

Teachers notes for the Premium TimeMaps Unit

Mughal India

India from 1450 to 1750 CE

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Introduction

This Premium TimeMaps unit is a sequence of maps which follows the history of the Indian subcontinent from 1450 through to 1750.

The unit's aim is to quickly and clearly show the episode that dominated the region's history during these centuries, the rise and decline of the Mughal empire.

Teachers of AP World History, who have a huge amount of ground to cover, may not wish to spend too much time on this period. In these circumstances you can use this TimeMap to skate through India's early modern history, picking out points you wish to draw your students' attention to. The bullet points in the Presentation notes will help you do this.

For those who have the opportunity to go into more depth, the Additional teaching notes provide comprehensive coverage of all the thinking skills, themes and key concepts relevant to this Period 4 topic.

How to use this unit

The unit can be used in two ways:

(1) Whole-class presentation

or

(2) Student-based enquiry work

Teachers may wish to use both approaches, perhaps using (1) as a quick introduction, and then (2) for students to carry out a more in-depth enquiry using the student-based questions; or (if you feel your students can manage this) starting them off with (2), to allow them to find out for themselves what happened at this period, before using (1) as a reinforcement exercise.

How does this unit fit in with other Premium TimeMaps units?

This unit follows on from the Premium Unit **Medieval India**, and is followed by the Premium Unit on the **British India**, which covers Indian history between 1750 to 1900.

Section 1: Whole-class presentation

Using a big screen, show the map sequence to your class, talking through each map. To help you do this, we have prepared accompanying Presentation Notes, which are set out below. You can use these either as a script or *aide-memoire*.

This activity can be used as a wrap up / reinforcement exercise, or as a stand-alone unit.

For each map, these notes mostly follow the same formula:

1. Date and introduction

The date to which the map refers, followed by a small introductory paragraph which seeks to encapsulate in a sentence or two what's going on in the map. These are in **bold**.

2. Bullet points

One or more bullet points cover different points of interest in the map, or in the period it covers.

If you are not wanting to spend much time on the topic, these bullet points will be all you need to give your students a clear overview.

3. Additional Notes

The premium map sequence offers a superb framework on which to hang a large amount of information. This more in-depth information is offered in additional notes. If the aim is to give a brief overview of the topic, then skip them.

If you wish to use these Additional Notes, we suggest that, prior to showing the Presentation to your class, you read them through and highlight sections you want to draw on.

These notes cover the vast majority of, if not all, the points referred to in the AP World History course document (these are covered in even more depth in the TimeMaps articles listed at the end of this guidance.)

Some key words or phrases are in **bold**; they are also there to help you see at a glance the key points in a paragraph.

Why not ask questions?

To keep the students engaged, you might like to pepper the presentation with questions. One that could be asked when a new map appears is, how has this map changed from the last one? (This will of course involve skipping between the two maps, which is easy to do).

Before moving on to the next map, you could ask the question, what's the most important thing happening in Europe at this date, do you think?

Presentation Notes

If using these in class it might be helpful to print these notes out.

1450

The Indian subcontinent is covered by a hotchpotch of states; most of these have Muslim rulers.

- The **Delhi Sultanate**, a Muslim empire which in the mid-14th century briefly ruled almost the entire subcontinent, has now given way to numerous states (note 1).
- Most of these states are also ruled by **Muslim sultans** (note 2).
- The mass of the population of the Indian sub-continent remain staunchly **Hindu** (note 3).

Additional notes

1. A hotchpotch of states

The **Delhi sultanate** was founded in northern India in the early 13th century, and went on to conquer almost the whole of the subcontinent by the middle of the 14th century. It then went into rapid decline, and at the date of this map, a hundred years later, the sultanate still exists but only as one state amongst many.

Most of the other states have been carved out of the once-extensive empire as its power has wained.

An account of the rise and fall of the Delhi sultanate is given in the Premium unit, Medieval India.

2. Muslim and non-Muslim states

Most of the newer Indian states are also under Muslim rulers, with the title of **sultan**.

These can almost all trace their descent from soldiers of **Afghan** or **central Asian** origin who came to India and rose high in the service of the Delhi sultans. As the central power of the sultans became weaker, these soldiers rebelled - or some cases simply ceased to pay any heed to the sultan's government - and founded independent sultanates of their own.

Apart from these Muslim states, there are also two major **Hindu-ruled** states. The first is in fact a group of states, but they often act in concert with one another. These are the **Rajput kingdoms** in the north west of the subcontinent. In the far south lies the powerful kingdom of **Vijayanagara**.

3. The Hindu population

In most of these states, whether ruled by Muslims or Hindus, the mass of the population remain staunchly **Hindu**. Buddhism, which used to be a major religion in India, the land of its birth, has almost died out. Another religion of Indian origin, Jainism, never spread widely amongst the population, and remains the faith of only a small minority.

In the north of the subcontinent, however, there are regions with large **Muslim** populations. These are located in Sind and Kashmir, in the west, and Bengal in the east.

1530

The Delhi sultanate experienced a late revival in power under its final dynasty, the Lodi, but in 1526 the last of the Delhi sultans was defeated at the battle of Panipat.

- The victor was **Babur**, an Afghan chieftain of Mongol origin; he went on to conquer much of north India and found the Mughal dynasty (note 1).
- The **Sikh** religion has appeared in the north west of the subcontinent (note 2).
- **Portuguese** seafarers have arrived on the coast of India, and established fortified trading posts (note 3).

Additional notes

1. The founding of the Mughal dynasty

The Delhi sultanate experienced a late revival in power under its final dynasty, the **Lodi**, but in 1526 the last of the Delhi sultans was defeated at the **Battle of Panipat** (1526).

The victor was an Afghan chieftain of Mongol origin who claimed descent from the great central Asian conquerors Genghis Khan and Timur. The line of rulers he founded was therefore called the **Mughal** (Afghan for “Mongol”) dynasty. He was called **Babur**. His victory was partly the result of his army having the first cannons used in India (although there is evidence of handguns being used before this date).

In the following few years Babur has conquered a large chunk of northern India, making his capital at the city of **Agra**.

In southern India, meanwhile, one of the two large states there, the **Bahmani** sultanate, has broken up into a number of smaller states.

2. A new religion

A new religious community has appeared in the **Punjab**, in the north-west. This is the **Sikh** community. Their faith is a mingling of Hindu and Muslim elements. Its founder, **Guru Nanak** (1469-1539), teaches that there is only one God, that all people were equal before Him (so no castes), and that following him involves treating others with integrity and kindness.

3. The Portuguese

In 1498 a Portuguese expedition, led by **Vasco da Gama**, arrived off the west coast of India. He came in search of **spices**, and the commercial success of his voyage led to the Portuguese following it up with many more. These succeeded in establishing trading posts at several points along the west coast, with **Goa**, on the west coast, as their chief base.

In the broad context of the Indian subcontinent, the arrival of the Portuguese is barely noticed; yet, as the first European toehold in the region, this is of immense importance for the future.

1605

The third Mughal ruler, Akbar the Great, has conquered most of northern India.

- Babur's son **Humāyūn** was driven back out of India into Afghanistan, before mounting a successful comeback (note 1).
- Humāyūn's son, **Akbar** (reigned 1556-1605) has expanded the Mughal empire over northern and central India, and placed Mughal power on much more solid foundations (note 2).
- The **Portuguese** now dominate the Indian Ocean spice trade with Europe, but local Arab and Indian merchants remain as active as before their arrival (note 3).

Additional notes

1. The reign of Humāyūn, the second Mughal ruler

Babur was unable to consolidate his power properly before his death in 1530. His son, **Humāyūn**, therefore, faced numerous uprisings, and over the next decade was driven back out of India into Afghanistan.

Humāyūn's nemesis was one of Babur's former generals, **Sher Shah**. This man proved not only to be a successful military commander but also a very able ruler. He reformed the currency and tax systems, and upgraded the road network. However, he too died after only a short reign, in 1545, before he had firmly established his rule.

In the internecine struggles which followed, Humāyūn was able to mount a successful counter-attack and had regain his throne by 1555. But once again fate intervened. The very next year he died in a riding accident.

Humāyūn left his 12-year old son, **Akbar**, to pick up the task of consolidating Mughal power. The first years of Akbar's long reign (1556-1605) were dominated by regents, but in 1564 he took the reins of power firmly into his own hands.

2. Akbar the Great

Akbar vigorously put down all opposition to his rule, including several major rebellions. He **expanded** the Mughal empire far and wide over northern and central India, and initiated policies which would place Mughal power on much more solid foundations.

These rested on the twin principles of **religious toleration** (Hindus of course made up the vast majority of his subjects), and **political centralization**.

Religious toleration

Akbar openly showed his approach to religious matters in the most public way possible, by marrying a **Rajput** (and therefore Hindu) princess. He abolished the hated tax on non-Muslims, and recruited Hindu nobles (especially Rajputs) into the highest reaches of government. Most remarkably of all, and in line with his own liberal religious convictions, towards the end of his reign he deposed Islam from its position as the official religion of the Mughal state.

Centralization of power

To concentrate government power more firmly in his own hands, Akbar strengthened and rationalized the **central administration** in the capital, Agra; he reduced the ability of the nobility to challenge his authority, imposing a more formal **provincial** structure across the empire; and carried out a comprehensive **land survey** of the empire to ensure a fairer and more effective system of **tax-collection**.

This has increasingly been paid in coin rather in kind, which has stimulated the **monetization** of the Mughal economy.

A short-lived capital

Akbar moved the Mughal capital from Agra to a new city called **Fatehpur**, in 1571. Despite the huge funds Akbar poured into its construction and the magnificent palaces he built there, it quickly proved unsuitable for the role - it was short of water and so unable to house a large population easily.

In 1585 Akbar moved the capital to **Lahore**, and later back to **Agra**.

The south

The Mughal position has been aided by the fact that no other powerful states are located in the subcontinent. Even the **Vijayanagara** empire in southern India has experienced serious decline. A major defeat at the hands of the Muslim sultanates to the north (1565) has led to the Vijayanagara rulers' hold on their underlings being weakened, and the governors of Madurai, Thanjavur and Jinji have declared outright independence. These developments will pave the way for future Mughal expansion in this direction.

3. The Portuguese

In international trade, the **Portuguese** dominate the Indian Ocean spice trade with Europe. Their aggressive attempts at establishing a monopoly over maritime trade in the region has failed, however, and local Arab and Indian merchants remain active - indeed prosper from the European demand for commodities.

Also, another European people, the **Dutch**, have recently started trading along the Indian coast.

The Portuguese have introduced various **crops** into India, which originated in the Americas: tomatoes, potatoes, papayas, cashew nuts, tobacco, pineapples and chili. They also often pay for trade goods in **silver**, most which also comes from the Americas - although the silver mines are controlled by the Spanish, they pay for Portuguese trade goods with this precious metal, which then finds its way to India on Portuguese ships.

The expanding use of silver within the economy helps to facilitate commercial activity within the subcontinent.

1689

Under Akbar's successors the Mughal empire has continued to prosper and expand, and has pushed its borders far down into south India.

- The reigns of the Akbar's two successors, **Jahāngīr** and **Shah Jahān**, were noted for stability, continued territorial expansion and staggering cultural achievements (note 1).
- Under Shah Jahān's son, **Aurangzeb** (reigned 1658 to 1707), the empire has attained its greatest geographic reach, particularly by pushing its borders far down into the south (note 2).
- However, Aurangzeb has abandoned the tolerant religious policies of his predecessors, and has sought to reimpose **Islam** as the dominant religion (also note 2).
- The Mughal empire has continued to prosper economically, and other **Europeans** have now joined the Portuguese and Dutch in trading with India (note 3).

Additional notes

1. The reigns of Jahāngīr and Shah Jahān

The reigns of the Akbar's two successors, **Jahāngīr** (reigned 1605-27) and **Shah Jahān** (1627-58), were noted for comparative political stability (notwithstanding succession disputes, lethal palace intrigues and the occasional rebellion) as well as continued territorial expansion.

Shah Jahān moved the capital from Agra to **Delhi** in 1648 to consolidate control over the northeast of the empire. Nevertheless it was he who adorned Agra with the peerless **Taj Mahal**. He also built the magnificent **Red Fort** in Delhi.

At his court Shah Jahān collected around him Indian and Persian scholars, poets and painters - surely some of the most accomplished in the world at this time. He has the iconic **Peacock throne** of the Mughals made.

These cultural achievements brought to a peak the **Indo-Islamic** fusion in art, architecture and literature that had begun under the Delhi sultanate.

To fund this ostentatious display he increased **taxes** on the peasantry of the empire.

2. Aurangzeb

Under Shah Jahān's son, **Aurangzeb** (reigned 1658 to 1707), the empire has attained its greatest geographic reach, particularly by pushing its borders far down into the south. However, Aurangzeb has abandoned the **tolerant** religious policies of his predecessors, and has sought to restore Islam as the dominant religion. He has reimposed the tax on non-Muslims, and forbidden the building of new Hindu and Sikh temples, or the repair of old ones.

Rebellions

Largely as a result of these measures, Aurangzeb's reign has seen some major rebellions - of the **Jats** (a tribal people in northern India), the **Pathans** (an Afghan group), the **Sikhs**, the **Rajputs** and the **Marathas** (a fiercely Hindu community based in central and southern India led, between c.1655 and 1680, by one of the outstanding figures in Indian history, **Shivaji**). These have all been dealt with more or less successfully - so far.

3. Economy and society

The **Mughal economy** has benefitted from the greater degree of law and order within the empire, from the **monetization** of the revenue system, and from improved road system and upgraded

river- and sea-port facilities. The Mughal state has taken an active part in investing in shipping and commercial activities.

Foreign trade

There has been a major increase in **foreign trade**, particularly with the Europeans.

The **Dutch, French and English** have now become active participants in the trade, each with their own trading posts along both the west and east coasts. Unlike the Portuguese, whose traders are protected by, and are under the control of, their royal officials, these other merchants are organized into their respective trading corporations, the **East India companies**.

These are **joint-stock companies** which can draw on much greater financial (and, just as valuable, political) resources in their home countries than any individual merchant could ever do. They set up their own trading posts along the coast of India, on land leased or sold to them by local power-brokers within the Mughal political system. Nevertheless much European trade still passes through large Mughal ports, above all **Surat**, on the west coast.

While **spices** remain an important Indian export, European traders are also purchasers of textiles - especially **cottons** and **silks** - and textile dyes such as **indigo**. The Europeans mostly pay for these in **silver**, which as noted above comes ultimately from the Americas.

Internal networks of commerce and finance

The briskness of the Mughal economy is linked to this influx of silver bullion, and the marked increase in the use of **coinage** in the subcontinent that it contributes to. This in turn has stimulated the growth of a wealthy and sophisticated financial sector, involving large scale **banking** operations. In the smaller towns and villages, local moneychangers oil the wheels of trade.

Urban growth

The commercial expansion of the period has stimulated **urban growth**, and such cities as **Lahore, Delhi and Agra** have emerged as amongst the largest in the world at the time. Below them, a multiplying network of smaller towns have expanded the reach of the **market economy** throughout the empire, with subsistence farming in retreat.

1707

The last half of the reign of the emperor Aurangzeb has seen unmistakable symptoms of imperial weakness.

The **Marathas** have effectively asserted their independence from the Mughals over sizable areas of southern India (note1).

Aurangzeb's hard line against non-Muslims is spreading deep resentment amongst the majority of the population (note 2).

Additional notes

1. The Maratha rebellion

The emperor **Aurangzeb** has spent most of his later years on campaigns in central and southern India. Here, the **Marathas**, refusing to accept their earlier defeat (see above, 1689), have been fighting an increasingly successful war of resistance against Mughal forces. They have effectively asserted their independence from the Mughals for significant areas of southern India.

2. Aurangzeb's intolerance

With Aurangzeb in far off southern India for years at a time, standards of imperial administration have been slipping in the rest of the empire. The collection of **tax revenues** has been particularly affected, with the amounts coming in from the provinces declining sharply.

Aurangzeb's hard line on **religious matters** has not helped. The latter years of his reign have seen an intensification of his attempt to bolster Islam in the subcontinent. He has ordered the demolition of all Hindu schools and temples, and attempted to suppress their teaching and practices. He has doubled customs duties on Hindu merchants, while abolishing them altogether for Muslims. He has induced Hindus to convert to Islam by granting them gifts and appointments in government service, and preferential treatment in courts of law.

Passive resistance

These measures have been almost calculated to provoke at least **passive resistance** from the local Hindu leaders, and whilst not provoking outright rebellion have contributed to the difficulties of extracting taxes from the provinces. Even many of his nobles have resisted Aurangzeb's policies, and covertly refused to implement them fully in their areas.

By the time of Aurangzeb's death, in 1707, the giant edifice of the Mughal empire is beginning to crumble.

1730

The Mughal empire has experienced steep decline.

- Aurangzeb's successors have more **conciliatory** in their policies towards their Hindu subjects (note 1)...
- ...but they have not been able to stem the spread of the **Marathas'** territories (note 2)...
- ...and powerful governors of Mughal **provinces** are breaking away from central control (note 3).
- Amongst the Europeans, the **French** and **British** East India companies now dominate, but have to seek support from local rulers to secure their trade in the subcontinent (note 4).

Additional notes

1. A more conciliatory approach

Aurangzeb's successors have been more conciliatory in their policies towards their Hindu subjects. They again abolished the tax on non-Muslims, and conciliated the **Rajputs** and **Marathas**.

This policy met with some success, but in the process the *de facto* **independence** of both these groups has been confirmed. On the other hand, another major **Sikh** rebellion was crushed in 1715.

2. The Maratha confederacy

The territories of the Marathas have expanded as the result of successful campaigns. The Maratha power is divided amongst semi-independent rulers of different areas, hence it is often described as a **confederacy**. The traditional king of the Marathas is a mere figurehead. However, there is a unifying figure in the **peshwa**, an hereditary office of chief minister, whose holders succeed to some extent in co-ordinating the activities of the different Maratha rulers.

3. A weakening Mughal regime

By this time, the Mughal regime is running out of money. The emperors are unable to **reward** the nobles and officials properly for their services, and this undermines their loyalty. Matters have been made worse by **wars of succession**, and the rise of violent **factionalism** at the Mughal court.

Provincial breakaways

In the absence of firm and consistent control from the center, **provincial governors** have grabbed more and more power for themselves. It is in these years that **Hyderabad** and **Carnatic**, in the south, move decisively out of the control of the Mughal court, whilst continuing to acknowledge its suzerainty. **Bengal** and **Orissa**, **Ayodhya** and the **Punjab** are all heading in the same direction.

The court, concerned primarily with ensuring the continued flow of **revenues** from the provinces, has little choice but to come to terms with these powerful governors, recognizing their wide-ranging authority within their territories in exchange for tribute.

4. The Europeans

The decline of Mughal rule has not led to a decline of the maritime trade with Europe; quite the reverse. Indeed, local Indian power-brokers' demands for European **silver**, and the advantages this can give them in their struggles with one another, has expanded.

Nevertheless, the European **East India companies** find themselves in a completely different situation to that which they had been accustomed under a strong and unified Mughal empire. In order to secure their trading rights they now have to gain the support of local rulers, who act more or less independently from the center.

Trading posts become military bases

At the (frequent) times when there are local power-struggles, the Europeans have to choose one side or another, and to protect themselves against hostile forces. Their **trading posts** sprout defensive **walls, forts** and military **garrisons**. These latter are increasingly recruited from amongst the local population, though officered by Europeans.

The French and British

By this date, the **French** and the **British** East India companies have built up a commanding position amongst the European trading communities. They have been petitioning the Mughal emperors for a *farman* - an official recognition of their commercial and property rights; whichever of these companies received it would effectively become an official part of the Mughal political structure. Although Mughal power is in steep decline, Mughal prestige still makes it the fount of **legitimacy** within the subcontinent.

In 1716 persistent diplomacy secures the *farman* for the British East India Company.

1750

Politically, the Mughal empire has now given way to a collection of successor states which now form a sort of confederation under Mughal presidency.

- The subcontinent is now a **collection** of powerful and often hostile states, but the **Mughal** emperor is still a powerful symbol of authority and the fount of legitimacy (note 1).
- **Delhi**, the Mughal capital, was sacked by Persian invaders in 1739 (note 2).
- The rivalry between the **British** and **French** East India companies have turned to outright warfare as their home countries have gone to war with each other (note 3).
- The decline of Mughal power seems in general to have made life **harder** for the people of India (note 4).

Additional notes

1. A confederation of states

Several large states have now evolved from what had been Mughal provinces: **Hyderabad**, **Carnatic**, **Bengal** and **Ayodha**. The **Rajputs** of Rajasthan are now all but independent, as are the **Sikhs** of the Punjab.

As for the **Marathas**, taking advantage of the decline in Mughal power they have conquered a huge stretch of central India.

2. The Sack of Delhi

In 1739, a Persian army invaded India and brutally sacked **Delhi**, the Mughal capital. It returned to Persia laden with booty, including some of the most priceless regalia of the Mughal emperors such as the **Peacock throne**.

The Persians also forced the Mughal court to cede large chunks of territory in the northwest of their empire to them. This destroyed the Mughal defenses along this sector of their frontier, and **Afghan** chieftains have since then repeatedly plundered these regions. At the same time the **Marathas** have been raiding Mughal territory from their new bases in central India.

Continuing Mughal prestige

In all this, the **Mughal emperor** and the court have remained a powerful symbol of authority. Afghan chiefs, Maratha leaders, Rajput kings and *de facto* independent governors have all sought to control the imperial court rather than destroy it: they need the **legitimacy** that it confers to bolster their own authority over local populations.

By the mid-18th century, therefore, a sort of **confederacy** of regional powers has emerged, all owing formal allegiance to the Mughal emperors in Delhi but each pursuing its own interests in rivalry with the others.

3. The British and French

The **British** and **French** likewise compete for recognition from the Mughal court. Until the 1740s they were engaged in purely commercial rivalry. In the early 40s, however, the **War of Austrian Succession**, in far away Europe, found France and Britain on opposing sides, and led to out-and-out war between the forces of the two East India companies.

This raised the stakes for the companies, and forced them to make great efforts to secure the support of the local rulers. This task was complicated by the internal struggles within the local

principalities. Indeed, in these struggles, contenders sought out the support of either the British or French. This drew in the French and British, who were forced to back “their man”.

In these struggles, European forces, largely composed of **Indian troops** but led and trained by **European officers** in European **weapons** and **tactics**, were able to defeat much larger forces belonging to local princes. This of course enhanced their attraction as allies for Indian rulers and challengers.

4. The economic and social impact of Mughal decline

In terms of social and economic developments, the evidence is contradictory as to what impact the break-up of the Mughal empire has had.

Warfare has certainly disrupted trade in the worst affected areas, and life for ordinary people has become harder here. Some areas, however, have prospered from the increase in European trade, and places like **Madras** and **Calcutta**, previously simple villages, have become thriving urban centers.

The clearest evidence comes from **Bengal**, which prospered under its nawabs (as its by-now independent governors were called) until the 1740s, but then suffered at the hands of **Maratha** raiders. The Bengali regime was then forced to respond by raising more troops and taxing the people more heavily.

Generally, conditions for the mass of the people do seem to have deteriorated, not least because the successor states of the Mughal empire have a tendency to **farm out** tax collection to private individuals, such as **zamindars**. These apparently take more from the peasants than the Mughal officials had done, leaving less to the ordinary cultivators.

After the Presentation

Here is a quick Quiz you might like to use to make sure your students haven't gone to sleep.

The answers are given (*in Italics*).

Quiz:

1. What was the great Muslim state whose rise and fall had dominated the history of the Indian subcontinent between the 13th and 15th centuries? (*The Delhi Sultanate*)
2. What religion did the majority of the Indian population follow in the 15th century (and indeed still do today) ? (*Hinduism*)
3. What was the name of the founder of the Mughal empire? (*Babur*)
4. A new religious community appeared in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent in the 15th century - what was this? (*The Sikhs*)
5. Which European nation established trading posts on the coast of India in the 15th century? (*Portugal*)
6. Who was the great Mughal emperor who reigned throughout most of the second half of the 16th century? (*Akbar the Great*)
7. What precious metal did the Portuguese often use to pay for goods, thus helping to stimulate the Mughal economy. (*Sliver*)
8. One of Akbar's successors, Shah Jahān, built one of the most beautiful structures in the world - by what name is it known? (*The Taj Mahal in Agra; but the Red Fort in Delhi will also do*)
9. Who was the Mughal emperor who reigned throughout most of the second half of the 17th century? (*Aurangzeb*)
10. Name one of the groups which rose in rebellion against Mughal rule in the second half of the 17th century. (*one of the following will do: Jats, Pathans, Sikhs, Rajputs and Marathas*)
11. What other European traders joined the Portuguese in setting up trading post on the Indian coast? (*Dutch, French and English*)
12. Name one of the products which Europeans buy from Indians in the late 17th century? (*one of the following: spices, cottons, silks, indigo*)
13. The East India Companies of which nations came to dominate the European trade with India in the early 18th century? (*France and Britain*)
14. The Mughal capital was brutally sacked in 1739 - which city was this? (*Delhi*)
15. A class of tax farmers arises in the post-Mughal era - what are they called? (*Zamindars*)

Section 2: Student-based enquiry work

The students can tackle these tasks either as individuals or in small groups. They will obviously need to have access to this Premium TimeMap unit.

They can present their answers in essay form or as presentations.

The questions are designed to stimulate enquiry, thought and discussion. We have offered suggested points that students might cover in their answers. These are given in *italics* just below the questions.

Task 1.

Answer the following questions:

1. What factors aided the rise of the Mughal empire?
2. What factors led to its decline?
3. What do these answers tell us about the strengths and weaknesses of the Mughal empire?

Answers should include:

Question 1:

- *strong emperors;*
- *cannons;*
- *the absence of strong rival states;*
- *Akbar's policies - of centralization, fairer taxation, toleration towards non-Muslims (for example his abolition of the tax imposed only on them).*

Question 2:

- *succession crises;*
- *factional politics;*
- *weak emperors;*
- *power of Mughal nobility and their willingness to rebel;*
- *Aurangzeb's policies - lack of toleration towards non-Muslims (his reimposition of the tax on them, measures against Hindu and Sikh temples etc); his preoccupation with dealing with revolts leading to declines in administration and tax revenues;*
- *independence movements - Marathas, Sikhs, Jats, Rajputs;*
- *decentralizing tendencies - governors of Hyderabad, Carnatic, Bengal and so on asserting independence - resulting in increases shortage of tax revenues, so that Mughal emperor unable to reward loyalty.*

Question 3:

- *Alien, Muslim minority rule over a non-Muslim native majority - there was always the potential for tensions and revolts;*
- *Mughal rule very dependent upon the abilities and personalities of the individual rulers - their fighting prowess, attitude to non-Muslim subjects, etc.;*
- *Policies towards taxation - contrast Akbar's aim to tax fairly and Shah Jahān's heavy taxation to pay for extravagance;*
- *Vulnerability to fate - early deaths of able emperors, eg. of Babur and Humāyūn, could have significant impact;*
- *The Mughal's never created a centralized and well-organized bureaucracy on the model of imperial China - eg. look at Song dynasty (see unit on Medieval China), where the reign of mediocre emperors did not lead to disaster;*

- *Regular rebellions - non-Muslims, but also Mughal nobility and regional governors rebelled or strove to be more independent of center (even while professing loyalty) - especially in early 18th century.*

Task 2.

Answer the question: What impact did trade with Europe have on the Mughal economy?

Answers should include some or all of these:

- *European maritime trade stimulated pre-existing patterns of trade, rather than replacing them;*
- *Europeans paid for many things in silver, and the resulting inflow of silver stimulates economic activity by helping monetize the subcontinent's economy more (eg., taxes were increasingly paid in coin), and stimulating growth of the banking sector;*
- *as a result of above, stimulating urban growth;*
- *Europeans brought new crops from the Americas: tomatoes, potatoes, papayas, cashew nuts, tobacco, pineapples and chili;*
- *European demand for commodities such as spices, cottons, silks and indigo must have contributed to wealth of Indian merchants;*
- *European demand for textile goods - cottons and silks - will have stimulated industry and employment.*

Task 3.

Answer the question: How did the position of European traders change over time - and how did this affect their motivations?

This is quite a high level question.

Answers should indicate the following -

- *First Europeans came simply to trade; they were strong at sea, but not so on land, compared with the might on Indian states, and even more so, the Mughal empire. And even at sea they were never able to dominate trade.*
- *Europeans were never united - they were rivals; it never occurred to them to unite their forces under one banner.*
- *For a long time, coastal trading posts were sufficient for their needs; they were organized into trading companies - joint-stock companies, which gave them capital and political influence at home but were originally commercial enterprises.*
- *The decline of the central power of the Mughals led the trading companies to have to operate in a volatile situation, including political upheavals and military threats to their coastal positions. They had to build up their own local armies and defenses.*
- *In this situation their motivation became more complex: still to trade, but to maintain their ability to do so they had to enjoy the support of local rulers.*
- *They thus found themselves drawn into local in-fighting between local rulers and challengers, and their motivation was yet more complicated by the outbreak of war between their nations back home in Europe: this meant that they used their securing of support by local rulers as a lever against their European enemies.*
- *From traders, their position and motivation had to a great extent become that of armed powers.*

I hope the students put it more elegantly than that!

Task 4.

A much simpler question than the above: What did the Mughal empire achieve?

Answers should include:

- *to a greater extent than had ever been achieved before, uniting the Indian subcontinent within a single state;*
- *as a result of this, giving the subcontinent a much larger measure of peace and stability than had prevailed previously;*
- *and therefore increasing economic prosperity;*
- *and creating some of the most impressive cultural artifacts in world history - eg. the Taj Mahal, Agra and the Red Fort, Delhi; and a large body of poetry and painting. These represented the height of the Indo-Islamic style.*

APPENDIX I

Appendix 1: TimeMaps articles for further reading

A list of all TimeMaps articles for Period 4 can be found on the Encyclopedia home page. Here is a selected list of the key articles which students should find most helpful:

[The Mughal Empire](#)

[The Medieval Civilization of India](#)

[The Delhi Sultanate](#)

[Early Modern Europe](#)

[European World Empires](#)