

Chapter 15, Section 3 (Pages 498–503)

# The Grandeur of the Moguls

## Big Idea

A country's society and its culture reflect the shared heritage of its people. As you read, create a chart listing the accomplishments and weaknesses of the Mogul rulers.

Ruler	Accomplishments	Weaknesses



## Read to Learn

### The Mogul Dynasty (page 498)

#### Analyzing Information

*Was India a strongly centralized state under the Moguls?*

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Bābur, the founder of the Mogul dynasty, came to India from present-day Afghanistan. Bābur captured Delhi and established power in the plains of North India. By 1605 Bābur's grandson, Akbar, had brought Mogul rule to most of India. The empire was actually a collection of semi-independent states held together by the power of the emperor. Akbar was humane. He was a Muslim, but had a policy of religious tolerance.

Many lower-ranking officials were Hindus. These local officials, called **zamindars**, sometimes came to have considerable power in their local districts. Indian peasants had to pay about one-third of their harvest in taxes, but the taxes were reduced in hard times.

Akbar was succeeded by his son, Jahāngīr, who gradually lost interest in government. His successor, Shāh Jahān, expanded his territory. However, his treasury was nearly empty, and he had to raise taxes to pay for his military campaigns and extensive building projects. Most of his subjects lived in poverty.

Shāh Jahān's son, Aurangzeb, tried to eliminate evils such as the practice of **suttee**, where a widow was required to burn herself to death on her husband's funeral pyre. However, he ended the practice of religious tolerance, causing many protests from Hindus. There were revolts, and after he died India became increasingly divided and vulnerable to attack.



# Read to Learn

## Life in Mogul India (page 501)

### Distinguishing Fact from Opinion

*What words tell you that the beauty of the Taj Mahal in comparison to other buildings is the author's opinion?*

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The Moguls were foreigners in India. They were also Muslims ruling a mostly Hindu population. The blend of influences on ordinary Indians was complicated. For example, women had played an active role in Mogul society. But the Moguls also placed restrictions on women according to their interpretation of Islamic law. Hindus adopted some of these practices, such as isolating women. Some Hindu practices, such as suttee and child marriage, remained unchanged. In the Mogul era, a wealthy nobility and a prosperous merchant class emerged.

Under the Moguls, Persian and Indian influences came together in a new and beautiful architectural style. This style is best symbolized by the Taj Mahal, which Shāh Jahān built in the mid-seventeenth century. It took more than 20 years to build and caused taxes to rise enough to drive many Indian peasants into complete poverty. The Taj Mahal may be the most beautiful building in India and possibly the entire world. It has monumental size and brilliance and also delicate lightness.

Painting in Mogul India blended Persian and Indian styles. Akbar strongly supported the arts and encouraged artists to imitate European art forms, including the use of perspective and lifelike portraits.

## Europeans Come to India (page 503)

### Making Inferences

*What was the British attitude toward India?*

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The arrival of the British hastened the decline of the Mogul Empire. British ships carried Indian-made cotton goods to the East Indies, where they were traded for spices. The British success attracted the French, who established their own forts.

Sir Robert Clive, an aggressive British empire builder, served as the chief representative in India of the East India Company, a private company that acted on behalf of the crown. Clive fought any force that threatened the Company's power and ultimately restricted the French to the fort at Pondicherry and a few territories on the southeastern coast.

In 1757 Clive led a small British force to victory over a Mogul-led army in the Battle of Plassey in Bengal. Victory gave the East India Company the power to collect taxes from lands in the area around Calcutta.

Many East India Company officials offended both their Indian allies and the local population, who were taxed heavily to meet the Company's growing expenses.

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