

A ceramic sculpture of a tiger with a man lying at its feet. The tiger is yellow with black stripes and is standing on a green base. The man is wearing a red and yellow outfit and is lying on his back, looking up at the tiger. The sculpture is set against a dark background with a light-colored wall in the background.

The Man and the Myth

A CREATIVE
RESPONSE
GUIDE ON TIPU
SULTAN

Overview

- Tipu Sultan presented the most powerful challenge to the might of Britain's East India Company in the period of its greatest territorial expansion. The Siege of Srirangapatna extinguished the most formidable threat that the British had faced in their history in India up till then; and they would not face anything else on the same scale again until the Revolt of 1857. The fearless Tipu died on the battlefield in 1799, as he fought the British to the last.
- No one on the British side saw the moment when Tipu fell in battle, and his body was only discovered after its conclusion. Yet, due to the almost mythic nature of his characterization as one of the fiercest foes of the British, the moment of his death has captured imaginations across generations.
- This activity seeks to narrativise the moment of his death through creative reimaginings from different perspectives and formats, critically exploring various kinds of sources.



First Hand Account: British Soldier

- Artists, especially in the creation of History Paintings, often depended upon first-hand accounts of events since they would usually be painting scenes that they had never witnessed. Some 'History paintings' were also entirely fictionalised. Artist Robert Kerr Porter, in his panoramic painting of the siege of Srirangapatnam relied on two first hand accounts of those who took part: the surveyor Captain Alexander Allan who was the official cartographer of the campaign, and Captain Alexander Beatson, its official historian.
- Imagine that you were one of the Company soldiers fighting at the Siege of Srirangapatnam. Look at the following paintings and their details to formulate your imagination.
- As your imagined character, write a diary entry of the battle in the antique page given, describing the moment you heard of Tipu Sultan's death. Remember that you would not have seen the death first-hand but most likely heard of it in the battlefield.

Robert Ker Porter, *The Last Effort of Tippoo Sultaun in Defence of the Fortress of Seringapatam - The Storming of Seringapatam - The Glorious Conquest of Seringapatam* (triptych), 1802-03



London Published as the Act directs, January 1803 by Rob^t Ker Porter No. 6 Gerrard Street, Soho

To The King most Excellent Majesty
This Plate 'The Storming of Seringapatam' is with his gracious humbly dedicated by his Majesty's most faithful subject & Faithful son



Henry Singleton (1766-1839) *The Assault and Taking of Seringapatam* c. 1800

4 May 1799

Press Account: Newspaper Report

- The defeat of Tipu was a decisive moment in the history of the East India Company. It was a moment of jubilation then, and has remained a crucial moment that historians and scholars have revisited time and again.
- The British reporters writing about the Battle of Srirangapatna and the defeat of Tipu would only be describing accounts that arrive second or even third hand from people on the ground in India. Imagine yourself to be a reporter in 1799 Britain and write an article about the result of the battle.
- Remember you are portraying a historic win to the people of Britain—a moment of great military triumph for the Empire!
- You can find examples of archival newspapers from May 1799 on <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/>

Confisting of large Four-
with fine Cotton, Map-
and Cheque, Furnitures,
Feather beds, Mattresses,
Blankets; Window Cur-
tains, Bath Grates, Fenders,
Drawers, Desk, Chairs,
Mahogany, Watifoot, &c.
of Grates, Pad Stoves,
able Boiler and Covers,
as, Crane, Smoke Jack,
re; Drag, Cast, and Flue
Frame; Copper and Iron
good Harnes for three

AUCTION,
COX,
on Friday the
ber instant.
GES or TENE-
NG, a large PIECE of
er **OUT BUILDINGS,**
eight Yards in Length,
h, with a Pump of good
NORTHAMPTON, in
Gardens, and others.
Four o'Clock.
own of Messrs. Snyth,
er, Gold-Street.

AUCTION,
OX,
HOUSEHOLD-
Mrs. KILPIN, in
TON.—Time and
t Week's Paper.

AUCTION,
OX,
on the Premises,
HOUSEHOLD-
EDWARD COLE
Lower End of the
t Week's Paper.

debited to the said
ed to pay the same
n the said Edward
desired to send an
edischarged.

AUCTION,
tober next, at Six
he Talbot Inn, in
thampton, subject
hen produced, by
tate and Effects of
E TOWCESTER
a Bankrupt,

FREE, expectant
ady, (upwards of
of and in all that
t MESSAGE or
Yard, and Gar-
erly situated in

longing, situate in the Hamlet of CALDECOTE, in
the Parish of Towcester, now in the Occupations of
William Coare and— Moore.
And also, a CLOSE of rich PASTURE GROUND,
adjoining or lying near to the said Messuages or Tenements,
containing about one Acre, in the Occupation
of Mr. John Duffin.
To see the Premises, apply to the Tenants; and
for further Particulars, or to treat for the same by
Private Contract, apply to Mr. Duffin, or Mr. Kirby,
Attorney at Law, in Towcester.



DEATH of TIPPOO SAIB, And the Capture of Seringapatam, the Capital of his Empire.

THIS morning arrived at the India-House
from Plymouth, the Purser of the Barwell
East-Indiaman; by which ship we have the im-
portant Intelligence, that on the 4th of May the
British Forces under General Stuart, took SE-
RINGAPATAM, *Tippoos Capital*, by Assault,
with a very trifling Loss on the part of the British
Troops. The Body of TIPPOO was found
among the slain upon the ramparts of the place,
and his two Sons were taken in his Palace.

By the Death of this restless Tyrant, and the
overthrow of his Empire, the lawful King of
Mysore will be restored to his Throne, the
English power in India effectually secured, and
the hopes of the French in that quarter com-
pletely destroyed.

Private Letters mention that immense Treas-
ure has been taken in Seringapatam.

Immediately upon receiving this pleasing In-
telligence Preparations were made for a splendid
Illumination of the India-House; and the Park
and Tower guns were fired on the occasion.

MADRAS GAZETTE EXTRAORDINARY, WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 1799.

The following Copy of a Letter from Lieut.
General Harris to the Right Hon. the Go-
vernor General, dated Seringapatam, 7th May,
1799, is published by his Lordship's Authority.

J. WEBBE, Sec. to Gov.

MY LORD,
On the 4th inst. I had the honour to address to
your Lordship a hasty Note, containing in few
words the sum of our success, which I have now
to report more in detail.

The fire of our Batteries, which began to bat-

Khan, to ask
his comman-
declare that
no condition
English.
Monsieur
prisoners :
French Gov.

Killed—
Europeans,
peans, 4.—8

Yesterday
from Sir R
East, the D
the defeat
armies in
believe on
is estimat
prisoners.

The En
having cor
rear, made
enemy to
their flun
and oblige
cipitation
Haerlem

Certain
town, th
at Helder
embarkin
informat

Yester
the Adm
Yarmou
the Du
Mitchel

Bank St
3 per Ce
3 per Ce
4 per Ct
5 per Ct

BIR
Lady o
The
Esq. c
MA
derick
Symo

Oral Account: Indian Soldier

- Many British artists have imagined the scene of Tipu's death and the blow it dealt to his faithful army in the fashion of a classical tragedy worthy of the mythic nature of Tipu's personality and his death.
- Imagine you are a member of Tipu's court and have just received news of the death of your revered leader. Draw up a dramatic scene with your classmates, either as a short skit or a dramatic painting.
- Look at some examples of how the British painters have imagined his death. How would an Indian perspective differ?



Robert Ker Porter, *Finding The Body Of Tippoo Sultaun*, 1800





Henry Singleton, *The Body Of Tippoo Sultaun Recognised By His Family*, 1801