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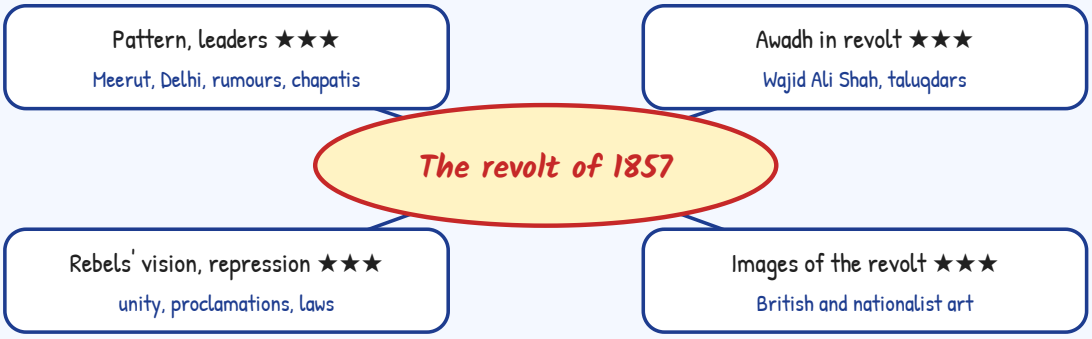
Chapter 10
Rebels and the Raj: 1857 Revolt and its Representations

Pattern of the rebellion: how the mutinies began, lines of communication, leaders and followers, rumours and prophecies, why people believed in rumours · Awadh in revolt: "a cherry that will drop into our mouth one day", deposition of the Nawab, the taluqdars, sepoys and peasants · what the rebels wanted: the vision of unity, against the symbols of oppression, alternative power · repression · images of the revolt: celebrating the British saviours, English women and the honour of Britain, vengeance and retribution, terror, nationalist imagery

Chapter map (★ = most important for exams)



Syllabus and weightage

Book III (25 marks); one of the most-asked themes: rumours and prophecies (greased cartridges, bone dust, chapatis), Awadh annexation and taluqdars, rebel proclamations and the Azamgarh proclamation, communication and coordination, repression, and visual representations (Relief of Lucknow, In Memoriam, Justice, Rani Lakshmibai). Map: centres of the revolt (Delhi, Meerut, Lucknow, Kanpur, Jhansi, Gwalior, Bareilly, Arrah, Faizabad, Azamgarh, Calcutta, Benares, Agra; shown on the map with NCERT exercise 10).

Centre	Leader
Delhi	Bahadur Shah Zafar (Mughal emperor)
Kanpur	Nana Sahib (adopted son of Peshwa Baji Rao II)
Jhansi	Rani Lakshmibai
Lucknow	Birjis Qadr (son of Wajid Ali Shah), Begum Hazrat Mahal
Arrah (Bihar)	Kunwar Singh (zamindar)
Barout (UP)	Shah Mal
Faizabad	Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah
Chhota Nagpur	Gonoo (Singhbhum, Kol tribal)

10.1 Pattern of the rebellion ★★★

How the mutinies began: late afternoon of **10 May 1857**, the sepoys in the cantonment of **Meerut** broke into mutiny; it began with the infantry and spread to the cavalry and then to the city; the ordinary people of the town and surrounding villages joined the sepoys. Sepoys captured the bell of arms (armoury and treasury), attacked white people and ransacked and burnt their bungalows and property; government buildings (record office, jail, court, post office, treasury) were destroyed. On **11 May** a group of sepoys rode into **Delhi**; they demanded to meet the Mughal emperor **Bahadur Shah**, who was not willing to challenge the British but was forced to give his support; they proclaimed him their leader. The revolt took on the character of a war of independence as the old Mughal emperor gave it legitimacy.

Sequence of events: in every cantonment the sepoys gave a signal of action (firing a gun or sounding the bugle); they seized the bell of arms and plundered the treasury; attacked government buildings (jail, treasury, telegraph office, record room, bungalows) and burnt all records; everything associated with the white man became a target. Proclamations in Hindi, Urdu and Persian appealed to Hindus and Muslims to unite and wipe out the firangis. Ordinary people joined, leading to attacks on the rich and moneylenders (and on loyal elites).

Communication between mutinies (planning and coordination): the coordinated pattern was partly because of planning: sepoys or their emissaries moved from one station to another; people were planning and talking about the rebellion. For example, during the mutiny of the 7th Awadh Irregular Cavalry in early May, the sepoys wrote to the 48th Native Infantry: "We have acted for the faith and are awaiting the 48th's orders." Sepoys in many places had councils: **Captain Hearsey** described "panchayats" held nightly in the Kanpur sepoy lines (sepoys lived together, shared lifestyle and many came from the same caste), where collective decisions were taken.

NCERT Q2 (planning and coordination): similar pattern everywhere; emissaries and letters (7th Awadh to 48th NI); sepoy panchayats at night (Kanpur); proclamations; leaders' courts (Delhi, Lucknow) with hierarchies; rumours and chapatis spread quickly.

Leaders and followers ★★★

To fight the British, leadership and organisation were required; for these the rebels turned to those who had been leaders before the British conquest. In Delhi, Bahadur Shah; in Kanpur, sepoys and the people of the town gave **Nana Sahib**, the successor to Peshwa Baji Rao II, no choice except to join as their leader; in Jhansi, the **Rani** was forced by popular pressure; in Bihar, **Kunwar Singh**, a local zamindar; in Lucknow, the displaced Nawab Wajid Ali Shah's young son **Birjis Qadr** was proclaimed the new Nawab, with his mother **Begum Hazrat Mahal** taking an active part. Often the leadership was not from the elite: local leaders emerged, urging peasants, zamindars and tribals to revolt; many were religious figures: **Shah Mal** (Barout pargana, UP; he mobilised the headmen and cultivators of chaurasi des, the 84 villages; he was killed in July 1857); **Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah** of Faizabad (prophesied the end of British rule; came to Lucknow; called "Danka Shah", the man with the drum); **Gonoo**, a tribal cultivator of Singhbhum (Chhota Nagpur) who became a rebel leader of the Kol tribals.

NCERT Q1 (why sepoys turned to erstwhile rulers): the sepoys needed leadership, organisation and legitimacy; former rulers had experience, prestige and authority, could gather resources and give a cause (restoration of the old order); many had grievances against the British (annexation, pensions stopped); having the Mughal emperor or the Peshwa's heir gave the revolt a political character and wide popular appeal.

Rumours and prophecies ★★★

- Sepoys from Meerut told Bahadur Shah about the **cartridges** of the new **Enfield rifles** said to be coated with the fat of **cows and pigs**; biting them would corrupt their caste and religion. (The rumour began in early 1857 at Dum Dum, near Calcutta.) British officials tried to explain that this was not the case but the rumour spread like wildfire.

- Another rumour: the British government had hatched a conspiracy to destroy the caste and religion of Hindus and Muslims by mixing the **dust of cow and pig bones** into the flour (atta) sold in the market; in towns and cantonments people refused to touch the atta.
- A prophecy that British rule would come to an end on the **centenary of the battle of Plassey**, 23 June 1857.
- Reports came from many parts of north India of **chapatis** being distributed from village to village: a man would come at night and give a chapati to the watchman, asking him to make five more and distribute them to the next villages; the meaning was not clear, but people read it as an omen of upheaval.

Why did people believe in the rumours? ★★★

Rumours circulate only when they resonate with deeper fears and suspicions; the rumours of 1857 begin to make sense when seen in the context of British policies from the late 1820s:

- Under **Lord William Bentinck**, the British adopted policies aimed at "reforming" Indian society by introducing **Western education, Western ideas and Western institutions**; with the cooperation of Indian reformers they set up English-medium schools, colleges and universities teaching Western sciences and liberal arts.
- They established laws to abolish customs like **sati** (1829) and permit the **remarriage of Hindu widows** (1856).
- On the plea of misgovernment and through the **Doctrine of Lapse** (Lord Dalhousie), they annexed not only states like Awadh, Jhansi and Satara but also many others; once annexed, the British introduced their own system of administration, laws, land revenue methods.
- Christian missionaries' activities; the impact of the people in north India grew (fear that the British wanted to convert them).
- In Dalhousie's time it was announced that Bahadur Shah would be the last Mughal king: after his death the family would move out of the Red Fort to another place in Delhi; Lord Canning later decided Bahadur Shah would be the last Mughal to be called "king".

So people in north India believed the British were bent on destroying everything they held dear: their religion, social customs and traditional way of life; rumours resonated with these fears.

NCERT Q3 (religious beliefs and 1857): greased cartridges and bone-dust rumours touched caste and religion; proclamations appealed to "deen and dharam"; the revolt was presented as a war in which Hindus and Muslims had to defend faith; religious leaders (Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah, Shah Mal's associates) mobilised people; missionaries and social reforms were seen as attacks on religion. But economic and political grievances (annexation, revenue, loss of status) were equally important.

10.2 Awadh in revolt ★★★

"A cherry that will drop into our mouth one day": in 1851 Governor-General **Lord Dalhousie** described the kingdom of Awadh as so. Five years later, in **1856**, the kingdom was formally annexed; the territorial annexation happened in stages: the **Subsidiary Alliance** had been imposed on Awadh in **1801** (the Nawab had to disband his military, allow British troops to be stationed and act according to the Resident's advice; the Nawab became dependent on the British). The British were interested in Awadh because its soil was good for producing indigo and cotton, and the region was ideally located to be developed into the principal market of Upper India.

Deposition of the Nawab: the annexation was on the grounds of misgovernment; the British wrongly assumed **Wajid Ali Shah** was an unpopular ruler; on the contrary, he was widely loved; when he was dethroned and exiled to Calcutta, many people followed him all the way to Kanpur, singing songs of lament ("emotional upheaval"). The widespread sense of grief at the Nawab's loss was heightened by the experience of dislocation: the removal of the Nawab led to the dissolution of the court and its culture; a whole range of people (musicians, dancers, poets, cooks, retainers, administrative officials) lost their livelihood.

Dispossessed taluqdars: the annexation displaced not just the Nawab but also the **taluqdars** of the region: before the British, taluqdars held forts and armed retainers (some had as many as 12,000 foot soldiers), enjoying considerable autonomy as long as they accepted the Nawab's suzerainty and paid revenue. After annexation, the British were unwilling to tolerate the power of the taluqdars: they were disarmed and their forts destroyed. The **Summary Settlement of 1856** proceeded on the assumption that taluqdars were interlopers with no permanent stakes in land (established through force and fraud), and wanted to remove them and settle land with the actual owners; the taluqdars lost a great deal: in pre-British times they held 67% of the villages; after the Summary Settlement this fell to 38%. The removal of taluqdars meant the breakdown of an entire social order.

Taluqdars and peasants: the ties of loyalty and patronage that had bound peasants to taluqdars were disrupted. In pre-British times taluqdars were oppressors but many appeared as generous father figures: they exacted a variety of dues from peasants but were sympathetic in times of need (e.g. they gave loans, helped in festivals). Now, under the British, peasants were directly exposed to over-assessment of revenue and inflexible methods of collection; no guarantee of remission in hard times or that collection would be postponed; no help in festivals. In areas like Awadh, where resistance was intense, the fighting was carried on by **taluqdars and peasants together**; many taluqdars were loyal to the Nawab of Awadh and joined Begum Hazrat Mahal in Lucknow to fight the British; some even remained with her in defeat.

Sepoys: the grievances of the peasants were carried into the sepoy lines, since a large number of sepoys were recruited from the villages of Awadh (the "nursery of the Bengal Army"); for decades the sepoys had complained of low levels of pay and difficulty of getting leave; by the 1850s the relationship between sepoys and their white officers had changed: officers had become racially arrogant, treating sepoys as racial inferiors and abusing them; in the 1820s officers had been friendly (took part in leisure activities, wrestled with them, fenced with them, went hunting). Distrust replaced trust: the greased cartridges issue is a classic example. The sepoys' links with the countryside: the anxieties of the families of sepoys at home (Awadh's annexation and Summary Settlement) were quickly transmitted to the sepoy lines.

NCERT Q6 (why the revolt was widespread in Awadh): annexation (1856) and the deposition of the beloved Wajid Ali Shah; dissolution of the court and loss of livelihood; dispossession of taluqdars (67% to 38%), disarming and destruction of forts; peasants faced over-assessment and inflexible collection without the old patronage; sepoys recruited from Awadh carried rural grievances, low pay and racial insult; so the sepoys, taluqdars, peasants and courtly classes all rebelled together under Begum Hazrat Mahal and Birjis Qadr.

10.3 What the rebels wanted ★★★

The rebels' view comes from a few proclamations and ishtahars (notifications) issued by rebel leaders; the British accounts portray them as bloodthirsty; but a few proclamations tell us.

The vision of unity: the rebel proclamations in 1857 repeatedly appealed to all sections of the population, irrespective of caste and creed. Many were issued by Muslim princes or in their names, but even these took into account the sentiments of Hindus; the rebellion was seen as a war in which both Hindus and Muslims had equal loss or gain. The ishtahars harked back to the pre-British Hindu-Muslim past and glorified the coexistence of different communities under the Mughal empire. The proclamation under Bahadur Shah appealed to people to join the fight under the standards of both Muhammad and Mahavir. It is remarkable that during the uprising religious divisions between Hindus and Muslims were hardly noticeable, despite British attempts to create such divisions: in December 1857 the British in Bareilly (western UP) spent Rs 50,000 to incite the Hindu population against the Muslims; the attempt failed.

Against the symbols of oppression: the proclamations completely rejected everything associated with British rule (firangi raj): the British were condemned for the lands they had annexed and the treaties they had broken; people were angry that British land revenue settlements had dispossessed landholders, foreign commerce had ruined artisans and

weavers; every aspect of British rule was attacked, and the firangi was accused of destroying a way of life that was familiar and cherished. The rebels wanted to restore that world. Rebels attacked the moneylenders and the rich as allies of the British (e.g. in many places they attacked the houses of moneylenders and burnt account books).

The Azamgarh Proclamation (25 August 1857): listed the grievances of zamindars (high revenue, auctions), merchants (monopoly of the British over trade in indigo, cloth and other goods; taxes and stamp duties), public servants (Indians given low pay, no respect, denied high posts), artisans (unemployed due to English goods) and pundits and fakirs (the British were enemies of both Hindu and Muslim religion).

The search for alternative power: once British rule collapsed, rebels in places like Delhi, Lucknow and Kanpur tried to establish some kind of structure of authority and administration: largely modelled on the Mughal administration (a hierarchy, revenue collection, payment of troops, ordering loot to stop); they planned battles; but these attempts were short-lived.

10.4 Repression ★★★

- The revolt was suppressed with the help of a series of **laws**: before sending troops, the British passed laws in May and June 1857: north India was put under **martial law**; military officers and even ordinary Britons were given the power to try and punish Indians suspected of rebellion; the ordinary processes of law and trial were suspended; rebellion was punishable by death.
- Armed with these laws and reinforcements from Britain, the British moved to crush the revolt on two fronts: **Delhi** was recaptured in **September 1857** (the campaign began in June, the city fell in late September after heavy fighting and casualties); **Kanpur and Lucknow** were taken by the British by March 1858.
- The British used military power on a gigantic scale; but in Awadh (taluqdars, peasants) they tried to break the unity by promising to give back taluqdars their estates; rebel landholders were dispossessed, loyal ones rewarded; many taluqdars died fighting, or escaped to Nepal where they died of illness or starvation.
- In the countryside, the British faced resistance: the whole population was hostile, so they used force against entire villages; e.g. they hanged rebels publicly, blew them from cannons.
- Bahadur Shah was tried and exiled to **Rangoon** (1858), where he died in 1862.

NCERT Q5 (steps to quell the uprising): martial law; special laws (trial and punishment by officers and Britons; death for rebellion); reinforcements from Britain; two-pronged campaign (Delhi, Kanpur and Lucknow); military power on a gigantic scale; dividing the rebels (promises to taluqdars, rewards for loyalists); exemplary punishments; exile of Bahadur Shah. **Q4 (measures for unity among rebels):** proclamations appealing to all castes and creeds; invoking the Mughal past; common leaders (Bahadur Shah); rejecting British attempts to divide (Bareilly); coordination through emissaries and panchayats.

10.5 Images of the revolt ★★★

Images produced by the British and by Indians (paintings, pencil drawings, etchings, posters, cartoons, bazaar prints) are an important record; we must analyse them for the intent of the artist and the viewpoint represented.

- **Celebrating the British saviours:** "**Relief of Lucknow**" by **Thomas Jones Barker** (1859): when the rebel forces besieged Lucknow, Henry Lawrence (Commissioner) gathered Christians and took refuge in the Residency; Lawrence was killed, but under Colonel Inglis the Residency held; on 25 September, James Outram and Henry Havelock cut through rebels and reinforced the garrison; 20 days later Colin Campbell broke the siege with reinforcements and rescued the garrison. Campbell, Outram and Havelock are at the centre; the painting celebrated the moment of rescue; the defence of the Residency became a symbol of British resistance, heroism and power.
- **English women and the honour of Britain:** newspaper reports of violence against women and children stirred up popular demands for revenge and retribution; artists expressed trauma: "**In Memoriam**" by **Joseph Noel Paton**

(1859): English women and children huddled in a circle, helpless and innocent, awaiting the inevitable (dishonour, violence, death); the painting evokes anger and fury. Other images show women as heroic, defending themselves: **Miss Wheeler** defending herself against rebels at Kanpur, shooting sepoys; the act seen as the defence of the honour and honourable Englishwomen; the Bible lying on the ground suggests a defence of Christianity.

- **Vengeance and retribution:** "**Justice**" (a picture published in Punch, September 1857: an allegorical woman with a sword and shield, trampling rebels, while Indian women and children cower); demands for revenge grew; pictures and cartoons showed brutal executions (rebels blown from guns, hanged).
- **Terror:** public executions to create terror; the cartoon "The Clemency of Canning" in Punch mocked Governor-General Canning for being lenient (calls for revenge were so strong that his attempts at mildness were mocked; he was called "Clemency Canning").
- **Nationalist imagery:** as the national movement developed, 1857 became the "**First War of Independence**" (V.D. Savarkar, 1909); leaders such as **Rani Lakshmibai** were represented as heroic figures leading soldiers into battle (a sword in one hand, reins of the horse in the other), symbolising determination to resist British rule; Subhadra Kumari Chauhan's poem "Khoob ladi mardani woh to Jhansi wali rani thi"; children's books and folk songs glorified the rebels.



Fig. 10.10 "Relief of Lucknow", Thomas Jones Barker, 1859



Fig. 10.11 "In Memoriam", Joseph Noel Paton, 1859



Fig. 10.12 Miss Wheeler defending herself against sepoys in Kanpur



Fig. 10.13 "Justice", Punch, 12 September 1857



Fig. 10.14 "The British Lion's Vengeance on the Bengal Tiger", Punch, 1857

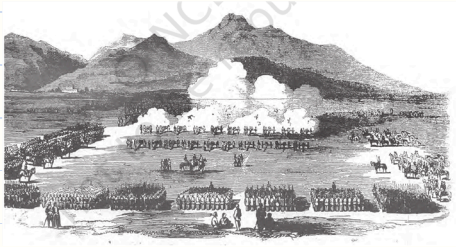


Fig. 10.15 Execution of mutineers in Peshawar: blowing from the guns, Illustrated London News, 3 October 1857



Fig. 10.16 Execution of mutinous sepoys in Peshawar, Illustrated London News, 3 October 1857



Fig. 10.17 "The Clemency of Canning", Punch, 24 October 1857



Fig. 10.18 Rani Lakshmibai as a warrior on horseback (film poster)

(Pictures from NCERT Themes in Indian History III, Theme 10)

NCERT exercises, solved ★★★

7. What did the rebels want? How did the visions of groups differ?

Ans. Overall: an end to British rule (firangi raj) and the restoration of the pre-British order, with Hindu-Muslim unity; rejection of annexations, broken treaties, revenue settlements, foreign commerce, attacks on religion. Groups: sepoys wanted respect, better pay, protection of caste and religion; former rulers (Nana Sahib, Lakshmibai, Begum Hazrat Mahal) wanted their kingdoms, titles and pensions restored; taluqdars and zamindars wanted their lands and power back and lower revenue; peasants wanted relief from revenue and moneylenders; artisans wanted jobs (against English goods); religious leaders wanted protection of faith; merchants wanted freedom from British monopolies. The Azamgarh proclamation shows these different demands.

8. What do visual representations tell us? How are they analysed?

The pictures named in the answer (Figs. 10.10–10.18) are shown in section 10.5 above; two of them are repeated here.



"Justice", Punch, 1857 (Fig. 10.13)



Rani Lakshmibai (Fig. 10.18)

Ans. They show the different viewpoints: British images (Relief of Lucknow, In Memoriam, Miss Wheeler, Justice, Punch cartoons) celebrated British heroes, showed women's suffering to demand revenge and justified brutal repression; nationalist images (Rani Lakshmibai) glorified rebels and inspired the

freedom struggle. Historians analyse who produced them, for whom, when and why; the symbols used; what is emphasised or left out; how they shaped public opinion; and compare them with texts.

9. One visual and one text: victor and vanquished.

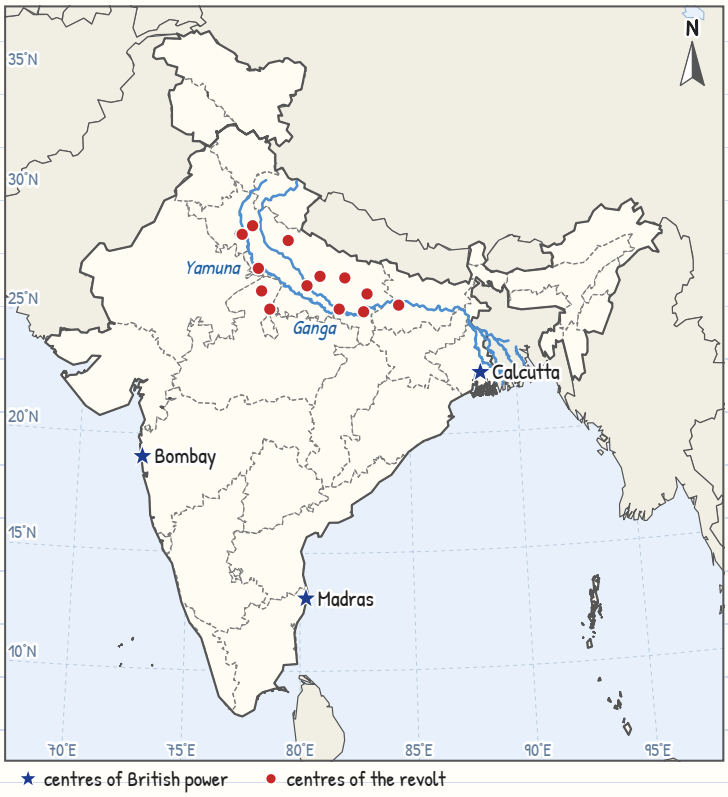


The visual used in the answer: "Relief of Lucknow" (NCERT Fig. 10.10)

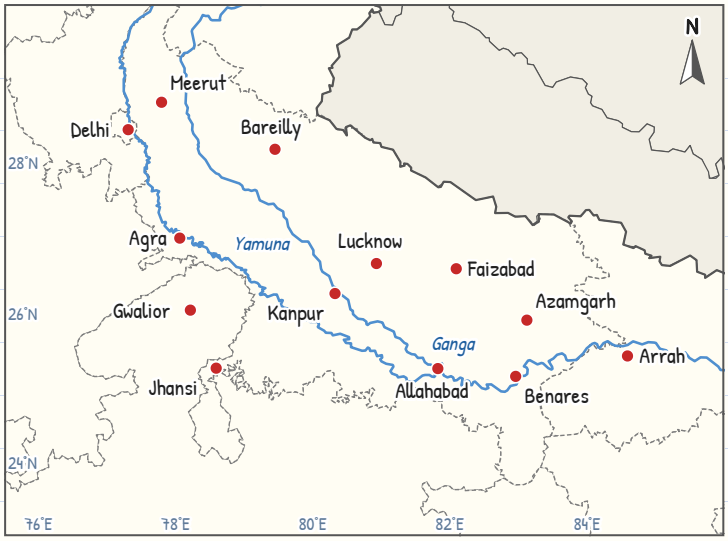
Ans. Visual: "Relief of Lucknow" (victor's view): British commanders as heroes, the rebels absent or defeated, the rescue as triumph of British power. Text: the Azamgarh proclamation (vanquished): lists the oppression of zamindars, merchants, servants, artisans and religious leaders by the British, justifying revolt. Together they show opposite perspectives on the same events.

10. On an outline map of India, mark Calcutta (Kolkata), Bombay (Mumbai) and Madras (Chennai), three major centres of British power in 1857. Refer to Maps 1 and 2 and plot the areas where the revolt was most widespread. How close or far were these areas from the colonial cities?

Ans. Centres of British power: Calcutta, Bombay, Madras. Revolt most widespread in the north: Meerut, Delhi, Agra, Kanpur, Lucknow, Jhansi, Gwalior, Bareilly, Allahabad, Benares, Arrah, Azamgarh, Faizabad; these were far from Bombay and Madras and fairly far from Calcutta.



NCERT map work: the three centres of British power in 1857 and the main centres of the revolt in the north (named on the enlarged map below)



The same centres of the revolt enlarged: the north (Delhi to Arrah)

Important exam questions

What was the Subsidiary Alliance? 2

> **Ans.** A system devised by Lord Wellesley (1798): allies had to disband their armies, accept British troops (paying for them) and a Resident, and not ally with others; imposed on Awadh in 1801.

Why were sepoys unhappy with their officers by the 1850s? 2

> **Ans.** Officers had become racially arrogant and abusive, unlike the friendly officers of the 1820s; low pay and difficulty getting leave.

CBSE board questions 2024–2026, fully solved ★★★

Every question on this theme from the 16 board papers of 2024 (61/1–5), 2025 (61/1, 2, 4–7) and 2026 (61/1–5), with complete answers based on the marking schemes and NCERT. Repeated questions are shown once with all paper codes.

Multiple choice questions (1 mark)

CBSE 2025 · 61/1/1 Match leaders of the Revolt of 1857 with regions: a. Shah Mal b. Kunwar Singh c. Birjis Qadr d. Nana Sahib — I. Lucknow II. Kanpur III. Baraut IV. Arrah. (A) II III IV I (B) III IV I II (C) III II I IV (D) IV II III I 1

> **Ans.** (B) Shah Mal – Baraut pargana (III), Kunwar Singh – Arrah (IV), Birjis Qadr – Lucknow (I), Nana Sahib – Kanpur (II).

CBSE 2025 · 61/1/1 A key feature of the Subsidiary Alliance introduced by Lord Wellesley in 1798: (A) Free trade (B) Maintenance of a native army by the British (C) Imposition of Western customs (D) Protection of native territory by the British 1

> **Ans.** (D) The British protected the ally's territory with their own forces stationed there, paid for by the ally, who could not keep its own armed forces or make alliances without British permission.

CBSE 2025 · 61/2/1 Odd one out (place – leader in 1857): (A) Arrah – Kunwar Singh (B) Baraut – Shah Mal (C) Singhbhum – Gonoo (D) Hyderabad – Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah 1

> **Ans.** (D) Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah fought at Lucknow (he was from Faizabad), not Hyderabad.

CBSE 2025 · 61/2/1 The Revolt of 1857 marked the end of the ___ dynasty in India. (A) Maratha (B) Rajput (C) Scindia (D) Mughal

Ans. (D) Mughal. Bahadur Shah Zafar was tried and exiled to Rangoon (1858).

CBSE 2025 · 61/4/1; CBSE 2024 · 61/3/1 Who wrote the line "Khoob ladi mardani, woh to Jhansi wali rani thi"? (A) Mahadevi Verma (B) Harivansh Rai Bachchan (C) Subhadra Kumari Chauhan (D) Ramdhari Singh Dinkar

Ans. (C) Subhadra Kumari Chauhan.

CBSE 2025 · 61/4/1 Nana Saheb : Kanpur; Kunwar Singh : ___ (A) Gwalior (B) Meerut (C) Singhbhum (D) Arrah

Ans. (D) Arrah (Bihar), where the zamindar Kunwar Singh led the revolt.

CBSE 2025 · 61/5/1 Assertion (A): Wellesley's Subsidiary Alliance significantly weakened the Indian princely states. Reason (R): Indian rulers lost military autonomy under it. (A) Both true, R explains A (B) Both true, R not explanation (C) A true, R false (D) A false, R true

Ans. (A) Allies could not keep their own armed forces and had to pay for British troops, so they lost power and became dependent.

CBSE 2025 · 61/5/1 Which British policy caused discontent among Indian soldiers before 1857? (A) Subsidiary Alliance (B) Doctrine of Lapse (C) Enfield rifles with greased cartridges (D) Western education

Ans. (C) Sepoys feared the cartridges, which had to be bitten, were greased with fat of cows and pigs.

CBSE 2025 · 61/6/1 Why were the British keen to annex Awadh? (A) to suppress nationalism (B) to get Awadh's rich resources (C) control in the west (D) military control in central India

Ans. (B) Dalhousie wanted Awadh's fertile soil, ideal for indigo and cotton, and its position as a market (annexed 1856 on grounds of misgovernment).

CBSE 2025 · 61/6/1 The local leader of Singhbhum who led cultivators in the Revolt of 1857: (A) Shah Mal (B) Birjis Qadr (C) Gonoo (D) Kunwar Singh

Ans. (C) Gonoo, a tribal cultivator of Singhbhum (Chotanagpur), who led the Kol tribals.

CBSE 2025 · 61/7/1 Why was Awadh called the "nursery of the Bengal Army" in the 1850s? (A) resistance to British rule (B) major recruiting ground for the Bengal Army (C) British training centre (D) base for British leaders

Ans. (B) A large number of sepoys came from Awadh's villages; their grievances about the annexation and land settlement linked them with peasants.

CBSE 2025 · 61/7/1 Arrah (Bihar) : Kunwar Singh; ___ : Birjis Qadr. (A) Awadh (B) Kanpur (C) Gwalior (D) Lucknow

Ans. (D) Lucknow: the young son of the deposed Nawab Wajid Ali Shah was proclaimed the new Nawab.

CBSE 2026 · 61/1/1 Why was the Revolt of 1857 a serious threat to the British? (A) hurt global trade (B) shook the world's colonial system (C) united all sections of Indian society (D) led to defeat in south India

Ans. (C) Sepoys, peasants, zamindars, taluqdars, princes and religious leaders of different communities joined together.

CBSE 2026 · 61/1/1 Choose the correct pair (local leader – region) of 1857: (A) Gonoo – Chotanagpur (B) Shah Mal – Hyderabad (C) Kunwar Singh – Kanpur (D) Ahmadullah Shah – Arrah

> **Ans. (A) Gonoo – Chotanagpur (Singhbhum).** Shah Mal – Baraut; Kunwar Singh – Arrah; Ahmadullah Shah – Lucknow/Faizabad.

CBSE 2026 · 61/2/1 Odd one out (officer – policy): (A) Dalhousie – Doctrine of Lapse (B) Cornwallis – Permanent Settlement (C) Wellesley – Western education (D) Hardinge – Enfield rifles

> **Ans. (C)** Wellesley is linked to the Subsidiary Alliance (1798); Western education is associated with Bentinck.

CBSE 2026 · 61/2/1 Which statements about Nana Sahib are correct? I. He was the successor (adopted son) of Peshwa Baji Rao II II. He joined the revolt from Kanpur III. His rebellion collapsed early in 1857 IV. He went to Nepal in 1857. (A) I, III (B) II, IV (C) III, IV (D) I and II

> **Ans. (D) Only I and II.** He fought until late 1857 and fled to Nepal later (1859).

CBSE 2026 · 61/3/1 Which was not a major centre of the Revolt of 1857? (A) Delhi (B) Jhansi (C) Arrah (D) Bombay

> **Ans. (D) Bombay.**

CBSE 2026 · 61/3/1 Assertion (A): The sepoys proclaimed Bahadur Shah Zafar their leader in 1857. Reason (R): His acceptance gave legitimacy to the revolt. (A) Both true, R explains A (B) Both true, R not explanation (C) A true, R false (D) A false, R true

> **Ans. (A)** The Mughal name was a symbol of authority across north India.

CBSE 2026 · 61/4/1 Which was not a major centre of the Revolt of 1857? (A) Kanpur (B) Meerut (C) Lucknow (D) Mysore

> **Ans. (D) Mysore.**

CBSE 2026 · 61/4/1 Assertion (A): In the 1850s Awadh was called the "nursery of the Bengal Army". Reason (R): A large number of sepoys were recruited there from all over India. (A) Both true, R explains A (B) Both true, R not explanation (C) A true, R false (D) A false, R true

> **Ans. (C)** A is true, but R is false: the sepoys were recruited from the villages of **Awadh** itself, not from all over India.

CBSE 2026 · 61/5/1 Which was not a major centre of the Revolt of 1857? (A) Gwalior (B) Arrah (C) Singhbhum (D) Hyderabad

> **Ans. (D) Hyderabad.**

CBSE 2026 · 61/5/1 Assertion (A): The British easily put down the Revolt of 1857. Reason (R): The British passed a series of laws to quell the insurgency. (A) Both true, R explains A (B) Both true, R not explanation (C) A true, R false (D) A false, R true

> **Ans. (D)** A is false: the British had a difficult time; it took them about two years of fighting, especially in Awadh. R is true: martial law was imposed across north India and military officers (and ordinary Britons) got powers to try and punish rebels.

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CBSE 2024 · 61/1/1 Match governors-general with roles: 1. Wellesley 2. Dalhousie 3. Bentinck 4. Hardinge — (i) annexation policies (ii) Subsidiary Alliance (iii) greased cartridges (Enfield rifle) (iv) reformative policies. (A) 1-iii 2-ii 3-i 4-iv (B) 1-iv 2-iii 3-ii 4-i (C) 1-ii 2-i 3-iv 4-iii (D) 1-i 2-iv 3-iii 4-ii 1

Ans. (C)

CBSE 2024 · 61/1/1 Which rebel took over the bungalow of a British official and turned it into a "hall of justice" in 1857 (UP)? (A) Shah Mal (B) Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah (C) Gonoo (D) Kunwar Singh 1

Ans. (A) Shah Mal of Baraut pargana.

CBSE 2024 · 61/2/1 Arrange chronologically: I. Summary Settlement in Awadh II. Subsidiary Alliance in Awadh III. Bentinck's reforms IV. Azamgarh Proclamation. (A) II, III, I, IV (B) III, II, IV, I (C) I, III, IV, II (D) IV, I, II, III 1

Ans. (A) II, III, I, IV: Subsidiary Alliance imposed on Awadh (1801) → Bentinck's reforms (1828–35) → Summary Settlement (1856) → Azamgarh Proclamation (25 August 1857).

CBSE 2024 · 61/2/1 Match leaders of 1857 with centres: 1. Nana Sahib 2. Kunwar Singh 3. Wajid Ali Shah 4. Birjis Qadr — (i) Awadh (ii) Kanpur (iii) Bihar (iv) Lucknow. (A) 1-iii 2-i 3-ii 4-iv (B) 1-ii 2-iii 3-i 4-iv (C) 1-iv 2-ii 3-iii 4-i (D) 1-i 2-iv 3-ii 4-iii 1

Ans. (B)

CBSE 2024 · 61/3/1 Match 1857 leaders with regions: 1. Kunwar Singh 2. Shah Mal 3. Birjis Qadr 4. Gonoo — (i) Singhbhum (ii) Arrah (iii) Baraut (iv) Lucknow. (A) 1-i 2-ii 3-iii 4-iv (B) 1-iii 2-ii 3-iv 4-i (C) 1-ii 2-iii 3-iv 4-i (D) 1-iv 2-ii 3-iii 4-i 1

Ans. (C)

CBSE 2024 · 61/4/1 Correctly matched (region – leader of 1857): (A) Kanpur – Kunwar Singh (B) Bihar – Gonoo (C) Lucknow – Birjis Qadr (D) Singhbhum – Nana Sahib 1

Ans. (C) Lucknow – Birjis Qadr.

CBSE 2024 · 61/5/1 The leader of the Revolt of 1857 from Bihar: (A) Shah Mal (B) Kunwar Singh (C) Gonoo (D) Nana Sahib 1

Ans. (B) Kunwar Singh of Arrah (Jagdishpur).

CBSE 2024 · 61/5/1 Who described Awadh as "a cherry that will drop into our mouth one day"? (A) Cornwallis (B) Wellesley (C) Dalhousie (D) Canning 1

Ans. (C) Lord Dalhousie (1851).

CBSE 2024 · 61/5/1 Where did the mutiny break out on 10 May 1857? (A) Barrackpore (B) Delhi (C) Meerut cantonment (D) Lucknow 1

Ans. (C) Meerut cantonment.

Short answer questions (3 marks)

CBSE 2025 · 61/1/1 "The rebellion of 1857 was seen as a war in which both Hindus and Muslims had equally to lose or gain." Analyse. 3

Ans. (1) Rebel proclamations (ishtahars) appealed to all sections of the population irrespective of community. (2) They harked back to the pre-British past of Hindu-Muslim coexistence under the Mughal empire; the proclamation under Bahadur Shah called people to fight under the standards of both

Muhammad and Mahavir. (3) Muslim princes addressed Hindu sentiments, and British attempts to divide the communities failed (e.g. in Bareilly, 1857); fear that missionaries were converting both Hindus and Muslims united them.

CBSE 2025 · 61/7/1 How has Indian imagery preserved Rani Laxmibai's contribution in the Revolt of 1857? Explain. 3

Ans. (1) She is portrayed in popular paintings and images as a heroic figure in male military clothes, riding a horse with a sword in one hand and the reins in the other, symbolising determination to resist injustice. (2) Nationalist imagery in the 20th century used such pictures to inspire people. (3) Poems (Subhadra Kumari Chauhan's "Khoob ladi mardani..."), folk songs, statues and novels keep her memory alive as a symbol of courage and resistance to British rule.

CBSE 2026 · 61/2/1 (a) Explain the events of 10 May 1857 at Meerut. OR (b) Explain the events of 11 May 1857 at the Red Fort, Delhi. 3

Ans. **(a)** (1) In the afternoon of 10 May 1857 the sepoys at the Meerut cantonment broke into mutiny, beginning with the native infantry and spreading to the cavalry and then to the city. (2) Ordinary people of the town and surrounding villages joined; the sepoys captured the bell of arms (armoury), attacked and killed white officers and their families, and set fire to the bungalows and records. (3) As night fell, a group of sepoys rode off towards Delhi.

(b) (1) Early on 11 May the sepoys from Meerut reached the gates of the Red Fort and demanded to meet the Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah. (2) The emperor at first was not willing, but some sepoys entered the palace; meanwhile Europeans were killed in Delhi, and rich Delhi people were attacked and looted. (3) Bahadur Shah, having little choice, agreed to be the nominal leader of the uprising, giving it legitimacy; the revolt then spread across north India.

CBSE 2026 · 61/3/1 How did Indian art and literature depict the Revolt of 1857 as the first war of independence? Explain. 3

Ans. (1) Nationalists in the 20th century drew inspiration from the revolt; V.D. Savarkar called it the "First War of Independence", in which all sections fought together against imperial rule. (2) Leaders such as Rani Lakshmibai were depicted as heroic figures in paintings, poems (Subhadra Kumari Chauhan) and stories; she was shown in men's clothing, riding a horse with a sword. (3) Such art and literature kept alive the memory of the revolt and created a sense of a shared struggle, used to inspire later movements.

CBSE 2024 · 61/1/1 (a) Why was the Revolt of 1857 especially widespread in Awadh? Explain. OR (b) Why did rebel proclamations in 1857 appeal for unity among all sections of the population? Explain. 3

Ans. **(a)** (1) Awadh was annexed in 1856 on grounds of misgovernment and Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, who was popular, was exiled to Calcutta, causing emotional upheaval; many lost livelihoods (musicians, dancers, poets, cooks, retainers, officials). (2) The Summary Settlement (1856) dispossessed the taluqdars of their lands, forts and armies; peasants too were not better off as revenue demand was high. (3) Most sepoys of the Bengal Army came from Awadh villages ("nursery of the Bengal Army"); their grievances about pay, allowances and the fear of loss of caste linked them with the peasants, so the revolt became a popular rebellion.

(b) (1) The rebels wanted all sections of people, irrespective of caste and creed, to rise against the

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common enemy, the British. (2) Proclamations recalled the pre-British past of Hindu-Muslim coexistence under the Mughals and called people to fight under the standards of both Muhammad and Mahavir. (3) British rule was seen as a threat to everybody's religion, caste, property and livelihood (zamindars, merchants, artisans, peasants), so a united front was needed.

CBSE 2024 · 61/2/1 Describe any three sources for knowing about the Revolt of 1857. 3

Ans. (1) **Rebel sources**: proclamations, ishtahars and arzis (petitions) of rebel leaders and sepoys, though few survive. (2) **Official British records**: letters, diaries, autobiographies and reports of British officials, which reflect their fears and biases. (3) **Pictorial images**: paintings, pencil drawings, etchings, posters, cartoons and bazaar prints by both British and Indians (e.g. "Relief of Lucknow" by Thomas Jones Barker, "In Memoriam" by Joseph Noel Paton; nationalist images of Rani Lakshmibai), and newspapers.

CBSE 2024 · 61/4/1 (a) How did rumours move people to revolt in 1857? Explain. **OR** (b) Why were the British so keen to acquire Awadh? Explain. 3

Ans. **(a)** (1) The rumour that the new Enfield rifle cartridges were greased with the fat of cows and pigs, and that biting them would corrupt caste and religion, spread among sepoys (e.g. at Dum Dum and Barrackpore); British explanations were not believed. (2) Rumours that the British had mixed bone dust of cows and pigs into the flour (atta) sold in markets, and that they were bent on converting Hindus and Muslims to Christianity, spread; towns and cantonments refused to touch the atta. (3) Prophecies that British rule would end on the centenary of the Battle of Plassey (23 June 1857) also spread; rumours were believed because they reflected deeper fears created by British policies (reforms, annexations, missionary activity, revenue settlements).

(b) (1) Dalhousie described Awadh as "a cherry that will drop into our mouth one day"; the Subsidiary Alliance (1801) had already reduced the Nawab's power. (2) The British wanted Awadh's fertile soil, good for growing indigo and cotton, and saw it as a big market for British goods. (3) By 1850 they had conquered most of India; Awadh's annexation (1856, on grounds of misgovernment) completed territorial expansion of the empire.

CBSE 2024 · 61/5/1 (a) Under what circumstances did Bahadur Shah Zafar bless the rebellion of 1857? Explain. **OR** (b) Explain any three sources for knowing about the Revolt of 1857. 3

Ans. **(a)** (1) On 11 May 1857 sepoys from Meerut reached the Red Fort; it was Ramzan and the old emperor had just finished prayers. (2) The sepoys said they had come after killing Englishmen at Meerut because the cartridges coated with fat of cows and pigs corrupted the faith of Hindus and Muslims; another group entered Delhi and ordinary people joined; Europeans were killed and Delhi went out of British control. (3) Some sepoys entered the fort without observing court etiquette and demanded his blessings; surrounded, he had no option but to comply, and the revolt acquired legitimacy in his name.

(b) See the answer on sources of the Revolt of 1857 above (rebel proclamations, ishtahars and arzis; British official records, letters and diaries; pictorial images and newspapers).

Source-based questions (4 marks)

CBSE 2025 · 61/4/1 *Source: Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah* — educated in Hyderabad, he became a preacher; in 1856 he moved from village to village in a palanquin with drumbeaters, preaching jehad against the British, so he was called Danka Shah; British officials panicked as thousands followed him; stopped from preaching in Lucknow (1856), jailed in Faizabad (1857); on release, the mutinous 22nd Native Infantry elected him leader; he fought at Chinhat, where Henry Lawrence's forces were defeated; many believed he was invincible and had magical powers.

33.1 Why was he called Danka Shah? (1) 33.2 How did British officials react to his growing influence? (1) 33.3 To what extent did his actions reflect resistance against British rule? (2) 4

> **Ans.** 33.1 He moved with drumbeaters (danka) in front of his palanquin.
> 33.2 They panicked; the police stopped him preaching in Lucknow and he was jailed in Faizabad.
> 33.3 (i) He mobilised thousands through religious appeal and was elected leader by rebel sepoys, linking popular and military revolt. (ii) He defeated the British at Chinhat; the belief in his invincibility shows how religious leaders gave the revolt authority and mass support.

CBSE 2025 · 61/5/1 *Source: Two rebels of 1857 – Shah Mal* — from a large village in pargana Baraut (UP), of a Jat clan whose ties spread over chaurasee des (84 villages); the British revenue demand was high and inflexible, and cultivators were losing land to traders and moneylenders; Shah Mal mobilised headmen and cultivators, moving at night from village to village; rebels plundered moneylenders, displaced proprietors reoccupied lands, they attacked government buildings, destroyed a bridge and dug up roads, sent supplies to sepoys in Delhi and cut communications with Meerut; acknowledged as Raja, he turned an English officer's bungalow into a "hall of justice" and set up an intelligence network; killed in July 1857.

33.1 How did his leadership spread the rebellion? (1) 33.2 How did it challenge British authority? (1) 33.3 How does his "hall of justice" reflect his vision of governance? (2) 4

> **Ans.** 33.1 He mobilised headmen and cultivators of the 84 villages, moving at night from village to village and urging them to rebel.
> 33.2 His men attacked government buildings, destroyed bridges and roads (symbols of British rule), supplied the sepoys in Delhi and cut communication between British headquarters and Meerut.
> 33.3 (i) He set up an alternative authority that settled disputes and gave justice, showing that the rebels wanted to replace British rule with their own. (ii) It reflected a just, local, accessible rule; people felt that "firangi raj was over and their raj had come".

CBSE 2025 · 61/6/1 *Source: What taluqdars thought* — Hanwant Singh, Raja of Kalakankar (near Rae Bareli), sheltered a British officer in the mutiny and escorted him to safety, then said: "Sahib, your countrymen came … and drove out our King. You sent officers to examine the titles to estates; at one blow you took from me lands which from time immemorial had been in my family. I submitted. … The people of the land rose against you. You came to me whom you had despoiled. I have saved you. But now I march at the head of my retainers to Lucknow to try and drive you from the country."

33.1 How did he express dissatisfaction with the British? (1) 33.2 Whom did he mean by "the people of the land"? (1) 33.3 How does his statement reflect the sentiments of taluqdars? (2) 4

> **Ans.** 33.1 He complained that the British drove out the king of Awadh and seized his ancestral lands at one blow through the land settlement.

33.2 The common people of Awadh (peasants and sepoys) who rose in revolt against British rule.
33.3 (i) Taluqdars lost estates, forts and armed retainers under the Summary Settlement of 1856, which removed them and settled revenue directly with peasants, so they joined the revolt to regain their power and status. (ii) Their loyalty to the deposed Nawab and their hurt honour show that the annexation of Awadh broke a whole social order.

CBSE 2026 · 61/1/1 *Source: What taluqdars thought* (Hanwant Singh of Kalakankar's words to the British officer he had saved: "At one blow you took from me lands which from time immemorial had been in my family … now I march at the head of my retainers to Lucknow to try and drive you from the country").
33.1 Explain Hanwant Singh's anguish. (1) 33.2 How had the taluqdars been supported by the rulers (Nawabs)? (1) 33.3 Explain two causes of the taluqdars' dissatisfaction with British rule. (2) 4

Ans. 33.1 The British had driven out the king of Awadh and taken away his ancestral lands at one blow.
33.2 Under the Nawabs taluqdars held estates and forts, kept armed retainers and enjoyed autonomy as long as they accepted the Nawab's suzerainty and paid revenue.
33.3 (i) After annexation (1856) the British disbanded their armies and destroyed their forts. (ii) The Summary Settlement of 1856 removed taluqdars wherever possible and settled revenue directly with peasants, so they lost land, power and honour (in Awadh their share of villages fell from 67% to 38%).

CBSE 2026 · 61/4/1 *Source: What the sepoys thought* — an arzi (petition) of rebel sepoys: their forefathers served the British, who conquered every place with Indian sacrifice, yet sepoys never revolted; in 1857 the British issued new cartridges mixed with fat of cows and pigs and atta mixed with powdered bones; the troopers of the 3rd Light Cavalry refused to bite the cartridges; the British paraded the regiments surrounded by European troops and guns and jailed 84 troopers in irons to frighten others; so the sepoys and their countrymen united to fight for the preservation of their faith; "If the religion of a Hindoo or Mussalman is lost, what remains in the world?"
33.1 How did the sepoys justify their rebellion? (1) 33.2 How did the British introduce the new cartridges? (1) 33.3 Why did the sepoys and Indian chiefs work together? (2) 4

Ans. 33.1 As a fight to preserve their religion and faith, which the British were trying to destroy through polluted cartridges and atta.
33.2 They were issued to every regiment with orders to bite them; when the 3rd Light Cavalry refused, the troopers were jailed in irons to frighten others.
33.3 (i) Both Hindus and Muslims feared the loss of religion and caste; a shared threat united them. (ii) Rajas and chiefs who shared their faith and had their own grievances against British rule joined, giving the revolt leadership and strength.

CBSE 2026 · 61/S/1 *Source: The Revolt of 1857* — on 10 May the Meerut sepoys mutinied, joined by townspeople and villagers; they captured the bell of arms, attacked whites, burnt bungalows, destroyed the record office, jail, court, post office and treasury, cut the telegraph to Delhi and rode to Delhi; on 11 May (Ramzan) they reached the Red Fort, told Bahadur Shah they had killed the Englishmen at Meerut because of cartridges coated with cow and pig fat that corrupted the faith of Hindus and Muslims; Delhi's people joined, Europeans were killed and the rich looted; Bahadur Shah, surrounded, gave his blessing, so the revolt acquired legitimacy in the Mughal emperor's name.

33.1 Why was Bahadur Shah's involvement important for the rebels? (1) 33.2 How did the rebels' actions in Delhi show a breakdown of British control? (1) 33.3 How did the sepoys and religious sentiments play a role? (2) 4

> **Ans.** 33.1 It gave the revolt legitimacy, as it could be carried on in the name of the Mughal emperor, a symbol of authority across north India.
>
> 33.2 Europeans were killed in large numbers, the rich were looted, and the city passed into the hands of sepoys and people: Delhi had gone out of British control.
>
> 33.3 (i) The sepoys started the revolt and led the march to Delhi, targeting symbols of British rule. (ii) The fear that the greased cartridges would corrupt the faith of both Hindus and Muslims united them and drew ordinary people into the revolt.

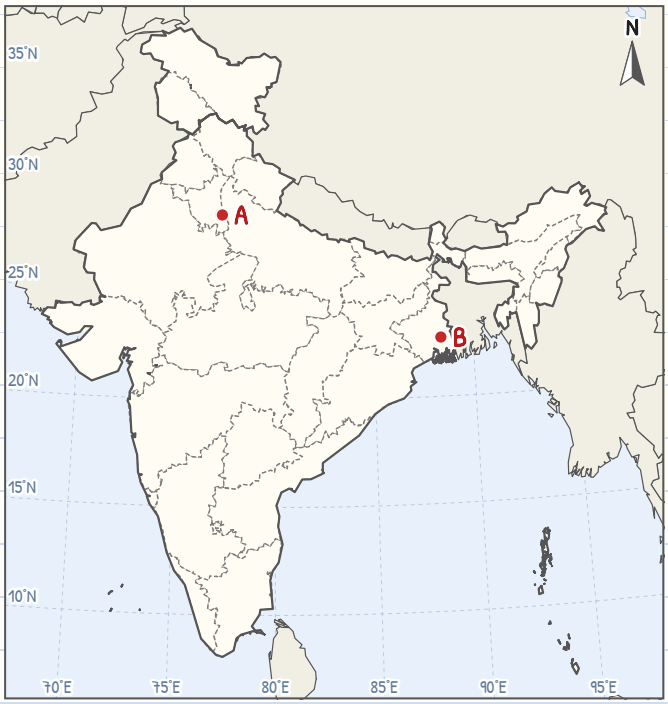
CBSE 2024 · 61/3/1 *Source: The Nawab has left* — a song mourned the ruler who had to leave his motherland: "Noble and peasant all wept together / and all the world wept and wailed / Alas! The chief has bidden adieu to his country and gone abroad."

33.1 Immediate impact of the removal of the Nawab. (1) 33.2 Why was there emotional upheaval? (1) 33.3 How did the annexation of Awadh fit into British colonial strategy? (2) 4

> **Ans.** 33.1 People of all classes mourned; many (musicians, dancers, poets, cooks, retainers, officials) lost their livelihood, and the whole society was disrupted.
>
> 33.2 Nawab Wajid Ali Shah was popular and widely loved; his removal (exile to Calcutta) was seen as an insult and the loss of a cultural world.
>
> 33.3 (i) Lord Dalhousie annexed Awadh in 1856 on the plea of misgovernment, part of the policy of expansion (Subsidiary Alliance, Doctrine of Lapse). (ii) The British wanted Awadh's fertile soil (good for indigo and cotton) and its position as a market for British goods (the "jewel of the cherry").

Map questions

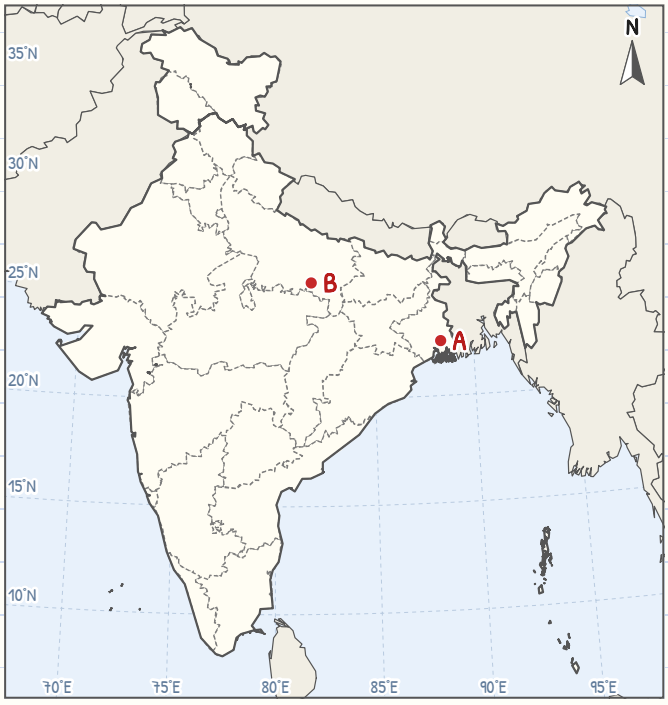
CBSE 2025 · 61/1/1; CBSE 2025 · 61/4/1 Two centres of the Revolt of 1857 are marked A and B on the map: identify them. (Visually impaired: write any two important centres of the revolt.)



Map as in CBSE 2025 (61/1/1 and 61/4/1): A and B marked at the same places as in the paper

Ans. A = **Delhi**; B = **Barrackpore** (near Calcutta). Other centres: Meerut, Lucknow, Kanpur, Jhansi, Arrah, Gwalior, Bareilly, Awadh. 2

CBSE 2025 · 61/6/1 Two places under British control in 1857 are marked A and B: identify them.



Map as in CBSE 2025 (61/6/1): A and B marked at the same places as in the paper

Ans. A = **Calcutta** (the scheme also accepts Barrackpore, which is next to Calcutta); B = **Allahabad**. Others under British control: Bombay, Madras, Surat, Agra, Patna. 2

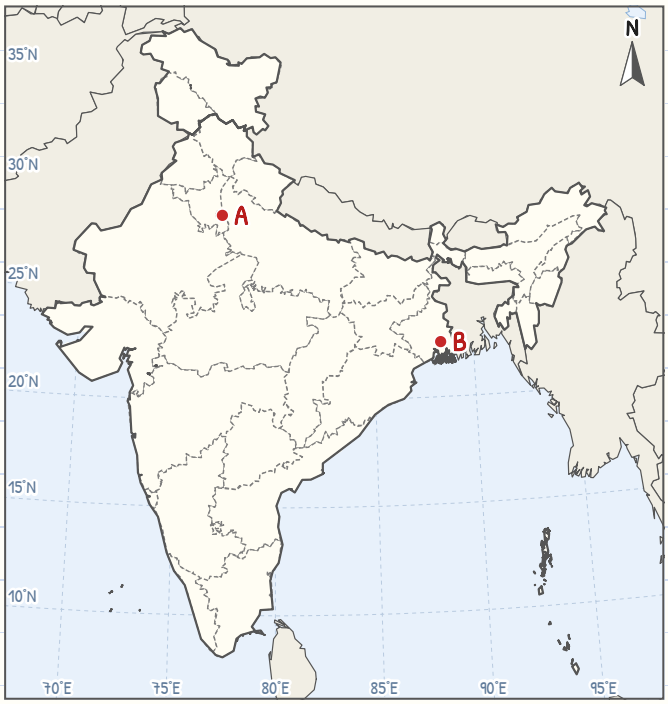
CBSE 2024 · 61/3/1 Two places related to British control in 1857 marked A and B: identify them. (VI: two cities under British control in 1857.)



Map as in CBSE 2024 (61/3/1): A and B marked at the same places as in the paper

Ans. A = **Delhi**; B = **Jhansi** (as per the marking scheme). *Note: Delhi and Jhansi were centres of the revolt that the British recaptured (Delhi in September 1857, Jhansi in April 1858); the scheme accepts these names for the two marked dots, which are at Delhi and Jhansi on the paper's map.* VI: any two places under British control, e.g. Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Allahabad. 2

CBSE 2024 · 61/4/1 Two centres of the Revolt of 1857 marked A and B: identify them.



Map as in CBSE 2024 (61/4/1): A and B marked at the same places as in the paper

Ans. A = **Delhi**; B = **Calcutta**. 2

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Practice set

1. When and where did the revolt begin?
2. Who described Awadh as "a cherry"?
3. What was the Summary Settlement's effect on taluqdars?
4. Who led the revolt in Lucknow?
5. Who painted the Relief of Lucknow?
6. Who called 1857 the First War of Independence?

Answers

Ans. 1. 10 May 1857, Meerut.
2. Lord Dalhousie (1851).
3. Their share of villages fell from 67% to 38%; disarmed, forts destroyed.
4. Begum Hazrat Mahal and Birjis Qadr.
5. Thomas Jones Barker.
6. V.D. Savarkar.

Multiple choice: 20 MCQs

1. Sepoys at Meerut mutinied on:
   (a) 23 June 1857 (b) 11 May 1857 (c) 10 May 1857 (d) 29 March 1857

2. The rebels proclaimed as their leader in Delhi:
   (a) Bahadur Shah Zafar (b) Nana Sahib (c) Wajid Ali Shah (d) Tatya Tope

3. Panchayats in the sepoy lines at Kanpur were reported by:
   (a) Henry Lawrence (b) Colin Campbell (c) Outram (d) Captain Hearsey

4. Shah Mal led the revolt in:
   (a) Arrah (b) Barout, UP (c) Faizabad (d) Singhbhum

5. "Danka Shah" was:
   (a) Shah Mal (b) Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah (c) Gonoo (d) Kunwar Singh

6. Kunwar Singh was a zamindar of:
   (a) Awadh (b) Delhi (c) Jhansi (d) Arrah, Bihar

7. The Enfield cartridges were rumoured to be coated with fat of:
   (a) cows and pigs (b) goats (c) sheep (d) buffaloes

8. British rule was prophesied to end on the centenary of:
   (a) Buxar (b) Panipat (c) Plassey (d) the EIC charter

9. The Doctrine of Lapse is associated with:
   (a) Wellesley (b) Bentinck (c) Canning (d) Dalhousie

10. Awadh was annexed in:
    (a) 1801 (b) 1856 (c) 1851 (d) 1857

11. The Subsidiary Alliance was imposed on Awadh in:
    (a) 1856 (b) 1765 (c) 1801 (d) 1798

12. Wajid Ali Shah was exiled to:
    (a) Calcutta (b) Rangoon (c) Kanpur (d) London

13. Taluqdars' share of villages after the Summary Settlement:
    (a) 67% (b) 38% (c) 50% (d) 12%

14. The Azamgarh proclamation was issued on:
    (a) 10 May 1857 (b) 1 November 1858 (c) 25 August 1857 (d) 23 June 1857

15. The British tried to incite Hindus against Muslims (Rs 50,000) at:
(a) Kanpur (b) Delhi (c) Lucknow (d) Bareilly

16. Delhi was recaptured by the British in:
(a) September 1857 (b) June 1857 (c) March 1858 (d) May 1858

17. "In Memoriam" was painted by:
(a) Joseph Noel Paton (b) Thomas Jones Barker (c) Raja Ravi Varma (d) Abanindranath Tagore

18. Bahadur Shah was exiled to:
(a) Andaman (b) Calcutta (c) Lahore (d) Rangoon

19. "Clemency Canning" was mocked in:
(a) The Times (b) Punch (c) Illustrated London News (d) Bengal Gazette

20. "Khoob ladi mardani" was written by:
(a) Premchand (b) Mahadevi Varma (c) Subhadra Kumari Chauhan (d) Savarkar

1 (c) · 2 (a) · 3 (d) · 4 (b) · 5 (b) · 6 (d) · 7 (a) · 8 (c) · 9 (d) · 10 (b) · 11 (c) · 12 (a) · 13 (b) · 14 (c) · 15 (d) · 16 (a) · 17 (a) · 18 (d) · 19 (b) · 20 (c)

Assertion–Reason (6)

(a) Both A and R true, R explains A. (b) Both true, R does not explain A. (c) A true, R false. (d) A false, R true.

1. A: People believed rumours about bone dust in flour. R: British reforms had created fears of attacks on religion and customs.
2. A: Awadh's annexation upset the sepoys. R: Many sepoys came from Awadh's villages.
3. A: Wajid Ali Shah was an unpopular ruler. R: People followed him to Kanpur singing laments.
4. A: Rebel proclamations appealed to both Hindus and Muslims. R: They glorified the coexistence of communities under the Mughals.
5. A: The British passed laws allowing ordinary Britons to try Indians. R: They wanted to suppress the revolt quickly.
6. A: The painting "Relief of Lucknow" celebrated British heroism. R: It was painted by Joseph Noel Paton.

Key: 1 (a) · 2 (a) · 3 (d) · 4 (a) · 5 (a) · 6 (c)

- **Last-night summary:** Meerut 10 May, Delhi 11 May 1857; Bahadur Shah; pattern (bell of arms, treasury, records burnt); communication (emissaries, 7th Awadh letter, Hearsey's panchayats); leaders: Nana Sahib, Rani Lakshmibai, Birjis Qadr and Begum Hazrat Mahal, Kunwar Singh, Shah Mal, Ahmadullah Shah, Gonoo; rumours: cartridges, bone dust, Plassey centenary, chapatis; reasons: Bentinck's reforms, sati ban, widow remarriage, Doctrine of Lapse, missionaries, end of the Mughal line.
- Awadh: "cherry" (Dalhousie 1851), Subsidiary Alliance 1801, annexed 1856, Wajid Ali Shah loved, court dissolved; taluqdars (forts, troops; Summary Settlement 1856: 67% → 38%); peasants lost patronage; sepoys from Awadh: low pay, racial arrogance.
- Rebels: unity (Hindu-Muslim, Bareilly failure), against British symbols, Azamgarh proclamation (25 Aug 1857), Mughal-style administration. Repression: martial law, special laws, Delhi (Sept 1857), Lucknow and Kanpur (March 1858), divide taluqdars. Images: Relief of Lucknow (Barker), In Memoriam (Paton), Miss Wheeler, Justice, Clemency Canning; nationalist: Rani Lakshmibai, Savarkar's "First War of Independence".