

Week 6 Agenda: U2 Identities in South Asia

India and South Asia: From Area Studies to Ethnic Studies

We started out this unit looking at identity pretty broadly – this week we will start to narrow down to a focus on national identity in the modern country of India. We'll need some background knowledge so that students can build up to doing some analysis of their own!

Optional Readings for Teachers or as Class Text

- Bose and Jalal Ch. 17 "1947: memories and meanings" (pgs. 159-168) and Ch. 18 "Post-colonial South Asia: state and economy, society and politics, 1947-1971" (pgs. 169-183)
- DeVotta and Ganguly Ch. 3 "The Historical Context" by Benjamin B. Cohen (pgs. 53-90)
- Ludden Ch. 6 "National Territory" (pgs. 195-227)
- Mann Ch. 3 "State formation and empire building in South Asia (1858-1998)" (pgs. 89-136)
- Mines and Lamb Part Five "Nation-Making" (pgs. 309-384)
- Talbot Ch. 8 "Independence with Partition" (pgs. 130-148)
- Visweswaran Part III "Partition, Nationalism, and the Formation of South Asian National States" (pgs. 113-172)
- Wadley Ch. 14 "The Federally and Provincially Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan: The Most Dangerous Place in the World?" (pgs. 215-226)

LESSON #1: Where is India?

Optional Bell-Ringer: When you think of "India," where would its boundaries be on a map? How do you know where those boundaries should be?

Purpose

- Before we can identify and compare different visions of what the Indian national identity should be, we need to know just where we are talking about when we say "India." This lesson will fold in some history, some geography, and some political science so that students will be able to discern which India a particular source is talking about.

Prep

- Copies of the first item from "Top Ten Things to Know About India in the Twenty-First Century" by Ainslie T. Embree from the Winter 2003 edition of *Education About Asia*...we'll only be using the first item on the list (below in original and modified form or from <https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/ea/archives/top-ten-things-to-know-about-india-in-the-twenty-first-century/>)
- Copies of a map of South Asia for students to annotate (for example, <https://geoalliance.asu.edu/sites/default/files/maps/SCASIA.pdf>)

Procedure

Developed by Rachel Heilman (Issaquah High School) with support from the South Asia Center at the University of Washington with funding from the U.S. Department of Education National Resource Centers Program.

1. As students read the first item in the article “Top Ten Things to Know About India in the Twenty-First Century” by Ainslie T. Embree, they should annotate their maps to create an explainer of what Embree describes as the “four Indias.”

Excerpt from

Embree, Ainslie T. 2003. "Top Ten Things to Know About India in the Twenty-First Century." *Education About Asia* 8, no. 3 (Winter): 7-11. <https://www.asianstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/top-ten-things-to-know-about-india-in-the-twenty-first-century.pdf>

1. There is not one, but four Indias

"The first and most essential thing to learn about India," declared a famous British administrator in 1888, is "that there is not, and never was an India, or even any country of India, possessing, according to European ideas, any sort of unity, physical, political, social or religious."¹ The statement sounds startlingly silly until one notices the defining clause, "according to European ideas." Then one can change it to read, "One of the most essential things to learn about India is to not try to fit it into a European idea of what is essential for India." Confusion arises because the term "India" has been used, by both foreigners and Indians, for four quite different entities. India is, first of all, a geographic term for the subcontinental region demarcated by the great sweep of hills and mountains from the northwest on the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal on the northeast, and bordered on two sides by those seas and the Indian Ocean. The ancient literature makes clear its people were aware of this distinctive, well-defined land mass.

But India and Indian refer to another India, to a civilization and its cultural components—religion, philosophy, art, literature—that through the centuries has flourished in the region called Bharat in the ancient literature. It was the civilization of many kingdoms and empires from Kashmir to Tamil Nadu, but was not exclusively identified with any particular one. This civilization not only dominated territorial India but was exported throughout Asia, especially Southeast Asia. Then India is used for a third India, best known to the Western world from the empire established in the subcontinent by Great Britain at the end of the eighteenth century, although the word was not officially used until 1833 when the East India Company official who had been known as Governor-General of Fort William in Bengal was designated Governor-General of India by the British Parliament.

The fourth India is, of course, the modern nation-state which became independent in 1947, making using "India" for the first time the name of a sovereign state. While its geographic inheritance is only part of the territorial India that had been ruled by Britain, it claims as its historical inheritance the civilizations, cultures, and political states that have flourished in the region for millennia. Here is the source of tensions and passions in relations with Pakistan, the other successor state of imperial India, in quarrels over its sovereignty in Kashmir and with China over other border areas in the Northeast. Probably most important for the future, however, is the claim made by powerful groups in contemporary India that Indian nationalism must be defined in terms of the second India, of the culture that was indigenous to the region, which they define as Hindutva, the culture of Hindu India."

¹ . Sir John Strachey, *India* (London: Kegan Paul, 1888), 1–8.

Modified Excerpt from

Embree, Ainslie T. 2003. "Top Ten Things to Know About India in the Twenty-First Century." *Education About Asia* 8, no. 3 (Winter): 7-11. <https://www.asianstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/top-ten-things-to-know-about-india-in-the-twenty-first-century.pdf>

1. There is not one, but four Indias

The first and most essential thing to learn about India," declared a famous British administrator in 1888, is "that there is not, and never was an India, or even any country of India, possessing, according to European ideas, any sort of unity, physical, political, social or religious."² The statement sounds very silly until you notice the most important part, "according to European ideas." Then it can be changed to "One of the most essential things to learn about India is to not try to fit it into a European idea of what is essential for India." Confusion arises because the term "India" has been used, by both foreigners and Indians, for four very different places.

India is, *first* of all, a geographic term for the subcontinental region [with boundaries made] by the long line of hills and mountains from the northwest on the Arabian Sea to the Bay of Bengal on the northeast. It is bordered on two sides by those seas and the Indian Ocean. The ancient literature makes clear its people were aware of this distinctive, well-defined land mass.

But India and Indian refer to a *second* India: a civilization and its culture —religion, philosophy, art, literature. This civilization developed in the region called Bharat in the ancient literature. It was the civilization of many kingdoms and empires from Kashmir to Tamil Nadu, but was identified with any exact one. This civilization not only dominated territorial India but also spread throughout Asia, especially Southeast Asia.

Then India is used to talk about a *third* India. The Western world knows about it from the empire established in the subcontinent by Great Britain at the end of the eighteenth century. However, the word was not officially used until 1833. That is when the East India Company official who had been called the Governor-General of Fort William in Bengal was re-named Governor-General of India by the British Parliament.

The *fourth* India is the modern nation-state which became independent in 1947. That is the first time "India" was used as the name of a sovereign state. In terms of geography this India is only part of the territorial India that had been ruled by Britain. However, it claims as its historical inheritance the civilizations, cultures, and political states that have flourished in the region for thousands of years. That is the source of disagreement with Pakistan, the other country that grew out of imperial India in 1947. They disagree about Pakistan's sovereignty in Kashmir. India also disagrees with China over other border areas in the Northeast. Probably most important for the future, however, is the claim made by powerful groups in today's India that Indian nationalism must be defined by the second India -- the culture that developed in the region, which they define as Hindutva, the culture of Hindu India.

² . Sir John Strachey, *India* (London: Kegan Paul, 1888), 1–8.

LESSON #2: Facets of Identity in Context

Optional Bell-Ringer: If you were sitting down to write the new Indian constitution in 1947, which aspects of identities do you think you would most need to take into consideration?

Purpose

- Next week students will begin to closely consider how various individuals proposed the Indian national identity should be conceptualized. This week is all about building the students' content knowledge so that they have the needed context. This lesson will remind students of the various identity lenses they can use to analyze the visions of national identity they will be encountering.

Prep

- You need a way to record student responses as you all brainstorm as a class (a shared document, a white board, a projected document, etc.)
- You will need students in small groups unless you'd like to complete the entire exercise as a whole group

Procedure

1. As a whole class, brainstorm the various facets of identity that might inform how a particular individual conceptualizes national identity.
2. Ensure that the following facets are included in your list: Caste, Class, Belief System, Gender, Education, Ethnicity.
3. In smaller groups, students should discuss how the different facets of identity (lenses) might impact an individual's conceptualization of national identity.
4. Share the small group responses out to the whole class.

LESSON #3: Pre-British Political History

Optional Bell-Ringer: List everything you know about the Mughal Empire. Is it a lot? Do you think it's all correct?

Purpose

- We will be focusing on India as a case study of the development of nationhood – India as a nation-state. To do that well, we need to brush off student knowledge of political history from the time before the modern state of India. The *Story of India* series provides an approachable experience and includes the use of evidence and sources to support assertions.
- Note: You could achieve a similar goal with the a reading instead if you prefer (some of the optional readings above or "Mughal Empire" from Lumen Learning's *History of World Civilization II* <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/atd-tcc-worldciv2/chapter/mughal-empire-history/>)

Prep

- Access PBS/BBC's *The Story of India*, Episode 5 "The Meeting of Two Oceans" (although you can purchase the episode through Amazon, your school or public library system likely has it available as a streaming option)
- Students will need a blank sheet of paper folded into fourths, each square given a label: Surprise!, Ruling Powers, Foundations for an Indian Identity, and Questions

Procedure

1. Show "The Meeting of Two Oceans."
2. As students watch, they should make brief notations in the boxes:
 - Surprise! = Things that really caught their attention/truly new ideas
 - Ruling Powers = States/political organizations and the territories they controlled
 - Foundations for an Indian Identity = Ideas from the past/aspects of the culture of the past that might provide a foundation for a modern Indian national identity
 - Questions = Ideas they'd like to understand better/things they'd like to discuss when the episode is over
3. Discuss the Questions (first with partners, then as a whole class if still needed)

LESSON #4: Islam in South Asia

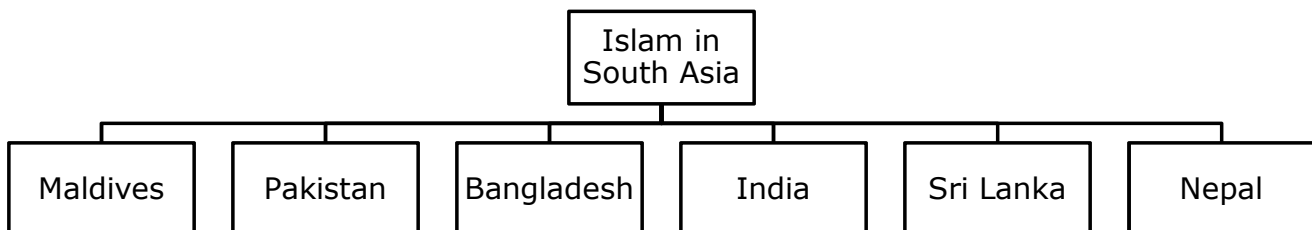
Optional Bell-Ringer: Which South Asian country do you think has been most influenced by Islam – and what makes you choose that one?

Purpose

- When thinking about national identity in South Asia in general and India in particular, the two features of culture that you most quickly encounter are language and religion. Given the time period we'll be most focused on – the founding of modern India in 1947 – it's important for students to have a solid understanding of religion in the region. We began that process in Unit 1 with geographic patterns. In this unit we'll fill out some of the historical context students will need.

Prep

- Provide students with a copy of "Islam in South Asia" by Bimal Kanti Paul from the Spring 2005 edition of *Education About Asia* (<https://www.asianstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/islam-in-south-asia.pdf>). The graphic organizer will provide scaffolding, but if you need to re-level the reading use rewordify.com.
- Read the article yourself and determine if you need to provide any information about current events, given that the article is relatively old. With the exception of Afghanistan it should work just fine because we will be updating India's political situation in future classes. However, something from 2005 always warrants a little quick research to make sure everything in it still works.
- Have students create this graphic organizer on a blank sheet of paper:



Procedure

1. A couple of notes: Afghanistan is not part of our course, so although they may wish to read that portion of the article they will not need to take notes on it. Also, that information is now out of date. The article as a whole is from 2005, so students should keep an eye out for areas that pique their curiosity.
2. As students read "Islam in South Asia" by Bimal Kanti Paul, they should take notes on their graphic organizer.
3. After completing the article, they should respond to these questions: How has Islam contributed to shaping identities in South Asia? What role does the author think it can/should play in forming national identities?

LESSON #5: Moving to End British Rule

Optional Bell-Ringer: How might fighting to gain independence from an imperial power shape national identity?

Purpose

- We are taking one more opportunity to build context for our exploration of Indian national identity. The *Story of India* series provides an approachable experience and includes the use of evidence and sources to support assertions.
- Note: You could achieve a similar goal with the a reading instead if you prefer (some of the optional readings above or "British Imperialism in Asia" from Lumen Learning <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/atd-tcc-worldciv2/chapter/british-imperialism-in-asia/>)

Prep

- Access PBS/BBC's *The Story of India*, Episode 6 "Freedom" (although you can purchase the episode through Amazon, your library system likely has it available as a streaming option)
- Students will need a blank sheet of paper to take notes on.

Procedure

1. Show "Freedom."
2. As students watch, they should take note of any event or idea that might inform India's future national identity.

Relevant Washington State Standards

SSS2.9-12.3 Determine the kinds of sources and relevant information that are helpful, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources.

SSS3.9-12.1 Evaluate one's own viewpoint and the viewpoints of others in the context of a discussion.

G1.11-12.6 Assess the social, economic, and political factors affecting cultural interactions.

G2.11-12.6 Evaluate how political and economic decisions throughout time have influenced cultural and environmental characteristics of various places and regions.

H2.11-12.4 Analyze how cultural identity can promote unity and division.

H3.11-12.1 Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people's perspectives.

H3.11-12.6 Evaluate the ways in which the perspectives of those writing history shaped the history that they produced.