



AB: Reading 'A little bit of history'

English Reading R, E 6

Reading: From the British Empire to the Commonwealth of Nations

① Read the text and work on the following exercises.

In the past, Britain was a very powerful country.

The „**British Empire**“ started in the late 1500s and early 1600s when England began setting up colonies and trading posts overseas. By 1920, the empire covered about 35.5 million square kilometers. This was about a quarter of Earth's total land area. Because of this, the English language, laws, and culture spread widely. People often said, „the empire on which the sun never sets“. This meant the sun was always shining on at least one part of the empire.

After World War II (1939 - 1945), Britain's power weakened. Many countries wanted to become free and independent.

India, its most important colony, gained independence in 1947. Slowly, the British Empire ended.

But many of the countries decided to stay in contact and work together. These countries joined the **Commonwealth of Nations** — or just the Commonwealth.

Today, the Commonwealth of Nations is a group of 56 countries from all over the world. Most of these countries were once part of the British Empire. They are connected by their shared history, the English language, and similar cultures.

Some of them still have the British King as their head of state, but most are independent.

Language support

- **British Empire** - Britisches Weltreich
- **colony** - Kolonie
- **trading post** - Handelsposten
- **a quarter** - ein Viertel
- **to spread widely** - sich weit verbreiten
- **to weaken** - nachlassen, schwächer werden
- **independent** - unabhängig
- **connected** - verbunden
- **head of state** - Staatsoberhaupt

...Was ist eigentlich eine **Kolonie**???



Flags of the Commonwealth countries in Parliament Square, London on Commonwealth Day





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Reading comprehension: A little bit of history

② The British Empire started around...

- ☐ 1200
- ☐ 1500 - 1600
- ☐ 1900

③ What happened after World War II?

- ☐ Britain got more colonies.
- ☐ The empire became bigger.
- ☐ Many countries wanted independence.

④ Match the words to their meanings:

colony	1		free, not under another country's control
independent	2		a country ruled by another country
culture	3		the way people live, with their language, food, and traditions
Commonwealth	4		a group of countries that work together and share a history

⑤ What does the sentence *"the empire on which the sun never sets"* mean?

⑥ What are some things that spread because of the British Empire?

⑦ How are the countries in the Commonwealth connected today?

