affected these two countries, starting with China.

Reading Passage Introduction

Gunpowder and the massive ships of Zhenghe are two examples of the many early technological innovations started in China. However, by the turn of the eighteenth century, scientific and industrial revolutions in other regions of the world, like Europe, seemed to be overpowering China.

While China had a history of holding onto ancient teachings and policies, by the nineteenth century, the era of dynasties faced a series of threats. Some western powers were following a policy of imperialism, continually pushing to take more authority over other places, including China. Let’s find out more about what was going on in China as European nations brought imperialism and industrialization to its shores.

Video 1
Hey there. I’m Andre. I can’t stop thinking about the big march tomorrow, the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Hopefully it will help guarantee rights for all Americans, no matter what their color.

Since I’m awake, I’ve been reading about the effects of industrialization and imperialism for my school exam. They had effects all over, in places like China and India. In fact, it was the effects of industrialization and imperialism in India that inspired the emergence of one of the most influential civil rights leaders in history. His name was Mohandas Gandhi.

Gandhi became a leading figure of Indian nationalism in the nineteen-twenties by creating ideas of nonviolent opposition to repressive colonial rule. His methods influenced millions both inside and outside of India, including, from what I hear, Dr. Martin Luther King Junior, himself.

Gandhi was born into a well-to-do family in the town of Porbandar in modern day Gujarat on October second, eighteen-sixty-nine. When he was born, India was under British rule, but the more than five-hundred kingdoms or ‘native states’ that made up India were allowed autonomy in domestic and international affairs.

Gandhi’s father was an advisor to the local ruler, while his mother was a devout Hindu. His father died before Gandhi had finished school. When Gandhi was thirteen, he had an arranged marriage. At nineteen, Gandhi left behind his family, including his son who was just a few months old, and traveled to England where he hoped to get a law degree.

While in London, Gandhi met with a number of people who were disappointed with the legacy of industrialism. He also encountered some religious texts, like the Bhagavad-Gita. Overall, Gandhi learned a lot about western nationalism and democracy. At
twenty-two he finished his law degree, and at twenty-three he returned to India, where he began his own law practice.

In the beginning, Gandhi’s law practice wasn’t very successful, so he accepted an offer to be the legal advisor for an Indian businessman in South Africa. In South Africa, Gandhi met Indians living with no political rights who were subjected to the common sentiments of European racism. The racist government and white minority there mistreated Africans and Indians, many of whom had been recruited as laborers.

South Africa was ruled by England at this time. English rule raised taxes on Indians, shut down Indian gatherings, and politically and socially oppressed both Indians and Africans. In some cases, Indians weren’t even considered to be full human beings. Gandhi was thrown out of a first-class railway car even though he had a first class ticket.

The injustices Gandhi saw in South Africa inspired him to emerge as a leader in the Indian community, and it was in that country that he first promoted his theory and practice of non-violent resistance. Gandhi’s methods of non-violent resistance were based on the belief that both the oppressor and the oppressed would recognize their common human bond.

I want to tell you more about how Gandhi put his methods into action, but before I do, would you like to hear about Gandhi’s early life again? If so, let me know.

**Video 2**

Alright, so Gandhi was determined to bring change to South Africa, and he was determined to do it without violence. He began helping the local Indians assert their rights, for which he was jailed, beaten and almost killed.
He also wrote a number of books detailing the struggles of Indians against oppressive legislation like poll taxes and the declaration by the government that all non-Christian marriages were illegal. He wrote critiques of the results of industrialization.

Between nineteen-oh-six and nineteen-fourteen, Gandhi carried on a fight for justice for Indians in South Africa. His non-violent resistance included hunger strikes, mass marches, and public demonstrations.

In nineteen-fourteen, the colonial regime caved to the increasing pressure and lifted the worst legal injustices against Indians. It was around this time that Gandhi was given the title Mahatma which means “great soul.”

Gandhi finally returned to India in nineteen-fifteen. Once there, he wanted to get more acquainted with the conditions Indians were experiencing there. He set up a spiritual center to train followers in his ideas of nonviolence. He didn’t discriminate between religions, believing that there were “innumerable definitions of God.”

Gandhi saw Indians working in oppressive conditions; at times he became involved in local struggles. He saw poverty and suffering of Indians all around him. To identify better with the plight of people of lower class, Gandhi gave up his high-caste dress and traveled third class. He also worked to better the situation of the lowest class of Indian society, the ‘untouchables’, insisting that they be involved in politics too.

In nineteen-nineteen, English forces massacred unarmed Indian protesters at Amritsar. This weakened Gandhi’s faith in English justice. Over the next two years, he initiated a non-cooperation movement, calling upon Indians to withdraw from British institutions, return honors conferred by the British, and to learn self-reliance.
In nineteen-twenty, Gandhi became the leader of India’s major nationalist organization, the Indian National Congress. In this role he was both a religious and political figure. He fully put his policy of noncooperation into action by launching three campaigns of civil disobedience.

Gandhi was frequently jailed for his participation in these campaigns, and he often fasted to prove his commitment to his cause. Gandhi’s wife, Kasturba, played an important role; she supported him and was by his side in many of the decisions that led to his becoming a leader for the Indian community.

Gandhi’s campaigns to better the Indian cause were also affected by the division between Hindus and Muslims in India. Some Muslims supported the Indian cause, but others felt that it was mainly a Hindu cause. This division would affect the future of Gandhi’s campaign as a civil rights and nationalist leader for the Indian cause. Still, Gandhi was able to bring about significant changes in the world without committing any acts of violence. If Gandhi could do it, maybe there’s hope for our cause too.

Well, I better try to get some sleep. Tomorrow's going to be a big day and a march isn't exactly the place for someone who’s sleepy. But before I get to bed, would you like to hear about Gandhi’s struggles again?

**Reading Passage Introduction**

Both India and China faced different threats during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In India, oppressive English colonial rule was beginning to unravel with calls for Indian civil rights and a political voice.
China, too was struggling with the effects of continually advancing European traders. One of the biggest threats British traders brought to China came in the form of drugs, opium to be precise. Surprised? The dangers of drug trafficking aren’t just a modern day phenomenon. Let’s read about the impact the drug trade had on China back then.