

Essay Questions: British Empire 1763-1914

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Note: The Section B&C questions have been organised into the **two breadth** and **five depth** key themes, as per the Edexcel syllabus. The Breadth Themes will be examined in Section C of the examination. The Depth Themes will be examined in Section B of the examination.

Note: Questions affixed with (POS) have been devised by the author and are not accredited by Edexcel.

Themes	A-LEVEL QUESTIONS
Breadth Theme One: The changing nature and extent of trade.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How far can the repeal of the <u>Navigation Acts in 1849</u> be regarded as a key turning point in the changing patterns of trade in the years 1763-1914? (Pearson, p.20) ● To what extent was the acquisition of the <u>Suez Canal</u> a new departure for British trading policy in the years 1763-1914? (Pearson, P.29) ● To what extent did <u>economic interests</u> govern the expansion of the British Empire during the years 1763-1914? (Pearson, p.33) ● How far was the <u>adoption of free trade in 1842-46</u>, the key factor in the growth of British global trade in the years 1763-1914? (SAMS) ● How far do you agree that the <u>willingness to use force to expand British commerce</u> was a key factor in British commercial success in the years 1763-1914? (SAMS) ● 'The abolition of the slave trade in 1807 was the biggest turning point in the patterns of British trade between 1763-1914.' To what extent do you agree with this statement? (POS) ● To what extent was the <u>acquisition of Cyprus in 1878</u> a new departure for British colonial policy in the years 1763-1914? (POS)

**Breadth
Theme Two:
The changing
nature of the
Royal Navy.**

- How far do you agree that the role of the Royal Navy did not substantially change in the years 1763-1914? (Pearson, p.50)
- To what extent is it reasonable to suggest that the expansion of the Royal Navy in the years 1763-1914 was the result of political imperatives? (Pearson, p.60)
- How far do you agree that economic interests were the most significant motivation behind the expansion of the Royal Navy in the years 1763-1914? (Pearson, p.62)
- To what extent did the role of the Royal Navy change as a result of Britain's expanding imperial interests in the years 1763-1914? (Pearson, p.84)
- How far can the acquisition of strategic bases in 1815 be regarded as the most significant development in the growth of Britain's global maritime power in the years 1763–1914? (SAMS)
- 'The power of the Royal Navy was a key factor in the growth of British trade throughout the world in the years 1763–1914.' How far do you agree with this statement? (SAMS)
- To what extent did the use of the Royal Navy to suppress the slave trade after 1808 represent a significant change in the role of the Royal Navy between 1763-1914? (POS)
- To what extent was the attack on Algiers in 1816 the most important symbol of Britain's naval strength between 1763-1914? (POS)
- How far do you agree that the Naval Defence Act of 1889 was the most significant development in the growth of British global maritime power in the years 1763-1914? (POS)

**Depth Theme
Three: The
loss of the
American
colonies,
1770-1783.**

- How far do you agree that the cause of the American Revolution was the introduction of the Tea Act in 1773? (Pearson, p.73)
- How far do you agree that the primary cause of the American War of Independence was the ideological difference between the American and British points of view over taxation? (Pearson, p.79)
- 'The Coercive Acts of 1774 were the most important cause of the American Revolutionary War.' How far do you agree with this statement? (POS)
- To what extent was the Boston Tea Party of 1773 the primary cause of the American War of Independence? (POS)
- How accurate is it to say that it was French intervention in the War of American Independence that determined the British defeat by 1783? (SAMS)
- How far do you agree that the key turning point in the American War for Independence was the defeat of General Cornwallis and his army at Yorktown in 1781? (POS)
- 'The British loss in the American War of Independence is primarily attributable to their own weaknesses and tactical blunders'. To what extent do you agree with this comment about the reasons for Britain's defeat by 1783? (POS)

**Depth Theme
Four: The birth
of British
Australia,
1788-1829.**

- 'By 1829, British settlement in Australia had effectively been transformed from an outdoor prison into an imperial colony.' How far do you agree with this comment on the Australian colonies in the late 1820s?? (Pearson, p.4 & p.107)
- How accurate is it to say that policy towards the Aboriginal people in Australia was determined by the settlers of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land? (Pearson, p.103)
- How far do you agree that the British settlement of Australia in the years 1788–1829 was a disaster for the Aborigine population? (SAMS)
- 'The policies and tenure of Lachlan Macquarie as Governor between 1809-1821 is the primary reason for the development of Australia between 1788 and 1829.' To what extent do you agree with this statement? (POS)
- To what extent do you agree that the first crossing of the Blue Mountains in 1813 was the most significant reason for the development in colonial Australia between 1788 and 1829? (POS)
- 'The introduction of sheep had the biggest impact on Aboriginal populations of all the actions by Colonial Settlers in Tasmania and New South Wales by 1829.' To what extent do you agree with this statement? (POS)

**Depth Theme
Five; Learning
from Past
Mistakes:
Canada and
the Durham
Report,
1837-1840.**

- How far do you agree that *Britain's decision to allow the continuation of French land tenure* was the most important cause of the revolt in Lower Canada in 1837? (Pearson, p.115)
- 'A genuine innovator in the changing relationship between Britain and its colonies'. How far do you agree with this assessment of Lord Durham? (Pearson, p.129)
- To what extent can the outbreak of revolt in Lower Canada in 1837 be explained by the *economic downturn of the 1830s*? (POS)
- How far do you agree that the *actions of Lieutenant Governor Sir Francis Bond Head between 1835 and 1838* explain the outbreak of revolt in Upper Canada in 1837? (POS)
- 'The failure of the Gosford Commission of Inquiry and the subsequent passing of the Russell Resolutions by Parliament in 1837 was the main cause of the revolt in Lower Canada'. How far do you agree with this statement about the causes of the Lower Canadian Revolt in 1837? (POS)
- How far do you agree that the Revolts in Lower and Upper Canada in 1837-1838 were mainly caused by the publication of *Louis-Joseph Papineau's 'Ninety-Two Resolutions' in 1834*? (POS)
- How far do you agree that the *perceived threat from the USA* was the main reason for the British dispatch of Lord Durham as High Commissioner to the Canadas in 1837? (POS)
- To what extent do you agree that the *political nature and governmental system of Upper and Lower Canada* was the fundamental cause of the Revolts in 1837-1838?

**Depth Theme
Six: Nearly
losing an
empire: the
British in
India,
1829-1858.**

- 'The power of the Company army was the most significant cause of the increasing British presence in India in the early 19th century.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. (Pearson, p.139)
- How accurate is it to say that Christian missionaries had a very limited impact in India by 1857? (POS)
- 'Sleeman's campaign against thagi was the most significant cause of cultural unrest in India between 1829 and 1856.' To what extent do you agree with this statement? (POS)
- How far is it accurate to say that the Indian Rebellion occurred because of the attack on Indian religion and customs by the British in the years leading up to 1857? (Pearson, p.148)
- How far do you agree that the Indian Rebellion / Mutiny occurred because of the nature of Company rule up until 1857? (Pearson, p.182)
- How far does Britain's ruthless response account for the defeat of the 'Indian Mutiny' in 1857–58? (SAMS)
- To what extent does lack of organised rebel leadership explain the defeat of the 'Indian Mutiny' in 1857-58? (POS)

**Depth Theme
Seven: The
Nile valley,
1882-1898.**

- How far can British strategic interests be regarded as the most significant cause of the occupation of Egypt in 1882? (Pearson, p.159)
- To what extent can British involvement in the Nile Valley by 1882 be explained primarily by the need to protect the European population in Egypt? (POS)
- 'Kitchener's veneration of Gordon is key in explaining his savagery towards the mahdist forces in the Sudan.' How far do you agree with this opinion? Explain your answer (Pearson, p.170).
- How far does Anglo-French rivalry explain Britain's occupation of the Nile Valley in the years 1882-1898? (POS)
- To what extent was it Britain's fears of European rivals that led it to occupy the Nile Valley in the years 1882–98? (SAMS)