

### *The Tiger in Indian History*

**AIM:** To help the children understand that through Indian history, the tiger has been associated with beauty, power and strength in the subcontinent.

**OBJECTIVE:** To provide children with a feel of the shifting fortunes of tigers and how they have now come perilously close to the brink of extinction.

**INTRO:** Discuss the national symbols of the country expanding on why the tiger was chosen as India's national animal.

**CONTENT:** *The Indus Valley Civilisation 3,200-1600 B.C:* Though largely agricultural the Harappans lived at a time when the Indus Valley was thick with forests. This fact is confirmed by their many seals, which depicted rhinos, elephants and tigers.

*254 B.C:* Although the exact dates of Asoka's life are a matter of dispute among scholars, he was born around 304 B.C. and became the third king of the Mauryan dynasty in 254 B.C. after the death of his father, Bindusara. His given name was Asoka but he assumed the title Devanampiya Piyadasi which means "Beloved-of-the-Gods, He Who Looks On With Affection." During his reign, the state had a responsibility not just to protect and promote the welfare of its people but also its wildlife. Hunting certain species of wild animals was banned, forest and wildlife reserves were established and cruelty to domestic and wild animals was prohibited.

*The Moghul Period 1526-1857:* The attachment of the Moghuls to nature stemmed largely from their 'scientific' interest. Most of the great Moghul emperors were keen naturalists who were known for their detailed observations of fauna and flora and their love of the hunt.

*Tipu Sultan 1750-1799:* Totally fascinated by the tiger, Tipu Sultan dressed his men in tiger jackets and decorated his personal possessions with tiger designs and stripes. He used to say that he would like to live two days like a tiger, rather than 200 years like a lamb! He was born in Devanhalli, Karnataka. His father, Hyder Ali, appointed himself as the Muslim ruler of Mysore around 1761. From his childhood Tipu travelled with his father on military campaigns, fighting in the First and Second

## History Lesson Plan

Mysore Wars. Tipu Sultan became the ruler of Mysore when his father died in 1782.

**The British Rule:** The tiger was almost wiped out thanks to shikar. Indian royals competed with the British to kill tigers, adding to its trauma.

**1947:** After Independence, thousands of Indians began to exercise their 'right' to shoot tigers, which was earlier a privilege enjoyed only by the British or Royalty. This brought the tiger to the very brink of extinction.

**1969:** The tiger was listed as a species in grave danger.

**1970:** Tiger shikar was totally banned.

**1972:** On April 10, a representative of the World Wildlife Fund, Guy Mountfort met the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi to ask for help to save the tiger. She became the tiger's greatest defender.

**1973:** Project Tiger was launched, with Kailash Sankhala as its first Director. Initially, nine 'Reserves' were chosen. Today we have 27 Reserves.







**1984:** The late Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, was assassinated.

**1990:** After being recognised as the world's most successful nature conservation project for almost two decades, Project Tiger floundered, as it lost political support after Mrs. Gandhi's death.

**2000:** The tiger is still in crisis. One tiger continues to be killed each day.

**2001:** Kids for Tigers, the Sanctuary Britannia Tiger Programme is launched. The tiger wins one million new young friends.

### **METHODOLOGY:**

-  List the various qualities associated with the tiger.
-  How many tigers are left in India (around 2,000)?
-  Why is India called the 'land of the tiger'?
-  Use the time line to make a chart of the history of the tiger, starting with the tiger in mythology (mentioned in the Vedas, Mahabharata and Ramayana).
-  Indus Valley civilisation depicted in seals and terracotta figures.
-  Asoka and his understanding of living close to Nature

- 🐾 Moghul Emperors and their love for nature.
- 🐾 Tipu Sultan and his fascination for the tiger.
- 🐾 How the British and their brand of fascination led to the decimation of tigers – 30,000 at the turn of the century, 2,000+ today.
- 🐾 The tiger is declared India's national animal.
- 🐾 Project Tiger is launched.
- 🐾 Re-emphasise how the tiger represents the safety of all of natural India.
- 🐾 List highlights of Kids for Tigers and how kids can make a difference.

**AIDS:** Symbols of the Nation's Pride.

**BLACKBOARD:** ○ Write down the url [www.kidsfortigers.org](http://www.kidsfortigers.org) ○ Draw a tiger time-line. Ask kids to turn the timeline into an illustrated project.

**EVALUATION:** ○ Why do you think the Tiger played such a significant role through Indian history? ○ Why are conditions for the tiger so different today?

### ACTIVITIES:

- 🐾 Make a colourful Tiger Timeline Chart for the Tiger Notice Board.



*Animals have been depicted in Indian art and culture for eons.*