Year: 8	Subject: History	Unit title: The British Empire	Term: Spring

Knowledge (Learn that):

- Scholars know that the British built their empire in America through settlement, land seizure, profitable plantations, forced labour and violence, while European diseases and expansion devastated Native American societies.
- Scholars know that the East India Company used trade, private armies, political interference, warfare and taxation to turn commercial influence into territorial control in India, with severe consequences for Indian rulers, workers and farmers.
- Scholars know that Britain used exploration, penal settlement and agricultural expansion to take control of Australia, causing Aboriginal dispossession, disease, frontier conflict and the destruction of communities.
- Scholars know that Britain used colonial trade, the Navigation Acts, enslaved labour and the Royal Navy to generate wealth, protect trade routes and expand its empire, while this prosperity depended upon violence and exploitation.
- Scholars understand that Britain built its empire through interconnected methods including settlement, land seizure, trade, commercial companies, military and naval power, forced labour and political control, and that British expansion brought wealth and power to Britain at immense human cost.

Core Vocabulary:

Empire, Colony, Colonisation, Settlement, Plantation, Enslavement, Indigenous peoples, East India Company, Sepoy, Battle of Plassey, Diwani, Penal colony, Dispossession, Frontier conflict, Navigation Acts, Transatlantic slave trade, Royal Navy

Vocabulary to Encounter:

Powhatan, Tsenacommacah, Jamestown, Tobacco, Mughal Empire, Nawab, Bengal, Famine, Gadigal, Botany Bay, First Fleet, Black War, Customs duties, Seven Years' War

Vocabulary to Retrieve:

Exploration, Empire, Trade, Colonisation, Indigenous peoples, Parliament, Act of Union, Great Britain, Taxation, Navy, Company, Patronage

Teaching Sequence:

Lesson 1: America
Lesson 2: India
Lesson 3: Australia
Lesson 4: Wealth, Trade and the Navy
Lesson 5: Planning Lesson
Lesson 6: Essay Writing Lesson
(There will also be a knowledge test and whole class feedback lesson related to this content)

Disciplinary aims:

The primary disciplinary aim is for scholars to understand **causation and historical argument.**
Scholars will be encouraged to:

- Identify settlement, land seizure, trade, commercial companies, military force, naval power, enslavement and political control as methods of empire-building.
- Explain how particular methods created or strengthened British control in different geographical contexts.
- Recognise that methods varied between America, India and Australia while remaining interconnected within a wider imperial system.
- Explain how commercial profit financed ships, armies, settlements and further expansion.
- Distinguish British intentions and claimed benefits from the consequences experienced by Indigenous, colonised and enslaved peoples.
- Compare the roles of settlers, companies, Parliament and the Royal Navy.
- Avoid presenting empire as the result of adventure or superiority alone.
- Construct a comparative argument about how Britain built its empire and at whose expense.

This enquiry develops scholars' understanding that imperial expansion resulted from interconnected economic, political and military processes. Consequence and impact form an important supporting strand because the methods used to build British power cannot be separated from coercion, dispossession and exploitation.

Writing curriculum:

Throughout this unit, scholars use writing to practise causal explanation and comparative historical argument.

- Scholars make claims about methods of empire-building and support them with precise evidence from regional case studies.
- "Because, but, so" structures connect method, explanation, complexity and human consequence.
- The connective "but" is used to introduce the cost to Indigenous, colonised or enslaved peoples rather than an unrelated counterpoint.
- Writing progresses from individual regional explanations to comparison across America, India and Australia.
- Scholars explain how trade, profit, legislation and naval power connected regional expansion.
- The final essay is organised around the three regional case studies and wealth, trade and the Navy.
- The conclusion synthesises interconnected methods and recognises that British wealth and power rested on immense human cost.

Year: 8	Subject: History	Unit title: The British Empire	Term: Spring

Links to other units:

Why this and why now?

The British Empire is Unit 8.5 and follows Georgian Britain in the Spring term. It is positioned here to:

- Show how the political and financial power developed by Parliament operated beyond Britain.
- Connect constitutional government, taxation, trade and naval power to eighteenth-century imperial expansion.
- Return to causation through a comparative enquiry across different regions.
- Place Indigenous experience and coercion within the explanation of British expansion.

How does this speak to what came before?

- Georgian Britain provides knowledge of Great Britain, Parliament, ministers, taxation, war and the constitutional framework of expansion.
- The Renaissance enquiry introduced exploration, maritime routes, colonisation and consequences for Indigenous peoples.
- The Rise of Islam and Medieval Mali provide earlier examples of trade networks, commercial exchange and connected world history.
- Earlier empire enquiries provide a comparative vocabulary of conquest, settlement, rule and resistance.

How does this prepare scholars for what comes next?

- Later Year 8 study can build on the transatlantic slave trade, enslaved resistance and the relationship between empire and British wealth.
- The economic and human foundations of industrialisation can be examined through colonial goods, capital, shipping and forced labour.
- In Year 9, scholars can trace migration within and from the British Empire and resistance to colonial rule.
- The enquiry prepares scholars to evaluate the long-term consequences of dispossession, exploitation and imperial power.

Links to the national curriculum:

This unit supports the key stage 3 study of ideas, political power, industry and empire: Britain, 1745–1901, and contributes to understanding significant societies and connections in wider world history. It examines the development of British power in America, India and Australia alongside trade, slavery and naval expansion.

Linking to the KS3 National Curriculum

- Scholars study early British settlement and plantation expansion in America.
- The unit explains how the East India Company moved from trade to political and territorial control in India.
- Scholars examine penal settlement, land seizure and frontier conflict in Australia.
- Trade, the Navigation Acts, enslaved labour and the Royal Navy connect regional case studies to a wider imperial system.

Moving Beyond the KS3 National Curriculum

1. Comparative Imperial Methods

- The unit compares settler colonisation, company rule, political interference, warfare and naval control.
- Scholars identify both regional variation and interconnected methods.

2. Indigenous and Colonised Experience

- The consequences of empire are embedded within the causal explanation rather than added as a separate moral judgement.
- Dispossession, disease, coerced labour, famine and resistance are examined across the case studies.

3. Economy, Violence and State Power

- Scholars connect consumer goods and commercial profit to enslavement, military force and Parliamentary legislation.
- The enquiry shows how private interests and state power combined.

4. Disciplinary Literacy and Argument

- Repeated claim, evidence and explanation structures support precise causal writing.
- The final essay requires comparison, synthesis and a judgement about interconnected methods and human cost.