

Remembering Partition

**Study Guide for Remembering Partition
(October 24th Event)**



Study Guide

The partition of South Asia is an event that has been covered in great depth by historians from various backgrounds. Research related to this topic is immense in its scope and it is not practically possible to be familiar with all resources on the topic. Furthermore, a lot of the material available on the event is often biased and influenced by political motive rather than historical fact. With these issues in mind, our team has set out a brief list of resources that should cover different aspects your preparation. For well-defined and objective debate, we have also enunciated each topic of the planned discussion in this reference source. We hope you find these elaborations to be helpful.

Please note that you are not expected to know any historical locations, dates or other minute facts. We are interested in your opinion above all else.

If you have any further suggestions or queries please contact us at rememberingpartition@gmail.com

Reference Sources:

READING

The compilation below consists of books by foreign authors as well as Pakistani and Indian writers. Overall, reading a couple of books from the selection should give a balanced view with multiple perspectives.

The collection of books above contains certain books that may be heavy and factually dense; it will not be possible to read everything on the list. We cannot stress enough, however, how important it is that you read at least one book before appearing for the event. For an extended (and we mean extended!) list of references, please see below:

I

The following books detail the political plays and personal interactions between the forces- Hindu, Muslim and British- that ultimately shaped the event as it were. Being acquainted with some of these sources is important because it provides an insight into the minds of the leaders of different faction, which will no doubt, influence your arguments to a great deal on the day of the event itself.

Freedom at Midnight by Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre

Liberty or Death by Patrick French

II

For a microscopic view of the event, with personal accounts and emotion mentions of tragedies at a particular location, read the following books. They are pieces of writing that will appeal to the emotive aspects of the tragedy.

Train to Pakistan by Khushwant Singh

The Other Side of Silence by Urvashi Butalia

Halfway to Freedom: A Report on the New India in the Words and Photos of Margaret Bourke-White by Margaret Bourke-White

The Death of an Empire by Ashis Nandy

III

A book that focuses on a broader canvas that leads the reader through the confusion, the uncertainties, the fear and eventually the horror faced by those who were soon to become citizens of the two new states, India and Pakistan.*

The Great Partition by Yasmin Khan

*The Economist Magazine

THE INTERNET

The Internet is always an easy and convenient way to do research and we would recommend starting your research on the topic here. A simple Google search or Wikipedia entry would give you a terse introduction to the topics. The Internet cannot be relied on solely for this project, however, because factual inaccuracies and biased information are concerns. Furthermore, the research online is unlikely to be as detailed as reading material, which once again leads us to emphasize how important it is that you read at least one of the above listed books.

The Topics:

After you have completed your research, you will be required to apply your knowledge to the following topics:

Topic 1: Was Partition Necessary At the Time?

-Did all Muslims feel persecuted? What about other minorities?

-Was the Muslim League justified in believing (at the time) that Muslims would not be able to live peacefully in a Hindu majority nation?

-Was the move purely political and motivated by ego rather national interest in mind?

-Or was trying to prevent any partition movement naïve and an attempt to deny an inevitable outcome? Would complete chaos have resulted in a unified nation?

Topic 2: Are the scars of this tragedy permanent? Will they loom over our nations forever?

-Draw from the emergence of distinct national identities of Pakistan and India. Also consider repercussions of partition stretching into contemporary Indian and Pakistani history, Bangladesh (another partition) for instance.

-Will partition die out as its last survivors pass away?

Topic 3: Indians and Pakistanis will never regard Partition with the same emotions

-Pakistanis see it as the moment their nation was born, Indians as the moment their country was torn apart. How correct is this viewpoint?

-Can both our nations ever reconcile to the events of 1947?

-Partition has, is and always will be the basis of the relations between both our nations. All tensions stem from the inherent mistrust of 1947. Do you agree?

Participants' views will likely fall into an established field of thought, following the lines of Gandhi, The Congress, The British, The Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha or other established entities. It is in this respect that your research will come in handy- know the arguments and counter-arguments surrounding your opinions. Be prepared to defend your views and amend someone else's.

After research, if you find that you believe something that no one at the time proposed, or you hold an amalgam of views, then develop your idea. Go ahead and explore; we're excited to hear what you have to say.

Select Research Bibliography on the Partition of India

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