



New York State Education Department

Global History & Geography

online
resource
guide

Unit 5 H - Imperialism

"Shooting An Elephant": George Orwell's Essay on his Life in Burma

Social Studies Standards 2, and 3 - World History and Geography

Key Ideas and Performance Indicators 2.1.2, 2.1.3, 2.1.4, 2.3.2, 2.4.4, 3.1.4, 3.1.5

Context:

George Orwell is today best known for his last two novels, the anti-totalitarian works *Animal Farm* and *1984*. He was also an accomplished and experienced essayist. Among his most powerful essays is the 1931 autobiographical essay "Shooting an Elephant," which Orwell based on his experience as a police officer in colonial Burma. This lesson plan is designed to help students read Orwell's essay both as a work of literature and as a window into the historical context in which it was written.