

Gandhi in India

Background of Mohandas K. Gandhi

- Mohandas K. Gandhi was born to a middle class Indian family in 1869. A decent student, at the age of 18, he was sent to college in London to become a lawyer -- which was the desire of his family.

- Gandhi was unhappy in London. He never particularly liked the study of law, and the cold damp climate of England was very different from his native India.
- Still, he graduated in 1891, and returned home to practice law. His attempts to establish his own law practice in Bombay failed, and he accepted a position in an Indian law firm in South Africa (which was part of the British Commonwealth).



Gandhi in South Africa

- While in South Africa, Gandhi encountered discrimination based on his skin color. He began to formulate his protest ideas. He was guided by *satyagraha*, or truth force, and he targeted unjust laws. Gandhi decided to intentionally break laws he found to be unjust. This breaking of laws is known as *civil disobedience*.

- Gandhi organized the Indian community in South Africa. They all burned their identification cards and passbooks. Many were beaten and jailed (including Gandhi), but they did not fight back. A big part of satyagraha involved *non-violent* resistance. Eventually, the leaders of the South African government had to negotiate a compromise with Gandhi.



Gandhi's Leadership in India

- Gandhi returned to India in 1915 -- in the middle of World War I. After the dreadful Amritsar Massacre, he became convinced that he could no longer negotiate with the British for Indian independence.

- Gandhi began employing the same methods he used in South Africa. He called upon the Indians to disobey unjust laws. He especially targeted a salt law that maintained British production of salt. He also encouraged Indians to boycott British goods and protest British rule whenever they could. Always, he told Indians to do so in a non-violent manner.
- The British were brutal in their treatment of protesters. But, the Indians did not fight back, and images of British troops beating innocent and peaceful Indians were broadcast by media across the world.



Freedom & Tragedy

- The British granted India its independence in 1947, but agreed to partition part of the land off into a "Muslim India" -- Pakistan.
- Gandhi was devastated. He believed that all Indians, whether Hindu or Muslim, should come together and form a single nation.
- Tremendous violence broke out between Hindus and Muslims as millions of people migrated between Pakistan and India. Gandhi, who was known by his nickname "*Mahatma*", or great soul, visited the areas most impacted by violence, and made a personal appeal to stop the fighting.
- In January 1948, Gandhi was assassinated by a Hindu extremist who did not agree with his policies of peace toward Muslims & Pakistan.

