

# British Empire Characters Introduce Me Activity Work in Progress



## Forced Orphan

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# British Empire Characters Introduce Me Activity

This activity was originally inspired by Rebecca Reed who requested help in making her school's history curriculum more supportive of the school's aim to be multicultural and inclusive. She had encountered a Hungarian pupil who needed to access work on the development of the British Empire. The project had already developed an activity on what is termed the "first empire" geared towards understanding how the growth of trade led to settlements and conflicts with other European traders:

[www.collaborativelearning.org/tradegoodsintroduceme.pdf](http://www.collaborativelearning.org/tradegoodsintroduceme.pdf)

This could well start off a unit of work on empire. In this new activity we have constructed minibiographies of characters who had an impact on or who were impacted by the development of interrelated colonies. We have only just scratched the surface here so please suggest corrections, additions etc. Please ask your pupils to research other characters which we could then include in the activity.

The more you delve into this the more complex and unpleasant it becomes. Trinidad could provide enough information for an activity on its own. To bring it up to date we are going to develop a third activity on the current crown dependencies. There is enough information in the tax justice network and elsewhere to support this. Can we encourage you to try out the activity and then persuade your pupils to do more research on these or other characters to incorporate into this or the subsequent activity.

Webaddress for this activity is:

<http://www.collaborativelearning.org/empirecharacters.pdf>

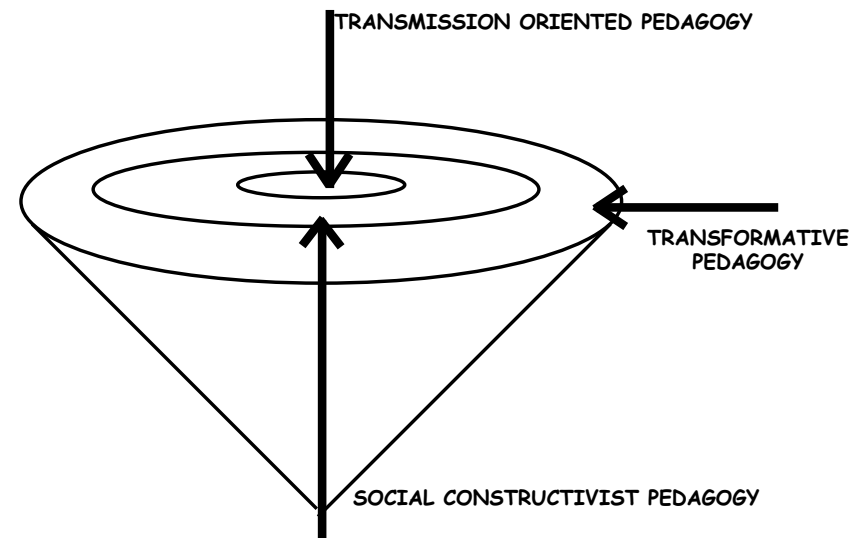
Last updated on Windrush Day 22nd June 2023

## British Empire Characters Introduce Me Activity.

This is the second of a series of activities we are working on the history of trade, colonialism and empire. It is a curriculum planning example of making a silk purse out of the sow's ear. The ear is the new history curriculum with an emphasis on a vast swathe of chronology combined with a concentration on 'our island story.' Our current Min of Ed, like a broken station clock, is right some of the time. Learners do need some chronological facts in order to understand a story and question the storytellers, but they also need some time and opportunity to interrogate these facts and develop alternative hypotheses based on other facts they might discover for themselves later. They also need to work in an educational context where they will feel that what they learn will help to change their lives and the lives of their families and community. The 'nest of pedagogies' key visual, which has come to me via Jim Cummins (he admits to me that he doesn't know where it originated!) illustrates how different views of learning should inform each other and not be in conflict. The knowledge is in the middle of the 'nest' and the choice of this, of course, is influenced in each country by culture and politics so will vary widely. The skill of developing good dialogue and interaction to question facts is based on the social constructivist pedagogy of Vygotsky so this is the next layer of the nest. The outer layer of the nest is the transformative pedagogy (learning that changes lives) and Paolo Freire is the most powerful thinker here.

Collaborative Learning = Oracy in Curriculum Context

**makes challenging curriculum accessible.**  
**improves social relations in the classroom.**  
**provides scaffolding for exploratory talk.**



## British Empire Introduce Me Activity. Instructions

Everyone in the class receives a card with information about someone who was involved in the growth of the British Empire. Everyone should read the information on their card two or three times. You do not have to remember the card word for word, but try to memorise two or three bits of information. Find ONE OTHER PERSON in the room with the same coloured dot on their card as you. In turn, introduce yourself as the person on the card to the other person. You can refer to the card if you get stuck, but try to do this without looking at the card as much as possible.

e.g. "Hello! I'm Robert Clive. I worked for the East India Company ....."

When you have both done this go to find another two people with the **same colour dots on their cards** as you. Now you are four, you have to introduce your partner to the others and they have to introduce **each other** to you.

e.g: "Hello! Can I introduce you to my partner He is a canecutter in the Caribbean ....."

## British Empire Introduce Me Activity. Instructions

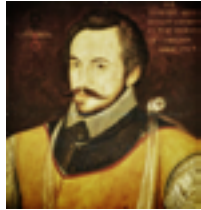
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# British Empire Introduce Me Activity.



**Humphrey Gilbert**

I am related to Walter Raleigh. I was a soldier in France and the Irish wars. I fought in the Netherlands too. I became an MP. I fought the Spanish in the Atlantic. The last thing I did was claim Newfoundland for the English crown in 1583.



**Queen Nanny**

I was an Ashanti princess but captured and sent to Jamaica as a slave. I escaped led a Maroon rebellion against the governor. We made a treaty and they gave us land in the mountains of Jamaica. We stayed free until slavery was abolished.



**James Radcliffe**

I was a miner in Lancashire. I went to Africa when Cecil Rhodes put an advertisement asking for diamond miners. It's a good life here and now people are coming to Rhodesia to start farms and build railways.



**Fur Trapper/Trader**

I travel all over western Canada trapping animals and buying furs from the native Americans. I sell the furs to the Hudsons Bay company. Traders are now coming from the United States and offering bad whisky in exchange for furs.



**Henry Morgan**

I became Governor of Jamaica in 1674.. I helped take the island from Spain in 1655. I made enough money as a pirate and privateer to buy three big sugar plantations.



**Lin Zexu**

i wrote an open letter in 1838 to Queen Victoria to ask her to stop the opium trade. She did not reply but English ships attacked China when we tried to stop the trade. We were defeated and gave England Hong Kong in 1841.



**Sepoy**

We are soldiers in the East India Company army. The pay is better than when fighting for the nawabs. It's 1757. We have just returned from Plassey where we defeated an army ten times our size. They did not keep their powder dry like us!



**West African Soldiers**

We are soldiers from the Gold Coast in west Africa. We fought in France during the first World War. Many men from other British colonies fought in the war.

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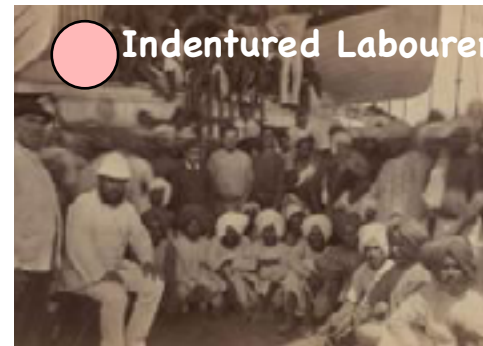
**Planter**

I was a farmer. I came from the lowlands of Scotland and was given land near Derry in Ulster by King James 1st. The land is better than in Scotland but there are problems with attacks from Irish bandits. We have castles to protect us.



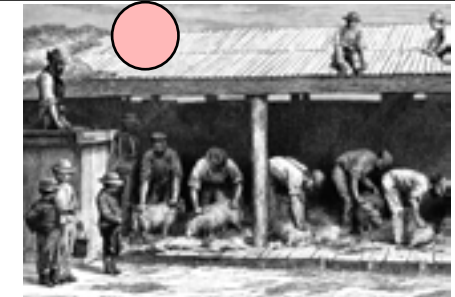
**Indentured Servant**

I was a servant in London. I came to Virginia in 1620 as an indentured servant. I had to work like a slave growing tobacco for five years for the plantation owner who paid my sea passage. Now I am free and have a tobacco farm of my own.



**Indentured Labourer**

I was an indentured labourer from Calcutta in India sent to Trinidad to cut sugar cane for a fixed wage. After five years I was offered free passage back to India, but decided to stay and raise a family.



**Sheep Farmer**

I used to farm a few acres in Worcestershire. Now I have a thousand acres in the Australian outback. The weather is harsh and the wildlife is fierce but I have a much better life here. My wool is sent to mills in England.



**"Boer" means "farmer"**

My family was French Huguenot and came to South Africa in 1688. We did not like the rule of the Dutch East India company and moved north. In 1814 the British took over and we moved further away from Cape Town. We hope we can stay independent from British rule.



**Cane Cutter**

I cut sugar cane in Barbados. My father cut cane and so did my grandfather. He was a slave. We are free but might as well be slaves since we have no choice about what work we have.



**Indentured Farmworker**

I was farmer in Ireland. Cromwell took my land and sent me to Bermuda. I am now an indentured labourer on a plantation. I may get some land of my own after five years.



**Forced Orphan**

I am a native Australian. I was taken from my parents and sent to home with other children. We were trained to become servants in white people's houses. We never saw our parents again.



### Palestinian Bedouin

We have lived in the Negeb desert for hundreds of years. After WW1 he area was held by Britain and became the State of Israel.



### Tetteh Quarshie

The first seeds of cocoa were planted in Gold Coast (Ghana) in 1879 by Tette Quarshie.. Britain extended control and fought wars with the Ashanti.



### Robert Clive

I started work for the East India Company as a clerk but soon joined their army. I fought against the French and gained control of a lot of India for the Company.



### RCMP

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police was set up in 1873. We kept the peace between fur traders and Native Americans and and tried to stop illegal alcohol.



### Tea Picker in Assam

The British secretly stole tea plants from China and brought them here. Now there are many tea plantations and the British import and drink lots of tea.



### Falklands Farmer

I was a Chelsea pensioner and came here in 1840. I lived at first on a wrecked ship then built a farm. Sheep do well here and my descendants are still farming the islands.



### Llanitos

Gibraltar has been a part of Britain since 1713. We call ourselves Llanitos and we are a mixture of many different cultures. We speak English, Spanish and Llanito.



### John Clarkson

I am John Clarkson brother of Thomas Clarkson who fought for the abolition of slavery in the British Empire. I was founder and governor of Freetown in Sierra Leone. I brought American slaves and free Black settlers from Nova Scotia and London.

Work in progress here waiting for your input!

More characters for this activity.

<p>English orphan sent to Australia or NZ after WW2</p> <p>st helena Tristan do Cunha islanders who refused to be evacuated in 1907</p>	<p>Freed slave from US 1812 war settled in Trinidad</p> <p>pitcairn William Bligh</p>	<p>Indian sugar cane indentured labourer in fiji Christmas island</p>	<p>Abdullah 1 of Transjordan and Jordan</p>
<p><b>Characters for our new activity on the "modern" British</b></p> <p>bank clerk in jersey</p> <p>Branson tax exile</p>	<p>chef at Fat Duck Michelin star restaurant owned by company in St Kitts and Nevis</p> <p>The Wai Wai indigenous community owners of the largest conservation area in Guyana</p>	<p>Diego Garcia chagos islanders in exile</p> <p>Hong Kong protester</p> <p>US citizen managing a bank in Cayman Islands</p>	<p>brass plate polisher in Bermuda</p> <p>hotel owner in Mauritius</p>