

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**  
**SECONDARY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME**

**GRADE SEVEN (7)**  
**WEEK FIVE**

**SOCIAL STUDIES**

**LESSON ONE (1)**

**Topic: A Glimpse of Our History.**

**Sub-Topic: Independence and Republican Status.**

**OBJECTIVES : Students will:**

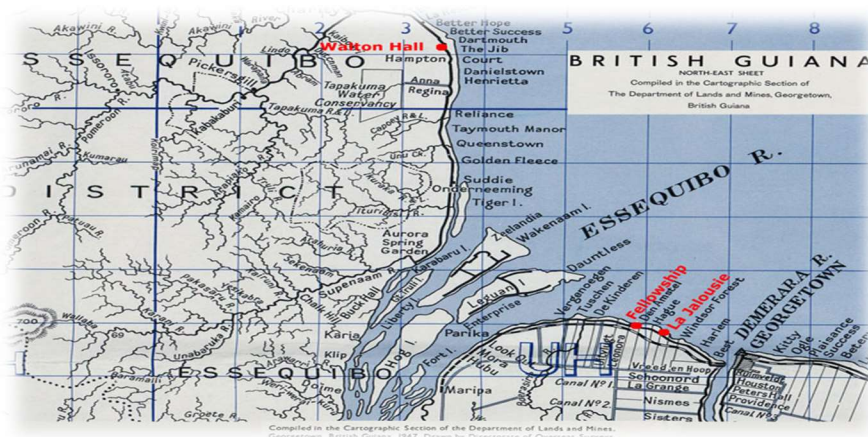
- ✓ Describe life in the colony.
- ✓ Explain the stages leading to Independence.
- ✓ Understand that a country like an individual can grow and develop.

**CONCEPT**

Independence is associated with growth and maturity as well as with the desire to make decisions which will promote one's well-being and enable one to take control of one's life. For a country it's the ability to rule itself and not to remain a colony.

That means being able to make its own decision as a nation, being **Independent**.

**THE COLONY OF BRITISH GUIANA (Status before Independence)**



**Map showing the colonies of British Guiana.**

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The colonies of Essequibo, Demerara and Berbice were united in 1831 into one British colony named British Guiana.

This colony was a dependent on Great Britain, which was referred to as the “Mother Country”. Every decision for the colony was made by Great Britain.

Laws pertaining to the government of the colony, crops to be cultivated and the defense of the colony were all made by the Mother Country.

In fact, Great Britain controlled the political, social and economic life of the colony. Very often decisions were made in favor of the British and the masses of the population had no say in the matter.

The British planters occupied all of the positions in the government and were regarded as the ruling class.

**INDEPENDENCE**

Our country gained its Independence and became a Nation on the 26<sup>th</sup> May, 1966.

Three political leaders, Mr. Cheddi B Jagan, Mr. Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham and Mr. Peter Stanislaus D’ Aguiar went to Great Britain and had discussions with officials of the colonial office which led to the country’s Independence.

**Some reasons why Guyanese leaders sought to gain Independence.**

- The leaders wanted to be free from the control of their mother country.
- They wanted to make decisions from which they could benefit.
- They preferred to have their own system of Government.
- For the defence of the country, they wanted to have their own police force and militia.
- The desire to provide for their own needs and to create new economic enterprises, urged them to struggle for Independence.

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**What does it mean to be Independent?**

**Characteristics of an Independent Person**

- ✓ An independent person is no longer under the control of his/her parent.
- ✓ He/ She moves into his/her own home with his/her family.
- ✓ He/ She are responsible for the management and protection of his/her own home.
- ✓ He/ She acts on his/her own decisions and takes responsibility for the consequences of his/her own actions.

**Characteristics of an Independent Country**

- ✓ An independent country is no longer a colony that is ruled by a mother country.
- ✓ The ruler and those who hold high offices in the Government are nationals.
- ✓ The country no longer uses the National Symbols of the Mother country but acquires its own.
- ✓ An Independent Country provides for its own needs. Money acquired from economic ventures remains in the country and is used for development.

**AN INDEPENDENT COUNTRY IS FREE FROM THE CONTROL OF ANOTHER COUNTRY**

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**ACTIVITY**

**Read and answer the following questions:**

1. Describe what you think life on a colony was like for the slaves.
2. Being a part of the majority before Independence, why were the ex -slaves and indentured laborers not able to rule the country?
3. Add five (5) more reasons to the list, of why Guyana sought independence.
4. Explain in your own words what being independent means.
5. Are you happy that we are an independent nation? Give reasons for your answers.
- 6.

**HOME WORK**



- A. Create a scrap book entitled ‘Guyana before Independence.’

Include the following with the use of words and pictures:

- ✓ The life of a slave
- ✓ Indentured laborers
- ✓ Colony houses and planters
- ✓ Political leaders who fought for Guyana’s independence.

- B. What changes did independence bring to the Guyana?

**References**

-  Ministry of Education Social Studies teacher’s guide level 7 pages 30 to 33
-  New Horizon in Social Studies book 1 pages 72 to 79.