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India – a country of contrasts, dreams and nightmares

by Rita Reinheimer-Wolf



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In dieser Unterrichtseinheit setzen sich Ihre Lernenden mit den verschiedenen Facetten Indiens auseinander. Unter anderem mithilfe von Fakten, Texten, einem Film und einem Romanausschnitt erarbeiten sich die Lernenden Wissen über Geschichte, Alltag, Probleme, Herausforderungen und Zukunftsperspektiven des Staates. Hierbei trainieren und erweitern sie ihre Lese-, Schreib-, Analyse- und Sprechkompetenz. Auf spielerische Weise vertiefen die Schülerinnen und Schüler schließlich das Gelernte in einer fiktiven Fernsehtalkshow.

India – a country of contrasts, dreams and nightmares

by Rita Reinheimer-Wolf

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Competences and skills

By working with the material, students enhance their **reading comprehension**. They also improve their **writing skills** by writing a comment, a film review and a creative text. Additionally, they train their **viewing competences** by filling in a post-viewing questionnaire after having watched a film. **Speaking** is improved by giving a short speech on a topic. **Discussion skills** are enhanced when students participate in a discussion representing a protagonist from the material. Finally, the skills of working with a non-fictional text are practiced.

Overview:

List of abbreviations:

A Analysis

D Discussion/debate

PR Presentation

T Working with the text

W Writing

C Comment

M Mind map/visualising

R Research

V Vocabulary work

CT Creative Task

PM Placemat activity

RC Reading comprehension

VC Viewing comprehension

Topic	Material	Method
1: India – its past and present	M1–M3	C, PR, T, V, W
2: Slums and poverty	M4	M, PR, VC, W
3: Human trafficking	M5–M6	A, PR, R, RC, V
4: <i>My Name ist Khan</i>	M7	PR, VC, W
5: <i>(Un)arranged Marriage</i>	M8–M9	A, CT, PM, PR, RC
6: Bangalore – India's Silicon Valley	M10–M11	D, T, V

India – a country of contrasts, dreams and nightmares

Facts

Milestones in India's past

For more than 300 years (1526–1857), most of the Indian subcontinent was under the control of Mughal (or Mogul) Emperors who were Muslims but ruled a country marked by a large Hindu majority. Mughals, however, spread Islam, Muslim arts and culture all over South Asia. The economy in the age of the Mughal Empire was characterised by agriculture and trade. The control of most of the Indian subcontinent was successfully realised by a highly centralised administration with a single currency throughout the Mughal Empire. At the beginning of the 17th century, the British showed interest in India and the British East India Company (BEIC) was founded. This enterprise of nearly unique historical and economic dimension not only managed to establish a number of trading posts in India but also represented the beginning of the colonisation process. The Company was chartered by Queen Elizabeth I in order to enable the British to trade with Asia. Consequently, the main goal was of an economic nature. Ambitious and power-seeking traders took control of huge swaths of India. Thus, by the year 1856, the British East India Company was in control of most of India. One year later, however, the so-called Indian Mutiny took place when Indian soldiers employed by the British army started a revolt against racial injustice and the lack of equal rights. This rebellious spirit also took hold of civilians. The East India Company was then dissolved and India was directly governed by the Crown. So, in 1857, the British Rule (Raj) started. In 1885, the Indian National Congress was founded and developed into one of the largest political parties in the world. This was a major force in the struggle against British rule in India. In the 1920s, the Indian National Congress adopted Mahatma Ghandi's concept of non-violent civil disobedience and resistance. The Quit India Movement was created as a consequence and also presided by Ghandi. The year 1947 marks a decisive milestone

in the history of the country because India became independent from Britain. Thus, the British Indian Empire was dissolved (Indian Independence Act). Before their withdrawal, the British divided India into two independent states: the Dominion of Pakistan (later Islamic Republic of Pakistan and People's Republic of Bangladesh) and the Union of India (later Republic of India) due to bitter tensions between Hindus and Muslims. The constitution of the Republic of India established a parliamentary democracy.

India in the 21st century

In the 21st century, India is a country that struggles with a number of far-reaching and diverse problems: overpopulation, environmental pollution, human trafficking, poverty and the lack of women's rights in a globalised world. Disparities consist in the backwardness of impoverished rural areas and big cities with suburban slums creating both poverty on the one hand, but also very high levels of income on the other hand. Furthermore, it is a common truth that women still do not enjoy an equal role in Indian society. Focal points in this area should be an improvement both of the literacy rate of women and female employment levels. In general, Indian women are frequently confronted with violence in their everyday life (gang rape, human trafficking or female foeticide). A unique 21st-century vision of India can be found in Bangalore (situated in the south of India). Bangalore is the capital of India's Karnataka state and figures as the third biggest city of the country, only Mumbai and Delhi are even bigger. In 2014, it was renamed into Bengaluru. In 2019, the estimated population of Bangalore was 12.9 million people. Bangalore is frequently referred to as the Silicon Valley of India due to the fact that some of the world's major IT corporations operate from there. It can definitely be called the nation's leading IT exporter. As a demographically diverse city, it is booming and futuristic representing a kind of oasis of technology and innovative entrepreneurship, where nearly 40 percent of India's IT industry is located. It is thus a place of technological progress without limits playing a key role in globalisation. India being the world's largest democracy, a technological hub and a Third World country with an intriguing past turns it into a highly relevant topic for learners of English. The unit *India – a country of contrasts, dreams and nightmares* aims at familiarising students with a number of essential facets of India.



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