

**LESSON 2- Colonialism and Fossil Fuels**

**Timeline Cards - print and cut out. The cards are shown in the correct order below.**

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| As the 19th Century progressed, the British Empire’s colonies spread, using land for mining and crops in Africa, the Caribbean and India, and controlling the economies of countries such as China and Argentina. |
| Before 1914, Britain rushed to explore new resources and technologies, as other nations tried to compete with its imperial power. In this era, the Titanic and Dreadnought ships were built. British engineers were responsible for new technologies that created a vast demand for oil, driven in part by advances in military aircraft. Supported by Shell Petroleum, the first internal combustion engines were developed from 1900 to 1914. |
| British Petroleum (BP) is one of the world’s oldest oil companies, alongside Shell, dating back to 1908 when the Anglo-Persian Oil Company was formed. BP’s origins lie in oil extraction in what is now modern Iraq and Iran. Shell has extracted oil in many places, including Nigeria. |
| [Winston Churchill](http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw01298/Winston-Churchill?locid=51&wPage=1&rNo=23) successfully argued to replace coal with oil in Navy ships. This resulted in the British purchase of 51% of the Anglo-Persian Oil company, which became BP. Germany was also gunning to secure this source of oil, and many believe this oil struggle was the real spark for World War One in 1914. |
| The turning point that led to our current fossil fuel frenzy was World War II, the first war to be fought using aircraft and tanks. By now, most ships were fuelled by oil too. Many of Britain’s bombing campaigns, led by [‘Bomber Harris’](http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp56247/sir-arthur-travers-bomber-harris-1st-bt), targeted Germany’s oil resources. |
| In the 1970s, Britain hit an oil crisis as nations in the Middle East reclaimed and nationalised their oil rights. Middle Eastern oil went from 80% to 10% of BP’s supply. In 1975, it began to extract oil from the North Sea via Scotland. Prime Minister [Margaret Thatcher](http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw07953/Margaret-Hilda-Thatcher-nee-Roberts-Baroness-Thatcher?locid=53&rNo=16) then oversaw the expansion of North Sea oil and gas, and BP privatisation. |
| Wars over control of oil-rich Middle Eastern lands have intensified this century, despite knowledge that we must reduce our consumption of oil. There are serious tensions and wars in Syria, Iran and Saudi Arabia border, Yemen, and Iraq. |