

2 A Tumultuous History

How did the British Empire benefit from the colonisation of India?

1 The history of the East India Company ?

VIDEO N°09

A. Groupwork. Look at the still and describe it. Then watch the video.

- **Group A** takes notes about the creation of the company (dates, people, countries).

- **Group B** takes notes about the reasons that led to the trade (items, places) and its evolution.

B. Share your findings and sum up the video.

C. Go further. Explain how this company shaped the future of Great Britain and India's relationship. Turn to **Worksheet n°07** for help.



2 The Raj Empire

A. Observe the photo. What can you say about the woman's attitude towards the man? What does it reveal about the colonisers' feelings towards Indians?

B. Read the text. Where does the scene take place and who are the protagonists?

HELP!

- contemptuous
- scornful: *hautain(e)*
- despise: *mépriser*
- mingle = mix with

C. Now, focus on the characters' opinions on Indians. How do they treat them?



Ronny was in high spirits. The request struck¹ him as comic, and he called out to another passer-by: "Fielding! How's one to see the real India?"

"Try seeing Indians," the man answered, and vanished.

5 "Who was that?"

"Our schoolmaster—Government College."

"As if one could avoid seeing them," sighed Mrs Lesley.

"I've avoided," said Miss Quested. "Excepting my own servant, I've scarcely² spoken to an Indian since landing."

10 "Oh, lucky you."

"But I want to see them."

She became the centre of an amused group of ladies. One said: "Wanting to see Indians! How new that sounds!" Another: "Natives! Why, fancy!" A third, more serious, said: "Let me

15 explain. Natives don't respect one any the more after meeting one, you see."

"That occurs after so many meetings."

But the lady, entirely stupid and friendly, continued: "What

I mean is, I was a nurse before my marriage, and came across 20 them a great deal, so I know. I really do know the truth about Indians. A most unsuitable position for any English woman—I was a nurse in a Native State. One's only hope was to hold sternly aloof³."

"Even from one's patients?"

25 "Why, the kindest thing one can do to a native is to let him die," said Mrs Callendar.

"How if he went to heaven?" asked Mrs Moore, with a gentle but crooked⁴ smile.

"He can go where he likes as long as he doesn't come near me. They give me the creeps."

1 (ici) *sembler* • 2 *à peine* • 3 *se tenir à l'écart* • 4 *en coin*

A Passage to India,
E.M. Forster, 1924

