

The rulers

This map shows the British Empire in 1900. Around the edges you can read about some of the people who helped to make the Empire. These people really existed but they never spoke these exact

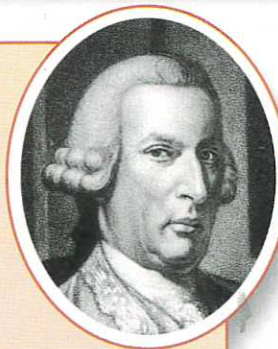
words. We have researched their lives and we have tried to **imagine** what they would tell us if they were to come back from the dead. Some of their ideas and actions seem shocking to us today.

James McLeod (1836–1894)



“I was a policeman. My father was a British army officer but I was raised in Canada. I joined the Mounted Police – the Mounties – in 1873. We Mounties were proud of the way we treated the natives, or Indians as we called them. In the United States of America thousands of white soldiers were killed in wars with the Indians. In Canada it was different: hardly a single Mountie was killed by an Indian. We gave them good land to live on, as well as tools and animals and teachers if they wanted them. I am proud of the way the British Empire treated the natives well in Canada.”

William Beckford (1709–1770)

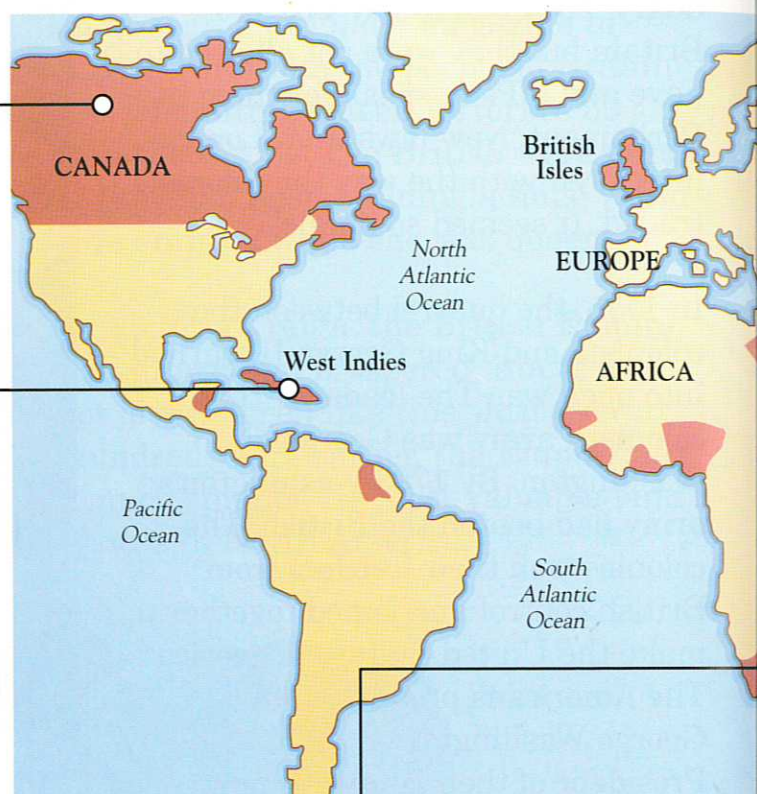


“I was a merchant. I was born in Jamaica in the West Indies. My family owned huge sugar plantations there. We bought black slaves from Africa and we sold the sugar cane they grew. That is what the Empire was all about: trade and riches! It helped us all: slaves became Christians, worked hard and were sure of a home and food. Planters became rich. I was a millionaire. I moved back to England and increased my fortune by trading from London.”

Cecil Rhodes (1853–1902)



“I was a businessman and politician. I left England to live in southern Africa in 1870. I made a fortune by mining for gold and diamonds. But that was not enough for me: I wanted to change history. We British were the best people in the world so I wanted us to control as much of the world as possible! I made a mining deal with an African chief. When his tribe rose up against my men we crushed them and took their lands. From that time on a new nation was born. It was called Rhodesia. I was proud to have part of the mighty British Empire named after me.”



Lord Dalhousie (1806–1857)

"I was Governor-General of India from 1848 to 1856. The East India Company had been taking land there for nearly two hundred years but the English traders did little to improve the way the Indians lived. I worked hard to help the Indians to follow our way of life. I took over land where Indian princes ruled badly. I built roads and railways as well as setting up schools and postal systems. I tried to stop the cruel Indian custom of 'suttee' which said that widows should burn themselves to death on the funeral bonfire of their dead husbands."



Mrs Mary Calvert (died in 1882)

"I was a **missionary**. I sailed with my husband James to the islands of Fiji in 1838. The poor, wretched natives there did not even know about Our Lord Jesus! They had such cruel customs: if a man stole something his children's fingers were cut off. Women were strangled as soon as their husbands died. We did our duty to God and worked with the natives for years. May God be praised, thousands of natives became Christians and gave up their terrible ways."



Edward Gibbon Wakefield (1796–1862)

"I was a thinker and a writer. In 1829, I was in prison in London for tricking a rich woman into marrying me. While in prison I wrote a book which said that Britain should encourage good, honest people to settle in Australia. Until then we had just been sending ship-loads of convicts there. I said young, keen, farming families could use the land properly, improve the country and trade with Britain. My ideas caught on and thousands of British people moved to Australia, New Zealand and Canada."



The British Empire in 1900

STEP 1

You have been asked to plan a television series about the British Empire. The top line of this chart shows the main theme of each of the five programmes. Copy the chart.

Decide which people might be mentioned in each programme and write their names in the correct column. Some names will go in more than one column.

<u>Money</u> <u>and Empire</u>	<u>Women</u> <u>and Empire</u>	<u>War</u> <u>and Empire</u>	<u>Religion</u> <u>and Empire</u>	<u>Rulers</u> <u>and Empire</u>

The ruled

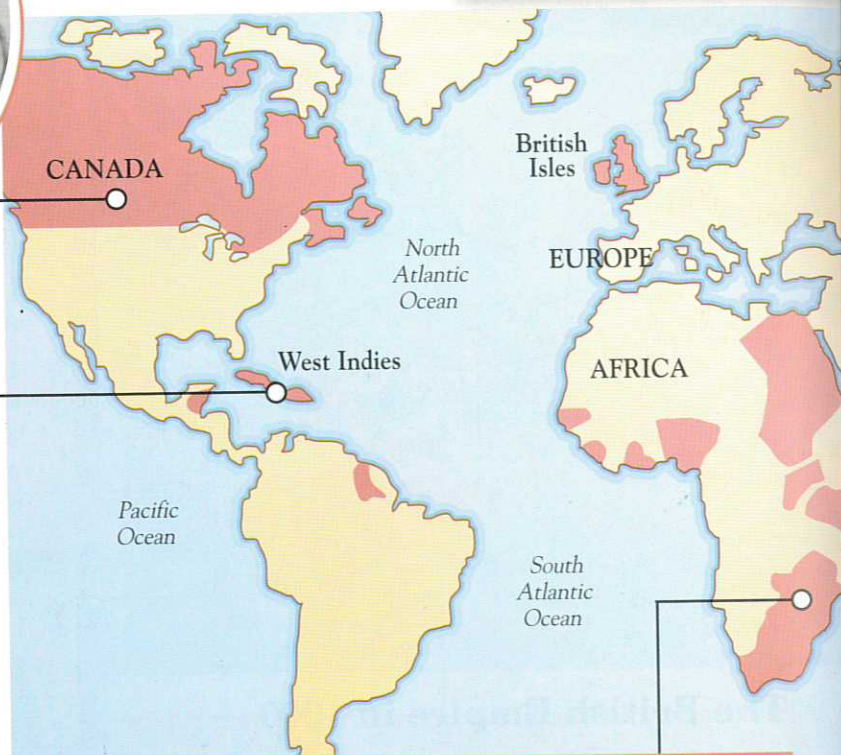
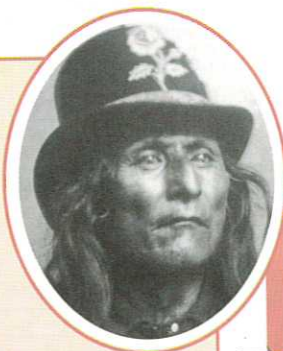
Here is the same map of the empire in 1900. This time it is surrounded by words from some real people who were ruled over by the British. Once again we have researched their lives and we have tried to **imagine** what they would tell us if they were to come back from the dead.



Rani Lakshmi
(died in 1858)

Chief Crowfoot

"I was the chief of a tribe in Canada. In 1876, Chief Sitting Bull crossed the border from the United States of America into Canada. He tried to persuade me to join him in a war against the whites. His warriors had just killed General Custer's United States army in a bloody battle. I refused to help Sitting Bull. The Great Mother, Queen Victoria, sent me a message of thanks. I stopped my people rebelling when the railway crossed our land. For this, I was given a life pass on the railway! But since my time the railway has opened up our lands, the number of whites has grown and grown – and very few of my people remain."



Mary Prince (born in 1788)

"I was born in the West Indies just like William Beckford. But I wasn't a millionaire – I was a poor slave. My ancestors were taken to the West Indies from Africa. I was sold several times and worked for different masters. Some whipped me and others did things so awful that I prefer not talk about them. In 1828, my master took me to London as a maid but I walked out on him. The Anti Slavery Society told my story in a book in 1831. Two years later the British Parliament ended slavery in the Empire – but blacks like me still had the worst jobs."

Chief Lobengula (died in 1894)

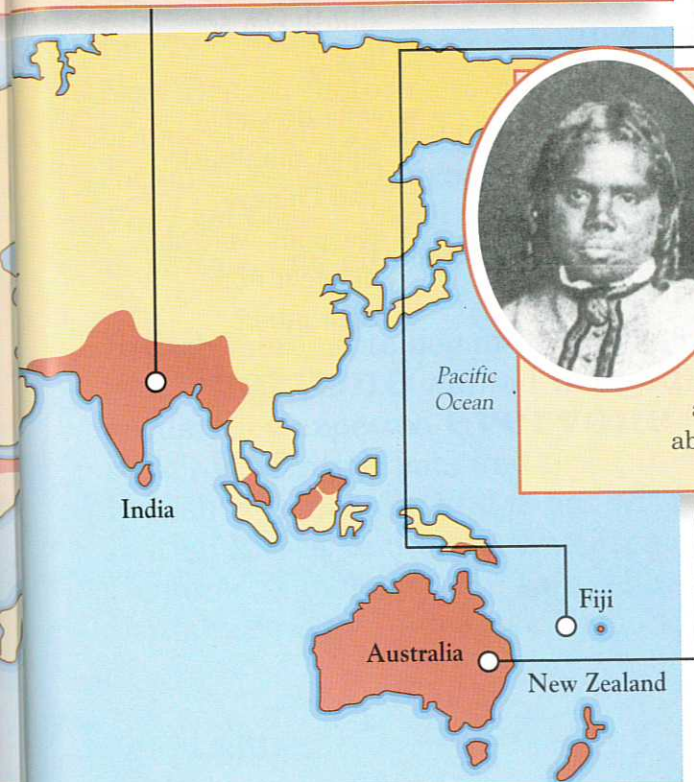
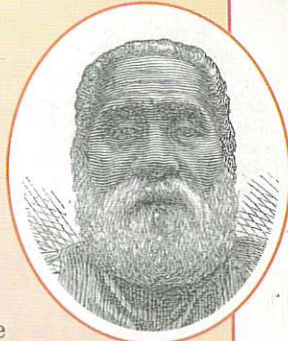


"I was the chief of the Matabele tribe in Africa. The whites came during the 1880s and asked to dig for gold on my land. They gave me tools and guns and I allowed them one hole to dig in. Later, I agreed they could dig one more hole in the east. Whites poured onto my land and started mines and farms wherever they liked. I asked the Great White Queen to stop them but she did not. My men bravely stood up to the British who cut them down with their cannons and machine guns. Soon afterwards I died of fever. My people were conquered and our lands were taken."

"I was an Indian princess. I hated the British for taking my husband's land when he died. They ignored our age-old custom which allowed princes to adopt a son to rule after them if they had no children. The British found many ways to interfere with our religion and customs. The Governor-General even upset Indians who were fighting for him in the East India Company army. In 1857, we rose up against the British and tried to drive them out of India. We failed, but at least I died in battle. The British punished survivors by firing cannon balls through them at point-blank range."

Chief Cakobau

"I was the greatest chief of Fiji. When the whites came to our islands they changed our lives. Some traders were cheats, but many missionaries treated us well. In 1854, I became a Christian and my people followed my example. We had to change many of our customs. After I became a Christian the wars between tribes on our islands stopped. The missionaries told me that Fiji would be safer if I took it into the British Empire. The British took over in 1874 and I sent Queen Victoria my favourite war club to say thankyou! Before long the British were growing sugar cane and cotton all over our land."



Bessy Cameron (1851–1895)

"I was a teacher. I came from an aborigine family but I went to a school run by white Australians who had followed Edward Gibbon Wakefield's advice to come to this land. I was taught to be a Christian and to forget aborigine beliefs. At first I was happy to follow the ways of white people. Soon I was teaching other aborigine girls how to count, read, sew, cook and wash for white women. My husband taught aborigine boys about gardening and outdoor work. Later I turned against this way of life – why should aborigines only be trained for the lowest jobs of all?"

STEP 2

Write the names of each of the 'ruled' people in the correct column on the chart you began in STEP 1. Remember that each name can go in more than one column.

The British Empire in 1900

Thinking your enquiry through

Bad news! The television company has decided to cut your series from five programmes to two – but the company still wants the series to show in a fair way what the empire was like for the British and for the people they ruled over. Look at the chart you made in STEPS 1 and 2. Decide which two programmes you will keep. Write a letter to the television company explaining

- what the programmes will be about
- why you have chosen to keep these two
- what problems you will have in making the two programmes fair
- what sorts of information you might need to make your programme accurate.