Power Changes Hands

Trace the rise and decline of Mughal rule in early modern India.

AWH.C.11.2 "Describe the rise and fall of the Mughal Empire, including important political, economic, and cultural aspects of early modern Indian history (e.g., rise and development of the Sikh religion and states, Portuguese maritime hegemony..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline details that explain Mughal strength, circle details that show changing religious policies, and number three steps from weakened imperial control to a Sikh kingdom.

From Empire to New States

1. In 1498, Portuguese ships reached India's southwest coast by sea. Portugal later seized Goa and used armed ships, fortified ports, and shipping permits to dominate parts of Indian Ocean trade. Yet Indian merchants and other powers kept trading. Inland, Babur defeated the Delhi sultan at Panipat in 1526 and founded the Mughal Empire. His grandson Akbar expanded it through warfare and alliances with local rulers. Mughal officials collected land taxes, the state's main source of income, from a productive farming economy. Tax money supported soldiers, officials, and courts. Control of farmland and alliances helped turn military victories into lasting rule.

2. Under Akbar, the Mughal court welcomed scholars and artists from different traditions. Persian-language histories, painted manuscripts, and buildings such as Fatehpur Sikri expressed imperial power. Akbar ended a tax on non-Muslims and invited religious discussions. Sikhism, founded through the teachings of Guru Nanak and later Gurus, gained followers in Punjab. Mughal policies toward Sikhs and Hindus changed over time. Jahangir ordered the execution of the Sikh Guru Arjan in 1606. Under Aurangzeb, the state restored the tax on non-Muslims and destroyed some Hindu temples. Sikh communities increasingly organized to defend themselves, while many Hindus still served the empire.

3. After Aurangzeb died in 1707, struggles over succession and costly wars weakened central authority. Regional rulers kept more tax revenue and built their own armies, shrinking the emperor's control. European trading companies, including the British East India Company, gained political power as Mughal authority weakened. In Punjab, Sikh groups formed armed confederacies in the eighteenth century. Ranjit Singh took Lahore in 1799 and established a Sikh kingdom soon afterward. Sikh state building was one outcome of the empire's fragmentation, not the only cause of its fall. After the 1857 uprising, Britain removed the last Mughal emperor in 1858.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Babur's victory and Akbar's actions each help build Mughal rule?

2. Compare how Portugal and the Mughals used power to benefit from trade or farming.

3. How did Mughal religious policies change from Akbar's reign to Aurangzeb's reign? Include one effect on Sikhs or Hindus described in the passage.

4. Explain how the weakening of Mughal authority created opportunities for both Sikh groups and the British East India Company.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a museum label of 75 to 100 words explaining how Mughal power rose and then gave way to new rulers. Include an economic or cultural feature of Mughal rule, a change in religious policy, the rise of Sikh states, and one detail about Portuguese sea trade or British expansion.

ANSWER KEY

Power Changes Hands

HIGH SCHOOL · AWH.C.11.2

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline details that explain Mughal strength, circle details that show changing religious policies, and number three steps from weakened imperial control to a Sikh kingdom. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Babur's victory and Akbar's actions each help build Mughal rule?	**Babur founded the empire by defeating the Delhi sultan. Akbar expanded it through warfare and alliances with local rulers.**
2	Compare how Portugal and the Mughals used power to benefit from trade or farming.	**Portugal used armed ships, fortified ports, and permits to dominate parts of sea trade. The Mughals controlled farmland and collected land taxes to support their state.**
3	How did Mughal religious policies change from Akbar's reign to Aurangzeb's reign? Include one effect on Sikhs or Hindus described in the passage.	**Akbar ended a tax on non-Muslims and invited religious discussions. Aurangzeb restored the tax and destroyed some Hindu temples. Sikh communities increasingly organized to defend themselves.**
4	Explain how the weakening of Mughal authority created opportunities for both Sikh groups and the British East India Company.	**As central control weakened, Sikh groups formed armed confederacies, and Ranjit Singh later established a kingdom. The British East India Company also gained political power.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Babur's victory at Panipat in 1526 began Mughal rule, and Akbar extended it through conquest and alliances. Land taxes from farms paid for the army and court, while painted manuscripts displayed imperial power. Akbar ended a tax on non-Muslims, but Aurangzeb restored it and destroyed some Hindu temples. As wars and succession struggles weakened the emperors, regional leaders kept more revenue. Sikh groups built armed confederacies in Punjab, and Ranjit Singh established a kingdom. The British East India Company also gained power, showing that the empire's decline created opportunities for several new rulers.

Accept other accurate economic or cultural features and either the Portuguese or British detail. Responses should connect weakened Mughal authority to Sikh state building without presenting it as the sole cause of the empire's fall.