

Hemispheres

Understanding Migration

Curriculum Resources for the Classroom

Hemispheres is a partnership of:

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Center for Middle Eastern Studies
Center for Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies
South Asia Institute**

**in the College of Liberal Arts
at the University of Texas at Austin**

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Final Edition
Publication Date: September 2007

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Student Activity: The Partition of India

Time needed:

1 class period (45 min.–1 hour) should be sufficient to complete the reading and T-Chart or writing prompt activities. The writing prompt may be done in class or assigned as homework. (Although the T-Chart and writing prompt activities complement each other, it is not necessary—and may be redundant—to assign both to your students.)

Supplies for this activity:

- Map of the world (not included)
- Reading: *The Partition of India*
- Either the *T-Chart: India/Pakistan* worksheet (p. 34) or the *Writing Prompt: India/Pakistan* worksheet (p. 35)
- Chalkboard or dry-erase board

Preparation:

Have students identify India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) on a map of the world. Compare their size to that of the United States. You may also wish to use the map on page 82 to identify the location of the city of Calcutta.

You may wish to go over the following term with your students:

- **Partition:** dividing something into smaller parts. In this case, Partition refers to the division of British India into two countries in 1947: present-day India, and Pakistan (which split into Pakistan and Bangladesh in 1971).

Class activities:

Distribute *The Partition of India* reading to all students. Have them read quietly.

Variation 1:

Distribute the *T-Chart: India/Pakistan* worksheet and have students complete the chart individually or in small groups. When finished, draw a T-Chart on the board and have each student or group offer one point and write it in the appropriate place on the board. Continue until all of the unique points offered by students are included. Discuss the results with the class. Ask students to compare the answers they gave with the answers that others gave. Are there any similarities? Are there any differences? Why? Or why not? Ask for a show of hands to determine which side the students feel has a stronger argument. Ask one or two students to explain their reasons.

Variation 2:

After students have finished reading, replicate the T-Chart from the *T-Chart: India/Pakistan* worksheet on the board. Complete the T-Chart by having students suggest points in favor of and in opposition to migration and write them in the appropriate column. As a follow-up to this activity, you may wish to assign the *Writing Prompt: India/Pakistan* worksheet as homework or an in-class activity.

Variation 3:

Assign both *The Partition of India* reading and the *Writing Prompt: India/Pakistan* worksheet as homework. In class the next day, replicate the T-Chart from the *T-Chart: India/Pakistan* worksheet on the board. Complete the T-Chart by having students suggest points in favor of and in opposition to migration and write them in the appropriate column. Continue until all of the unique points offered by students are included. Discuss the results with the class. Ask students to compare the answers they give with the answers that others give. Are there any similarities? Are there any differences? Why? Or why not? Ask for a show of hands to determine which side students supported in their writing, and have some of the students read the conclusion from their writing prompt out loud to the class.

The Partition of India

After colonial rule, the British left India in 1947, under the agreement that it be Partitioned—divided—along religious lines. Areas where a majority of Hindus lived were given to India; areas where mostly Muslims lived became the new country of Pakistan. After Partition millions of people found themselves on the “wrong” side of the border. The city of Calcutta and the surrounding area, whose population was 75% Hindu, were awarded to India. The Muslims who lived there had to decide whether to remain or to set out and create new lives in Pakistan. Read the following accounts and complete the activity.

My name is Minhaj, and I am a Muslim boy. I once lived in a village near Calcutta, which is now in the new country of India. I lived in a large house with my mother and father and six sisters and brothers.

Now we live in my uncle’s home in a town in Pakistan. The house is very crowded and every day my father worries about finding work so our family won’t be such a burden to my uncle.

After Partition, we heard stories of trouble in nearby villages. Other Muslim families in our village started to send their children away to Pakistan. At first, my father refused to budge. There was too much at stake—we owned a lot of property and everyone in the family was comfortable. My father owned the most popular clothing shop in the area. My older brothers also worked there. Our family also ran the high school in the village. No one wanted to leave behind our property, so we decided to wait and see.

Soon, some troublemakers came into our village and started to cause problems. They came and stood outside our house in the middle of the night and yelled things. They threw rocks at our windows and broke them. We were afraid that they might break down our door and come inside to hurt us.

The next day we found out that the mob had wrecked my family’s stores and closed down our school. All of our money was invested in the store and we lost it all in one night. Our Hindu friends and neighbors in the village tried to help us, but they became scared for their own safety and so they urged us to leave.

I miss my old home and friends. But there is nothing left for us in our village. Now we must start a new life in Pakistan.

My name is Wazia, and I am a Muslim girl. I have a large family with deep ties to the city of Calcutta. My father’s family has lived here for many generations. Before the British left India, my father worked for the Calcutta Assembly. He now works for the new government of India. We live in a large house that we own, across the street from the assembly building.

One of the things I love about Calcutta is that we have so many different groups living together in relative peace. I go to a school with children from different backgrounds—Hindu and Muslim boys and girls go to school together. Many of my friends are Hindu. We visit each other’s houses as if they were our own. Until Partition, we didn’t even know the differences between us.

After Partition, my mother tried to convince my father to move to Pakistan. On the radio, we heard about violence in some parts of the country, but we were lucky not to experience any in our own neighborhood. Still, we stayed in our house for many days just to be safe. Our friends and neighbors would visit and bring us things from the market.

My mother was also worried about staying in Calcutta because her family lives in a village that ended up on the Pakistani side of the border. Before Partition, we visited them every year during the Ramadan holiday. She worried that she would not be able to see them again. At first, it seemed she was wrong to worry. We were able to go back and forth freely and you did not need a passport or visa. Now things have changed and it is difficult to go back and forth. I haven’t seen my mother’s family in two years.

But still I’m glad we stayed in Calcutta—I can’t imagine living any other place.

T-CHART: INDIA/PAKISTAN

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

Assignment: Read the passages on *The Partition of India*. Then complete the chart below, listing reasons why Muslims living in Calcutta might have wanted to emigrate to Pakistan in the left column, and reasons why they might have chosen to stay in the city in the right column.

Make as many points as you need for each side. The first three are already labeled for you.

Reasons why Muslims might have chosen to emigrate to Pakistan	Reasons why Muslims might have chosen to stay in Calcutta
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

Which side do you agree with? Cite examples from the text to support your answer:

WRITING PROMPT: INDIA/PAKISTAN

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

Examining both sides of the issue: The Partition of India

Imagine that you are a member of the Muslim Business Council in Calcutta, shortly after the partition of India in 1947. You have been asked to make a presentation to the Council, which is trying to decide if it should encourage Muslim business owners to remain in Calcutta, or to emigrate to Pakistan.

In the space below, prepare your presentation by first giving the reasons why Muslims might choose to stay in Calcutta, and then why they might choose to leave. Give at least two points for each side, using examples from the text or other points that you can think of to make your case.

At the end of your presentation, you should give your personal recommendation to the Council. Use examples from the reading to explain why you do or do not think that your fellow Muslims should remain in Calcutta.

My Esteemed Colleagues:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

About Hemispheres

Created in 1996, Hemispheres is the international outreach consortium at the University of Texas at Austin. Hemispheres utilizes University resources to promote and assist with world studies education for K–12 and postsecondary schools, businesses, civic and non-profit organizations, the media, governmental agencies, and the general public.

Comprised of UT's four federally funded National Resource Centers (NRCs) dedicated to the study and teaching of Latin America; the Middle East; Russia, East Europe & Eurasia; and South Asia, Hemispheres offers a variety of free and low-cost services to these groups and more. Each center coordinates its own outreach programming, including management of its lending library, speakers bureau, public lectures, and conferences, all of which are reinforced by collaborative promotion of our resources to an ever-widening audience in the educational community and beyond.

Hemispheres fulfills its mission through: coordination of pre-service and in-service training and resource workshops for educators; promotion of outreach resources and activities via exhibits at appropriate state- and nation-wide educator conferences; participation in public outreach events as organized by the consortium as well as by other organizations; and consultation on appropriate methods for implementing world studies content in school, business, and community initiatives.

For more information, visit the Hemispheres Web site at:
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