

Britain and Decolonisation

- 1) Check your understanding of these key words and terms in the powerpoint commentary:
 - Colonies, mandates, dominions and Commonwealth
 - decolonisation
 - anti-colonialism and nationalism
 - informal empire
 - neo-colonialism

- 2) Questions for thinking and writing:
 - How do we account for the British retreat from empire after 1945?
 - Is anti-colonialism a sufficient explanation for the end of empire?
 - What importance should be attached to the second world war in bringing about post-war decolonisation?
 - Why did British decolonisation occur over a long period rather than all at the same time?
 - What part did the United Nations play in decolonisation?
 - Why were new states so reliant on development aid?

- 3) Further reading and research:
 - Choose two different countries that were once British colonies and explore the history of their transition to independence.
 - For more on the recent controversy over British responses to the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya, see this article: '[Academic sleuthing uncovered British torture of Mau Mau fighters](#)' which includes the historian David Anderson discussing his work.
 - Listen to the speech by British Conservative prime minister, Harold Macmillan to the South African parliament in February 1960. Why does he say a wind of change was blowing through Africa, and what did he suggest were the consequences? What significance do you think should be attached to the fact he gave this speech in South Africa? What was happening in South Africa at the time? You can listen to the speech here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c07MiYfpOMw>
 - Advanced: Many British primary sources about the end of empire have been published in volumes in the *British Documents on the End of Empire* series. Read some of the documents about the first phase of British decolonisation in the 1940s in the volume edited by Ronald Hyam (Series A, Volume 1) or on the period 1957-64 in the volume edited by Ronald Hyam and W.R. Louis (Series A, Volume 3). You can access these for free at: <https://bdeep.org/volumes/> . You might find the introductions to these volumes useful too.
 - Advanced: If you can get access to JSTOR Arts and Sciences II read the important article on decolonisation by A.G. Hopkins, 'Rethinking Decolonization', *Past and Present* (2008), no. 200, pp. 211-247.