Taking as its starting point the current debate over the significance of history in the National Curriculum for England, this article examines the place of the country's colonial past in its national culture of memory. In the context of debates about educational policy and the politics of memory concerning Britain's colonial heritage, the author focuses on the transmission and interpretation of this heritage via school history textbooks, which play a key role in the politics of memory. This medium offers insight into transformations of the country's colonial experience that have taken place since the end of the British Empire. School textbooks do not create and establish these transformations in isolation from other arenas of discourse about the culture of memory by reinventing the nation. Instead, they reflect, as part of the national culture of memory, the uncertainties and insecurities emerging from the end of empire and the decolonization of the British nation's historical narrative.
At the end of the First World War, the German colonies of Africa, as well as Iraq and Palestine in the Middle East, were added to Britain's area of control. Its empire was now bigger than ever before, and covered a quarter of the entire land surface of the world. There were already signs, however, that the empire was coming to an end. At the 1919 peace conference US President Woodrow Wilson's disapproval of colonialism resulted in Britain's latest territorial gains being described as "mandated" from the League of Nations. Britain had to agree to help these territories.

British Empire: British Empire, a worldwide system of dependencies—colonies, protectorates, and other territories—that over a span of some three centuries was brought under the sovereignty of the crown of Great Britain and the administration of the British government. Learn more about the British Empire in this article. Origins of the British Empire. Great Britain made its first tentative efforts to establish overseas settlements in the 16th century. Movements for the end of slavery came to fruition in British colonial possessions long before the similar movement in the United States; the trade was abolished in 1807 and slavery itself in Britain’s dominions in 1833. Competition with France. For decades, this was true: the British colonial Empire touched all corners of the globe. After the War concluded, however, a worldwide process of decolonization commenced in which Britain granted independence to all of its major colonies, beginning notably in India. Especially since the end of war, the processes which gave birth to the nation-states of Europe have been repeated all over the world… Fifteen years ago this movement spread through Asia. The British Empire of the nineteenth century displayed and embodied racism in its composite. In embodying this idea of racial inequality, the Empire created grounds on which it could justify the imperialist actions that it executed throughout the Read Article ». 