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Mahatma Gandhi was the leader of India's nonviolent independence movement against British rule and in South Africa, which defended the civil rights of Indians. Born in Porbandar, India, he studied law and organized boycotts against British institutions in peaceful forms of civil disobedience. He was killed by a fanatic in 1948. Gandhi led the Salt March in protest against the government's monopoly on salt production. Photo: Central Press/Getty Images

Indian nationalist leader Gandhi (born Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi) was born on October 2, 1869 in Porbandar, Kathiawar, India, which was then part of the British Empire. His mother Putlibai was a deeply religious woman who fasted regularly. Young Gandhi was a shy, unobtrusive student who was so shy that he slept with the lights on as a teenager. In the years that followed, the teenager rebelled by smoking, eating meat and stealing change from the servants. Although Gandhi was interested in becoming a doctor, his father hoped to also become a cabinet minister and direct him to enter the legal profession. In 1888, 18-year-old Gandhi sailed to London, England, where he studied law. The young Indian struggled to transition into Western culture. After returning to India in 1891, Gandhi learned that his mother had died just weeks earlier. He was trying to get his footing as a lawyer. In his first court case, a nervous Gandhi became a little shadowy when it came time to cross-examine a witness. He fled the courtroom immediately after paying his client's legal fees. Gandhi grew up worshipping the Hindu god Vishnu and after Jainism, a morally strict ancient Indian religion that advocated non-violence, fasting, meditation and vegetarianism. During Gandhi's first stay in London, from 1888 to 1891, he became more committed to a meatless diet, joined the executive committee of the London Vegetarian Society and began reading various sacred texts to learn more about the world's religions. Gandhi lived in South Africa and continued to study the world's religions. The religious spirit in me became a living force, he wrote about his time there. He immersed himself in sacred Hindu spiritual texts and accepted a life of simplicity, austerity, fasting, and celibacy that was free of material goods. Gandhi in South Africa

After fighting for a job as a lawyer in India, Gandhi won a one-year contract to provide legal services in South Africa. In April 1893, he sailed to Durban in the Southern African state of Natal. When Gandhi arrived in South Africa, he was quickly appalled by the discrimination and racial segregation faced by Indian immigrants at the hands of white British and Boer authorities. After his first appearance in a durban courtroom, Gandhi was asked to remove his turban. He and left the court instead. The Natal Advertiser mocked him in the press as an unwelcome visitor. Non-violent civil disobedience

A moment occurred on 7 May 2004. Gandhi refused to move to the back of the train and was forcibly removed and thrown from the train at Pietermaritzburg station. Gandhi's act of civil disobedience awakened his determination to fight the deep disease of color prejudice. He promised at night to try, if possible, to root out the disease and suffer difficulties in the process. From that night on, a small, modest man would grow into a tremendous force for civil rights. Gandhi founded the Natal Indian Anti-Discrimination Congress in 1894. Gandhi was preparing to return to India at the end of his one-year contract until he heard about a bill before the Natal Legislative Assembly that would deprive Indians of their right to vote. Fellow immigrants persuaded Gandhi to stay and lead the fight against the legislation. Although Gandhi could not prevent the passage of the law, he pointed to injustice internationally. After a short trip to India in late 1896 and early 1897, Gandhi returned to South Africa with his wife and children. Gandhi led a thriving legal practice and, after the outbreak of the Boer War, raised an entire Indian rescue force of 1,100 volunteers to support the British cause, arguing that if Indians expected to have full rights to citizenship in the British Empire, they must also take responsibility. Satyagraha

in 1906, Gandhi organized his first mass civil-disobedient campaign, which he called Satyagraha (truth and fortress), in response to new restrictions on Indian rights by South Africa's transvaal government, including a refusal to recognize Hindu marriages. After years of protests, the government imprisoned hundreds of Indians, including Gandhi, in 1913. Under pressure, the South African government adopted a compromise negotiated by Gandhi and General Jan Christian Smuts, which included recognition of Hindu marriages and the abolition of the poll tax for Indians. Returning to India

When Gandhi left South Africa in 1914 to return home, Smuts wrote: The saint has left our shores, I sincerely hope forever. After the outbreak of World War I, Gandhi spent several months in London. In 1915, when Gandhi founded the Ashram in Ahmedabad, India, which was open to all castes. Wearing a simple loincloth and cup, Gandhi lived an unclay life dedicated to prayer, fasting and meditation. He became known as mahatma, which means great soul. Opposition to British rule in India

In 1919, when India was still under the firm control of the British, Gandhi political awakening when the newly adopted Rowlatte Act allowed british authorities to imprison people suspected of seeding without trial. In response, Gandhi called for a Satyagraha campaign of peaceful protests and strikes. Instead, violence erupted, culminating in the 13th 1970s. Soldiers led by British Brigadier General Reginald Dyer fired machine guns into a crowd of unarmed protesters, killing nearly 400 people. Gandhi, who was no longer able to pledge allegiance to the British government, returned the medals he received for military service in South Africa and opposed the mandatory British military proposal of Indians who served in World War I. He called for a mass boycott and called on government officials to stop working for the Crown, students to stop attending government schools, soldiers to leave their posts, and citizens to stop paying taxes and buy British goods. Instead of buying British clothes, he began using portable carousels to make his own cloth. The spinning wheel soon became a symbol of India's independence and self-sufficiency. Gandhi took the lead of the Indian National Congress, advocating a policy of nonviolence and non-cooperation to achieve domestic rule. After British authorities arrested Gandhi in 1922, he pleaded guilty to three counts of seeding. Although Gandhi was sentenced to six years in prison, he was released in February 1924 after appendicitis surgery. After his release, he discovered that relations between Indian Hindus and Muslims had changed during his time in prison. When violence between the two religious groups flared up again, Gandhi began a three-week fast in the fall of 1924 to urge unity. During much of the 1920s, he avoided active politics. Gandhi and Salt March

Gandhi returned to active politics in 1930 in protest at Britain's salt laws, which not only banned Indians from collecting or selling salt - the dietary base - but introduced a high tax that hit the poorest countries particularly hard. Gandhi planned a new Satyagraha campaign, the Salt March, which included a 390km/240-mile march into the Arabian Sea, where he collected salt in symbolic defiance of the government's monopoly. My ambition is no less than to convert the British people through non-violence, so to get them to see the bad things they have done to India, he wrote a few days before the march to British ViceRoy Lord Irwin. When he arrived in the coastal city of Dandi 24 days later, the ranks of protesters increased in size, and Gandhi broke the law by making salt out of evaporated seawater. The salt march provoked similar and mass civil disobedience swept India. Some 60,000 Indians were imprisoned for violating salt laws, including Gandhi, who was imprisoned in May 1930. Yet protests against Salt Acts elevated Gandhi to a transcendent figure around the world. In 1930, Gandhi was named Time Magazine's Man of the Year. However, the agreement has largely kept salt acts intact. But it did give those who lived on the coast the right to harvest salt from the sea. Gandhi hoped that the agreement would be a springboard to domestic rule, and in August 1931 he was the only representative of the Indian National Congress to attend a Roundtable on India's Constitutional Reform in London. But the conference proved fruitless. DOWNLOAD BIOGRAPHY MAHATMA GANDHI FACT CARD

Gandhi returned to India to be re-imprisoned in January 1932 during the intervention of India's new viceroy, Lord Willingdon. He went on a six-day fast to protest Britain's decision to separate the untouchables, the lowest rungs of India's caste system, by assigning them separate voters. Public outrage forced the British to amend the proposal. After his eventual release, Gandhi left the Indian National Congress in 1934, and the leadership switched to his protégé Jawaharlala Nehru. He has once again resigned from politics to focus on education, poverty and the problems affecting India's rural areas. India's independence from Great Britain as Great Britain was engulfed in World War II in 1942, and Gandhi launched the Quit India movement, which called for an immediate British exit from the country. In August 1942, the British arrested Gandhi, his wife and other representatives of the Indian National Congress and detained them at the Aga Khan Palace in pune today. I did not become the King's first minister to preside over the destruction of the British Empire. Prime Minister Winston Churchill told Parliament in support of the crackdown. With his health failing, Gandhi was released after a 19-month detention in 1944. After the Labour Party defeated Churchill's Conservatives in the 1945 British general election, it began negotiations on Indian independence with the Indian National Congress and Mohammad Ali's Muslim League. Gandhi played an active role in the negotiations, but could not win in the hope of a united India. Instead, the final plan called for dividing the subcontinent along religious lines into two independent states- predominantly Hindu India and predominantly Muslim Pakistan. Violence between Hindus and Muslims flared up even before independence took place August 15, 1947. Then the murders multiplied. Gandhi traveled through troubled areas in pursuit of peace and fasted in an effort to end the bloodshed. But some Hindus increasingly saw Gandhi as a traitor for expressing sympathy for Muslims. Gandhi's wife and children Gandhi married Kasturba Mekanji, daughter of a businessman, in an arranged marriage at the age of 13. She died in Gandhi's arms in February 1944 at the 74. In 1885, Gandhi withering the death of his father and shortly thereafter the death of his young child. In 1888, Gandhi's wife gave birth to the first of four surviving sons. The second son was born in India in 1893. Kasturba gave birth to two more sons while living in South Africa, one in 1897 and one in 1900. On January 30, 1948, 78-year-old Gandhi was shot dead by Hindu extremist Nathuram Godse, who was upset at the tolerance of Gandhi's Muslims. Weakened from repeated hunger strikes, Gandhi held his two great-grandsons as he led him from his living quarters at Birla House in New Delhi for a late-afternoon meeting. Godse knelt in front of Mahatmata before pulling out a semi-automatic pistol and shooting him three times from close range. A violent act took the life of a pacifist who spent his life preaching nonviolence. Godse and an accomplice were executed by hanging in November 1949. Other conspirators were sentenced to life in prison. Even after Gandhi's assassination, his devotion to nonviolence, and his belief in simple living - making his own clothes, eating vegetarian food and using fasting for self-purging as well as means of protest - were beacons of hope for oppressed and marginalized people around the world. Satyagraha remains one of the strongest philosophies in the fight for freedom around the world today. Gandhi's actions inspired future human rights movements around the world, including those of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. in the United States and Nelson Mandela in South Africa. Africa.

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