

Name _____

Date _____

Gandhi

Use the text to answer each question below.

1. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in the Indian city of Porbandar in 1869. He grew up in a Hindu family that emphasized many of the values he would later be known for: vegetarianism, fasting, and nonviolence toward all living things. When he was 18, Gandhi went to school in London to become a barrister, a type of lawyer. Upon his return to India, he had trouble finding work, so in 1893 he took a job in Natal, South Africa. Compared to where Gandhi grew up in western India, South Africa had a diverse population that included many Indians. The White ruling class treated Black and Indian citizens poorly, limiting where they could live, what property they could own, and even which transportation they could use. After being kicked out of a Whites-only train car, Gandhi formed the Natal Indian Congress and spent the next two decades leading the Indian community in civil disobedience against discriminatory laws. He coined the term “Satyagraha,” or “adherence to truth,” to describe his philosophy of nonviolence.

How did Gandhi’s young life influence his later activism?

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| A. His parents taught him that violence was necessary in extreme situations. | B. His childhood interest in law led him to attend law school in London. |
| C. His upbringing in India well prepared him for the diverse population in South Africa. | D. His belief in nonviolence was instilled in him by his Hindu family. |
2. Gandhi returned to India in 1915. At the time, India was under British control. The formal relationship between these countries began in 1600, when a group of English businessmen established the East India Company, a royal charter that created a monopoly on trade with India and other Southeast Asian countries. In 1858, the British Crown took direct rule over India, beginning a period called the British Raj. Under British rule, Indians were treated as second-class citizens. Wealthy British people owned most of the land, while many Indians lived in poverty as farmers or manual laborers. Gandhi organized protests, drew up petitions, and led strikes against British landowners, and he was eventually sent to jail. He had gained a large following by then, and thousands of supporters came to the prison to demand his release. But even after he was freed and the British government promised to grant more rights to Indian workers, the oppression continued. Soon Gandhi decided that the only solution was for India to become independent from foreign rule.

Which of these best describes India’s relationship to Britain during the Raj?

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| A. India was a British ally. | B. India was a British colony. |
| C. India was a British enemy. | D. India was a British war zone. |

3. In 1921, Gandhi became the leader of the Indian National Congress. He devoted the next 27 years to rejecting British rule in multiple ways, all adhering to his philosophy of nonviolence. One was a boycott of goods imported from Britain. Another was a protest against a British tax on salt, which led to the 23-day Salt March of 1930. Three years later, he fasted for 21 days to bring attention to the dire conditions facing the Dalit, the lowest caste in Indian society. Perhaps his biggest act of defiance was his refusal to support British troops in World War II, for which he was thrown in prison for two years. All of Gandhi's efforts paid off in 1947, when India finally became an independent nation.

Which of these best describes Gandhi's efforts against British rule?

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| A. Inspiring but overall ineffective | B. Violent at times |
| C. Diverse and widespread | D. Targeted at economic issues |