

What have colonialism and empire got to do with sustainability and development?

KS3 History

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Specialist knowledge for teachers

Recognising the legacies of colonialism is a means of highlighting how uneven the capacity to think about and act upon sustainable futures can be. Such capacity is largely determined by context, namely, the place and the time where and when the very question of sustainability is raised. Take the experience of communities from informal settlements in the Global South whose participation in consumer society and civic democracy may be limited. Collaborative research conducted in Cali, the third largest city in Colombia, as part of the **UKRI-GCRF GREAT** project, has shown the prevalence of existing sustainable practices led by women who reduce solid waste at household level, and generate half the weight of waste per capita (230 grams) than that of the average per capita at neighbourhood level and less than a third of the national average. The UK average of solid waste generated per capita ranges from 1.1 kg to 1.4 kg.

Intersectional characteristics, namely, gender, ethnicity and whether residents in the area have been the victims of Colombia's armed conflict or not, do matter greatly. As part of the GREAT project, we are seeking to influence, among other things, zero waste policies locally and nationally. What sustainable development looks like in 2050 in cities like Cali or in the cities, villages and rural areas of the Morecambe Bay will differ, which is not to say that we can't learn to build meaningful bridges. Understanding the value of context, of places and their histories, is a key part of beginning to do so.

The intention of this resource is to encourage students to consider sustainability and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the light of European,

British and Lancastrian development during the period of Imperialism and Colonialism. This work will allow students to engage with the contemporary debates in the UK around reparations, loss and damage, repatriation of indigenous artefacts and apologies for past imperial and colonial actions. Teachers may find the **Facing the Past** resources useful for developing their own knowledge of this, as well as those developed by the **Lancaster Black History Group**.

This resource is for five lessons as follows:

1. Introduction to colonialism, empire, development and sustainability
2. Who were the enslaved people?
3. How did Lancaster develop?
4. How far did slavery contribute to the growth of Lancaster?
5. How far did colonialism contribute to the prosperity of the colonisers?

A sixth lesson on 'What next' could be planned to invite students to think creatively about what should be done. To do so, groups will develop proposals around four main themes, namely, repatriation, apology, compensation, and sustainable development in 2050. This provides an opportunity to connect to other curriculum areas, for example, the arts.

Materials for lessons are available on the MBC Moodle and teachers should be aware that each 'lesson' does not have to be constrained to one single session. ▶



► The knowledge below concerns: Lesson 1 Introduction to colonialism, empire, development and sustainability

For Lesson 1, teachers should focus on establishing some definitions and working vocabulary for the overall plan:

- Knowledge of European empires, the nature of colonial rule and its impact on development both for the imperial centre and the colonised
- Knowledge of sustainable development and the idea of equity and shared responsibility for the achievement of the SDGs
- Knowledge of how this relates to Lancaster from a historical perspective and how that might relate to now

Teachers should have a good overview of European voyages of discovery, the development of plantation economies, the slave trade, the nature of colonial rule and how modern developed economies have in many cases developed from these. Additionally, they should be aware of Lancaster's development in a general sense and could use this to allow opportunities to facilitate some links to local history amidst the macro/global picture. Lancaster's museums have some excellent stories and artefacts which connect the local to the global, and you can find out more on the [Visit Lancaster](#) website.

Teachers should also have a good understanding of the origins of sustainable development as a concept and its implementation through institutions such as the United Nations, the World Bank, UNESCO, UN-Habitat and the Conference of the Parties (COP). The [SDG website](#) has links to events, publications and resources whilst the [Teach SDGs website](#) contains tips, videos and links to ongoing global projects.

Vocabulary to support new knowledge

European Empires

- Empire/Imperial
- Colony/colonial/colonised
- Chattel slavery
- Indentured servitude
- Extractive industries
- Capitalism

Sustainable development

- Equity
- Shared responsibility
- SDGs
- Global commons
- Climate change
- Poverty
- Loss and damage
- Reparations

Lancaster

- Buildings
- Institutions
- Open spaces
- Fields
- Infrastructure (mills, canals, railways)
- River Lune



Examples in practice

Resources needed

- Voyages of discovery
- Maps of European empires
- Growth of developed economies graphs/tables
- A3 brown paper for students to work out ideas
- Maps of countries most impacted by climate change

Lesson plan

- Put students into the following groups – each group would have resources only related to these areas:
 - Voyages of discovery
 - European Empires
 - Economic growth
 - Maps of countries most impacted by climate change
 - Selected sustainable development goals/definitions
 - Experiences of the colonised
- Each group to complete the overall vocab list but only for words related to their sources. They will also have a large sheet of paper with their group theme in the centre – they should discuss the sources and create a spider diagram about what they have learnt.
- Students should then initiate the market-place of ideas session where they will move around until they have gathered all the information they can, filling in as much as then can of their vocab sheets and working out how the other themes relate to their own.
- Plenary will discuss learning and the links made. Can they see how these areas are/might be connected?



Curriculum aims and objectives

1. Students will use maps, graphs and other data to think critically about the contribution of colonialism and empire to modern day issues of climate change and development.
2. Students may make links to Morecambe Bay and consider how our local area might relate to these big issues. This involves connecting local stories with the wider global narrative.

Aligned with the KS3 National Curriculum aims, this resource supports students to:

- Know and understand how people's lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world
- Know and understand the achievements and follies of mankind
- Gain and develop a historically grounded understanding of abstract terms such as empire

More specifically, students will learn about their own area through engagement with sources, create a peer resourced vocabulary list and start to think about how empire and colonialism, sustainability and development, and Lancaster's history relate to one another.

This will be achieved by group work, involving discussion about the sources they have read as starting points and working out how definitions from their vocabulary list can be linked to these. This is followed by a marketplace of ideas activity where one person from each group goes to another group and exchanges what they have learned. They will use large sheets of paper to synthesise and share their understandings and gradually work out how they think each topic is linked.

Head

Students will develop an understanding of the part played by Lancaster in global colonial issues such as slavery and use this knowledge to think critically about current issues of climate change.

Heart

By raising awareness of these challenging issues in the city's history, students will be encouraged to develop kindness and empathy for those who have suffered in the past and those who continue to suffer today. This will allow them to build bridges between communities and to reflect more deeply on the consequences of their own actions within the current climate crisis.

Hands

Students will engage critically with source materials, interpret these and synthesise knowledge in groups. They will apply specialist vocabulary to share their learning with others through discussion and collaboration.



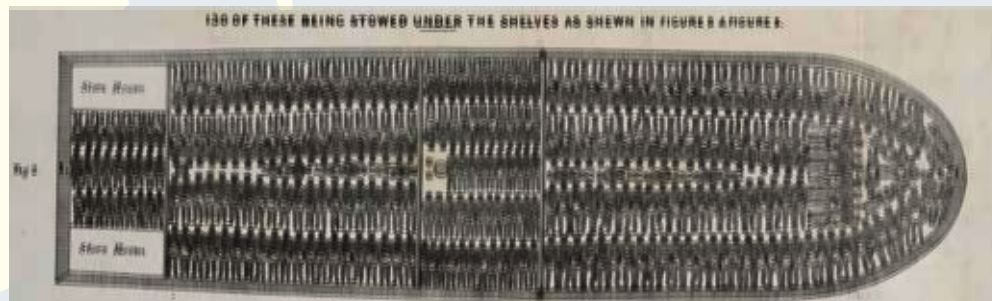
Enslaved Africans Memorial

This memorial was the first in Britain to remember the millions of African people enslaved, whose forced labour produced vast amounts of wealth for this country, the legacies of which are still visible today.



The Rawlinson bookcase by Gillow at the Judges' Lodgings. ▶

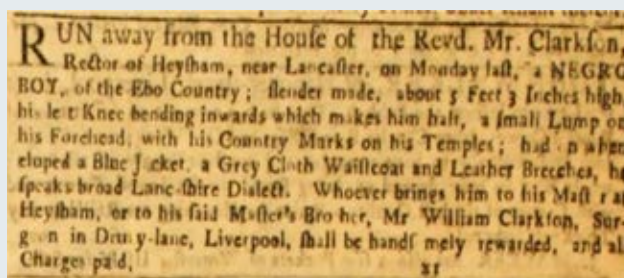
▶ Stowage of the British slave ship Brookes



▶ Edward Colston made his fortune through human suffering. Between 1672 and 1689 ships are believed to have transported about 80,000 men, women and children from Africa to the Americas.



▶ West Indiaman slave ship.



▶ 1765 advert in Liverpool Williamson's Advertiser.

Adaptations to extend impact

The resources could be adapted by choosing different areas along the Morecambe Bay so that instead of Lancaster teachers focus on:

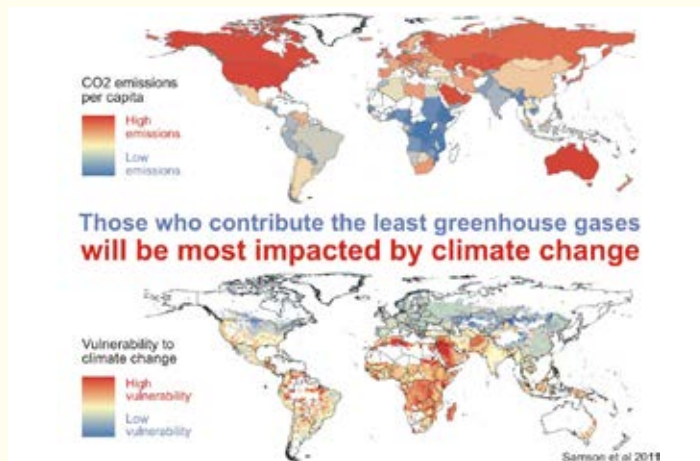
- Fleetwood and fishing communities
- Heysham and nuclear power plants
- Barrow and the shipping and defence industry



Brockbank shipyard in Lancaster from Ayre's painting (1806) from Lesson 3 to be used to demonstrate Lancaster's historical links to slavery and empire.



A typical Mahogany plantation.



This image would be used to highlight those most vulnerable to climate change are often countries with colonial pasts and/ or countries that have been left behind by globalisation.



The Columbian Exchange from Lesson 5 to illustrate historical exploitation by colonial powers.

