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| 1947  India and Pakistan: independence and Partition | 1957  Ghanaian independence | 1950s-1980s  Colonies of the British Empire gain independence | 1980s  “Cambridge School”–historical perspective of decolonisation | 2000s  “New Imperial History”– historical perspective of decolonisation | |
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Key people, ideas and developments

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| 1 | Decolonisation | To start with, decolonisation meant the political process of colonies gaining independent from empire. In the British Empire, this process took place in the 1940s to 1980s. More recently, people have started using the word to describe a cultural and social process, where the legacy of empire stops having as much influence, for example when the knowledge and contributions of former colonised people are celebrated. |
| 2 | Independence and partition in India and Pakistan | An Indian nationalist movement grew in the late 19th and early 20th century. At the same time, a movement for Pakistan to form its own country also grew. Gandhi led the Indian National Congress, a nationalist group, leading nonviolent demonstrations. Demands for independence grew in the 1940s. In 1947, plans were drawn up to hand power over. After first trying to keep India as one country, a partition plan was drawn up hurriedly. Two large states, Punjab and Bengal, were split in half. Many people found themselves on the “wrong” side of the border, and millions of people moved, with hundreds of thousands killed in the chaos and violence as Muslims moved to Pakistan and Sikhs and Hindus to India. |
| 3 | Independence in Ghana | Kwame Nkrumah became a leader in the Ghanaian independence movement in the 1940s. He led nonviolent protests, but was put in prison. From prison, his political party won an election. After this, the British government released him and started working with him on a plan to hand over power. Ghana gained independence in 1957. |

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| 4 | Ronald Hyam | Hyam is an archival historian, meaning that most of his sources are written documents – often official ones, or ones written by powerful people such as prime ministers who make the decisions. He argues that the most important factor in explaining the decolonisation was the decisions of the governments, taken because of international pressure (e.g. from the USA) and out of a desire for Britain to find a new place in the world. Hyam’s perspective is a bit broader than the original ‘Cambridge School’, which used mostly British government archives, but his work builds on the ‘Cambridge School’. |
| 5 | Antoinette Burton | Burton’s approach is less archival than Hyam’s; more of her sources come from Indigenous perspectives. She also focuses more on India than any other colony. She argues that rebellion by Indigenous people was the most important factor, and in fact argues that rebellion *against* empire was the most defining feature *of* the British Empire throughout its existence. Burton is one of the historians who are sometimes referred to as writing ‘new imperial history’. |
| 6 | Writing history | Historians often come to different conclusions about how important different factors were. This might be because they approach a subject differently, focus on different geographical areas or time periods, look at different types of sources or ask different questions when looking for information. |

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| Word | Definition | In a sentence |
| **decolonisation** | *Political definition:* the process of a colony or colonies becoming independent from an empire.  *Social and cultural definition:* removing the legacy of empire from the way people think about themselves and the types of knowledge that society rewards | The British Empire decolonised in the 1940s to 1980s. (political definition)  The campaigners were arguing for the decolonisation of the curriculum. (social and cultural definition) |
| **archive** | A collection of documents which show the history of a place, group or institution. | The National Archives is the official archive of the British government.  Ronald Hyam is an archival historian. |
| **independence** | When a territory (country or area) stops being run by an empire (or bigger country) and runs itself. | Ghana achieved independence in 1957. |
| **school of thought** | The perspective of a group of people who share an opinion or way of thinking about history (or society, culture, etc.). | The Cambridge School was one of the earliest schools of thought that explained the process of decolonisation. |