

Enquiry question 3	Why is Brick Lane changing?
Rationale	<p>Understanding British history and how we have come to our present condition is fundamental to KS3 history, and local history plays a key role in this. The story of how social and economic change is affecting one East London street reflects a wider, more universal story of our towns and cities. This is the story of our streets.</p> <p>Together with the previous enquiries, this provides a historical perspective through which students can understand change which will affect their futures, even if it takes a somewhat different form depending on where they live.</p> <p>Affordable restaurants serving global foods, together with the linked food stores, have been a key factor in the story of migration and the transformation of our streets. If corporate high streets threaten these, do they also threaten migrant communities? The question – debated among interviewees – of whether these changes result in discrimination against the Bangladeshi community or reflect its success relates to wider discussions of systemic racism and upward mobility.</p> <p>Change and continuity are frequently addressed in history classrooms: what makes this especially interesting is the interplay between the two. It can be said that the area's key continuity is that it is always changing.</p>
Second order focus	Change and continuity, causation
Builds on knowledge of ...	Brick Lane's previous history Social and economic change in recent UK history
Would support future learning of ...	Local history and patterns of change in urban streets Social and economic change in twenty-first-century Britain
Points to emphasise	<p>Lesson 1: Brick Lane and the surrounding area have seen many changes due to migration (Huguenots, Jews, Irish, Bangladeshis) and changing occupations (in seafaring, textiles and catering). So it can be described as a place of constant change. However, that is perhaps also a kind of continuity.</p> <p>Lesson 2: Interrelated changes happening today include increases in property prices; an influx of young people with money; gentrification; corporate development; businesses closing and residents, especially ethnic minorities, being pushed out; a lack of skilled restaurant staff; less frequent customers; diversification of types of cuisine.</p> <p>Lesson 3: Each case study is distinct, but they are all examples of adaptation to changing circumstances affected by some of the changes in Lesson 1. The whole street data shows how diverse the businesses on the street already are. The street and city data gives evidence of both change and continuity.</p> <p>Lesson 4: Interrelated causes include Brick Lane's location close to the City; high rents; lack of planning and support from politicians; the failure of traditional businesses to adapt; strict immigration rules; young people not wanting to work in restaurants; curry houses all over London and the UK</p>

	<p>Lesson 5: The three quotations suggest three different analyses: that this is a story of change; that there is underlying continuity; and that what's continuous about Brick Lane is that it is continually changing. The street voices offer vox pop responses to this issue.</p>
<p>Things to avoid</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Giving the impression that people in the community all share the same view.</i> As the video shows, views about the changes are diverse and no one speaks for everyone. - <i>Presenting the story as one entirety of change.</i> There are real continuities too. - <i>Telling a story of inevitability.</i> As the COVID-19 crisis has shown, things can change unexpectedly.
<p>Suggested number of lessons</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>Lesson suggestions with links to supporting website resources</p>	<p>Start with these two quotations, the first from the Overview:</p> <p>'pronounced urban change, marked by a number of redevelopment initiatives that have altered the nature of the urban fabric of the area and the street ... displacement of established patterns of life and livelihood'</p> <p>The second is from a Brick Lane resident, quoted on the Sticky Wings page:</p> <p>'Brick Lane died the day Sweet & Spicy closed down, you know.'</p> <p>Lesson 1: How has the area changed in the past?</p> <p>Students can note down the many ways in which the area has changed since the seventeenth century.</p> <p>The history of migrations to the area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Video (1.29–2.71). ● Making Home: The World in Brick Lane. <p>The restaurant trade:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Video (3.37–4.21). ● Working Lives: From Clothing to Catering. ● Cookbooks, Cafes and Curry Restaurants. ● The Rise of Banglatown. ● City Spice and Monsoon are good case studies. <p>Lesson 2: Gentrification: How is Brick Lane changing now?</p> <p>Students can consider and reflect on how Brick Lane is changing and 'gentrifying'. As well as considering how the composition of businesses and their customers is changing, students could consider how different people feel about the change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● City Data could provide a way in to this lesson looking at how demographics have changed over time. <p>Students can watch the video extract, noting down all the ways in which Brick Lane is changing, then following this up with the fuller explanations in the 'Globe' section.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Video (from 6.34 to the end). ● The Decline of 'Banglatown'. ● The Future of Bengali Brick Lane. ● Street Voices: Esther, Maria and Shiraz.

	<p>Lesson 3: Case studies</p> <p>Each student could take a distinct case study, looking for its story of change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moon Light, Bengal Village, Muhib, Amar Gaon, The Famous Curry Bazaar, Preem, Sheba, Taj Stores, The Old Truman Brewery, Epra Fabrics, London Tea Exchange, Dark Sugars, Sticky Wings, La Casita Mexicana. <p>Students could look at these links for connections with the stories in the case studies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole Street. • Street Data: land use, employment, proprietors. • City Data: property and population. <p>Lesson 4: What is causing these changes?</p> <p>Students can watch the video extract for a second time, followed by the other links, this time looking for <i>causes</i> of the changes previously noted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video (from 6.34 to the end). • The Decline of 'Banglatown'. • The Future of Bengali Brick Lane. • City Overview. • Spitalfields Market and The Old Truman Brewery. • Bengal Cuisine, The Monsoon, The Grill & Spice, City Spice. <p>Lesson 5: Is Brick Lane a story of change or continuity?</p> <p>As students create their outcomes (see below) they can consider these three points of view, all from restaurant owners quoted in The Future of Bengali Brick Lane:</p> <p><i>Continuity</i>: 'as far as the Bengali community are concerned throughout the country, still Brick Lane is the centre of the Bengali community, the capital city of the Bengali community. That will remain.'</p> <p><i>Change</i>: 'It's not really Banglatown anymore'</p> <p><i>Both – change is Brick Lane's continuity</i>: 'from the Huguenots to the Jews to the Bengalis, people have passed through here, and people will pass through continually'</p> <p>Street Voices: Mauricio, Julia, Johnathan, Joan, Ben, Brenda and Ashley.</p> <p>Interviewees in the video:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sean Carey preferring the old 'Banglatown'. - Sheikh Aliur Rahman not seeing gentrification as a problem. - Ansar Ahmed Ullah liking today's diverse Brick lane. - Abdul 'Jamal' Quayum lamenting the loss of community.
<p>Possible outcome tasks</p>	<p>Visualisation</p> <p>With each change or cause on a separate piece of paper, working in groups, students could arrange the papers to create a visualisation of the complex interrelationship of cause and effect – some causes may also be effects, and some may have multiple effects. These can be shared with the whole class and, through discussion, the class can come to a visualisation on which all can agree. Discussion could focus on how far this holds true for other parts of the UK – perhaps the school's local area – or the UK as a whole.</p>

Timeline

Students could create an A4 or A3 poster charting how the area around Brick Lane has changed from the seventeenth century to the present. This timeline could be illustrated and have details such as the different groups who have lived on Brick Lane, how and why this changed, and key events that brought about change.

Vox pops

The Street Voices section of the website is a series of vox pops. Students could go back to the individual case studies they took on in Lesson 2, and take the role of a proprietor or worker being interviewed about the changes affecting their business, the causes of that change and how they feel about it. This could be hot-seated and/or filmed.

Essay

'I think there is a real sense of hope but also a real sense of loss' (Claire Alexander). How far do you agree, and why?

Debate

- Is the change Brick Lane is going through inevitable?
- Is this change desirable?
- Is what is happening to Bangladeshi Brick Lane a negative example of systemic racism, or a positive case of upward mobility?
- How might COVID-19 affect Brick Lane's future?
- Is Brick Lane's story Britain's story?

Local

This enquiry could be a springboard for an enquiry into a street close to school, with a focus on migration history (1), community identity (2) and change (3).