

PERIOD 1

1491–1607

Overview

Period 1 focuses on the North American continent from 1491 until 1607, the years from just before the arrival of European explorers to the founding of the Jamestown colony by the British. These years include the initial contacts between American Indians and the earliest explorers, as well as the introduction of West African slaves to the Western Hemisphere.

The overview begins with an examination of the various native populations that migrated to and spread across North America—their origins and the different ways each group adapted to the conditions they faced in the regions they settled. The American Indian societies that developed shared some common characteristics, but all had to make unique adjustments to the environments they encountered. The result was the creation of societies of varying complexity.

Indians living in present-day Mexico and the American Southwest relied on the cultivation of maize, with the addition of a mix of foraging and hunting to sustain their communities. Settlement of the western Great Plains was limited until the arrival of horses with the Spanish made possible a nomadic lifestyle based on hunting. Those who settled in the Northeast and Southeast relied on both agriculture and hunting, practices that led to more permanent towns and villages.

The arrival of European explorers in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries brought significant changes to both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. The introduction of trade goods and agricultural products, as well as diseases on both side of the Atlantic, set off a series of changes that had a lasting impact on the entire world. Called the Columbian Exchange, this series of contacts and interactions initiated demographic, social, and economic changes that reshaped the history of all the regions involved. Areas where the Spanish and Portuguese explored saw the emergence of a racially mixed population, one made even more diverse by the introduction of West African slaves. The Spanish justified slavery by labeling it the *encomienda* system, arguing that offering conversion to Christianity offset the disadvantages of being enslaved. The introduction of horses, pigs, and cattle further altered the economy and lifestyles of those who lived in the Western Hemisphere.

European rivalries led to intense competition for control of the Western Hemisphere. The desire for wealth, the wish to extend political power, and the determination to spread Christianity fueled these rivalries. European nations experienced growth in both population and wealth, furthering the shift from a feudal economy to more modern capitalism. Changes in technology and better business organization also boosted international trade, leading to more rapid changes for the economies of all involved.

Colonization led to significant changes in how Europeans, American Indians, and West Africans viewed each other. Europeans tended to judge all peoples by European standards and saw anyone different from themselves as backward and in need of “civilization.” This belief in white superiority led to the justification and extensive use of slavery and other methods of control, such as forced conversion to Christianity. In spite of these hardships, both American Indians and West Africans managed to adapt to the harsh conditions they faced while still finding ways to maintain cultural and linguistic aspects of their distinct heritages, as well as some measures of autonomy in their daily lives.

Key Terms

Be sure that you understand the meaning of these terms and their relevance in U.S. history.

Animism
Capitalism
Civic humanism
Columbian Exchange
Cultural autonomy
Demographic change

Encomienda system
Feudalism
Predestination
Primogeniture
Social diversification
Social issues

Questions to Consider

As you study Period 1, keep the following thematic questions in mind.

Identity

- ♦ In what ways did American Indians and Africans struggle to maintain their identity and autonomy in the face of Europeans' attempts to subjugate them?

Work, Exchange, and Technology

- ♦ Why did the economies of native societies differ so much?
- ♦ What advantages and disadvantages accrued to both European and native societies as a result of the Columbian Exchange?
- ♦ What impact did technological advancements have on Portuguese and Spanish exploration to the New World?

Peopling

- ♦ What forces resulted in the emergence of diverse native societies in both North and South America?
- ♦ Why were Europeans able to develop and maintain an extensive slave trade?
- ♦ Why did African slaves replace Indian labor in Spanish New World colonies?
- ♦ In what ways did the Spanish presence in the Western Hemisphere shape native social, economic, and political development?

Politics and Power

- ♦ In what ways was European colonization of the New World promoted by national conflicts in Europe?
- ♦ What factors led American Indian societies to resist the European domination and influence?
- ♦ What shape did Indian resistance take, and how successful was it?

America in the World

- ♦ How did economic and political rivalries in Europe affect the forms of colonization in North America?
- ♦ What effects did Spanish and Portuguese colonists have on the American Indian population?
- ♦ What effects did the Columbian Exchange have in Europe, Africa, and the Americas?

Environment and Geography

- ♦ How did different Indian societies confront the environmental challenges?
- ♦ How did the varied environments in North and South America shape the emergence of vastly different economic, social, and political development among American Indian societies?

Ideas, Beliefs, and Culture

- ♦ What religious and social beliefs promoted Spanish and Portuguese colonization in the New World?
- ♦ In what ways did overseas expansion change how Europeans viewed Africans and American Indians?
- ♦ How and why did Africans and American Indians both adapt some aspects of European culture and resist European attempts to change their values and beliefs?

America's History Chapter Summaries

(required AP® content in bold)

Chapter 1 Colliding Worlds, 1450–1600

Chapter 1 discusses the earliest inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere, their migration from Asia, and the different societies that developed as they adapted to new surroundings. The chapter also looks at Western Europe and West and Central Africa on the eve of first contact. It then examines the earliest explorations of the Spanish and the Portuguese into Africa and the Americas.

The first Americans migrated across a land bridge from Siberia in far eastern Asia across the Bering Strait into what today is Alaska. Over time, Native Americans spread across the Americas and adapted to a **variety of environments and developed unique political, economic, language, and social structures**. Mesoamerica was home to the Aztec Empire, and the Andes region was dominated by the Incas. Both societies were led by priests and warrior-kings who managed large, agriculturally based populations with complex political and religious systems. While nothing on the scale of the Aztecs and Incas developed north of Mexico, **maize cultivation spread from Mexico into the Rio Grande Valley and beyond** (ex: Cahokia, Pueblos). **Along the Atlantic coast, native peoples practiced both agriculture and hunting-gathering**. Indians living on the **edges of the Western Plains established a more mobile lifestyle**.

By the late 1400s, European explorers began to arrive in the Americas by sea, **seeking to expand their empires**. The Spanish and the Portuguese were the first to “discover” the Americas as they looked for sea routes to Asia. The Spanish conquistadors began to systematically conquer native empires in Mesoamerica and Peru, **destroying civilizations and introducing diseases that killed millions**. The Indians of Mesoamerica and South America were better organized and able to offer some resistance to European conquerors, while those of North America were weaker lineage-based societies that were more easily subjugated.

Europe in the mid-1400s was largely a land of peasants farming manorial land. Hierarchy authority rested in the hands of the monarchs, the nobility, and the Church, although all of these institutions were on the verge of change with the arrival of the Renaissance. **New technologies made exploration and trade easier**. The power of the merchant class grew as **Europeans became aware of the immense riches to be found in Asia and other parts of the world**. The Portuguese were the first to branch out toward Africa in search of a lucrative gold trade. It was through this trade that the **Portuguese adopted the system of acquiring African slaves**. As their African trade networks expanded, other European countries also looked for ways to both exploit Africa and find a quicker route to the Far East. **Trade in African slaves soon became a lucrative international business** that would have a lasting impact on four continents.

The Spanish soon replaced the Portuguese as the leading empire builders, sending expeditions around Africa as well as across the Atlantic. Native tribes in the West Indies as well as in Mesoamerica fell at the hands of Spanish conquistadors. Many of those who survived the initial onslaught later **died of epidemic European diseases** (ex: smallpox, measles). Paying little attention to Indian culture and traditions, the **Spanish justified their conquests, seeing themselves as bearers of “civilization.”** The Spanish created their own bureaucratic empire in the New World, establishing institutions such as **Catholic Church to convert native peoples** and the Spanish legal code and organizing **Indians into their labor force in a system known as the *encomienda***. The Spanish justified the subjugation of Africans and American Indians by claiming **superiority and offering them the opportunity to become Christians**.

Key Concept 1.1

Key Concept 1.1.I.A

Key Concept 1.1.I.C

Key Concept 1.1.I.B

Key Concept 1.2.II

Key Concept 1.2.I.A

Key Concept 1.2.II.C

Key Concept 1.2.II.B

Key Concept 1.2.I.B

Key Concept 1.2.I.A

Key Concept 1.2.II.A

Key Concept 1.2.I.D

Key Concept 1.2.II.A;

Key Concept 1.3.I.B

Chapter 2

American Experiments, 1521–1700

Chapter 2 spans both Periods 1 and 2 of the AP United States History course. The chapter explores the three types of distinctive colonies that emerged in the Americas: the Spanish colonies in Mexico and Peru that relied on the wealth and labor of Indian peoples, the plantation colonies of the tropics and subtropics where slave labor worked to product sugar and other crops, and the colonies where Europeans sought to establish societies similar to the ones they knew in Europe. All of these colonial endeavors brought disease, displacement, or subjugation to native people, but there were **significant differences in the Europeans' approaches to colonization**.

Key Concept 2.1.I

The Spanish came to the New World in search of gold and silver, relying on conquistadors to establish military control and then sending priests to work for the **conversion of native people to Catholicism**. Many Spanish soldiers eventually took Indian wives, leading to the **creation of a society that included large numbers of mixed-race people**. The Spanish used the *encomienda* system to commandeer Indian lands and labor. **Some Indian groups resisted Spanish control and attempted to retain some of their cultural traditions**. When **African slaves replaced native labor, they too managed to retain much of their own cultures**.

Key Concept 2.1.I.A

Key Concept 1.2.I.D

Key Concept 1.3.II.B

Key Concept 1.2

The **Columbian Exchange** is the term given to the movement of peoples, diseases, plants, and animals among societies on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Beginning with the Spanish and the Portuguese, **epidemic diseases from the Old World**, such as smallpox, influences, measles, and yellow fever, decimated Native American populations. The exchange of **new crops and livestock** transformed the American landscape.

Key Concept 1.2.I.A

Key Concept 1.2.I.C

The plantation colonies that emerged first in Brazil saw **the introduction of plantation-based African slave labor to the Americas who replaced Native Americans**, who had succumbed in large numbers to disease. Later **plantation societies emerged in the Caribbean**, based on a single crop: sugar. In the colony of Virginia, established at Jamestown in 1607, tobacco cultivation based on the plantation model emerged as the dominant economic system. At first, planters used indentured servants from England, but as the **supply of indentured servants dwindled, the colony came to rely on slaves imported from Africa**. Slavery as an institution became more rigid and harsher, and a slave's status became **permanent and hereditary**. Although they had few rights, **slaves managed to find ways to resist their bondage**. **Continuing competition for land led to conflicts between Indians and settlers as well as conflicts among the settlers themselves** (ex: Bacon's Rebellion).

Key Concept 1.2.I.D

Key Concept 2.1.III.C

Key Concept 2.1.II.B

Key Concept 2.1.II.C

Key Concept 2.1.II.D

Key Concept 2.2.I.C

The Dutch colony of New Netherland and the French colony of New France both began as fur trading enterprises. French and Dutch trappers and traders often **intermarried with American Indians, building trade alliances in order to obtain valuable furs**. In New France, Jesuit missionaries made concerted efforts to convert Native Americans to Catholicism, allowing some incorporation of native traditions into Catholic rituals.

Key Concept 2.1.I.B

The British colonies in New England, settled by Separatists and Puritans, established **closely knit communities that stressed family and religious principles**. **They founded small villages and towns and organized their economy around farming and commerce**. They also brought with them British forms of government, establishing the first representative assemblies in the New World. As the Puritan population grew and settlements expanded, they came into **direct conflict with American Indians** (ex: Puritan-Pequot War, Metacom's War).

Key Concept 2.1.III.A

Key Concept 2.1.I.C

Period 1 Practice Questions

Multiple-Choice Questions

Questions 1–3 refer to the map below.



Native American Peoples, 1492

1. American Indian culture had a different view of landownership than did Europeans in that they thought
 - (A) land should be owned by individual members of the society.
 - (B) tribal ownership of land was perpetual and exclusive.
 - (C) they owned the use of the land but not the land itself.
 - (D) all land was open to settlement by all people at any time.

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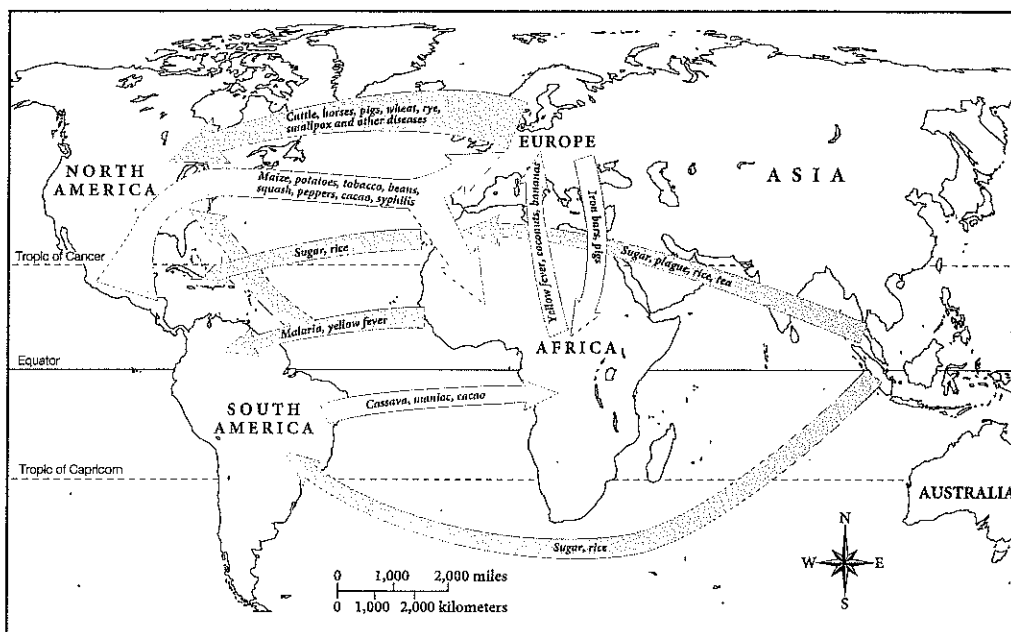
2. American Indian cultures

- (A) established a common written language.
- (B) established trade networks and communication over relatively large areas.
- (C) had peaceful relationships with each other that included voluntary emigration.
- (D) formed major alliances to combat attempts by Europeans to encroach on their lands.

3. Which of the following is true about American Indian cultures prior to contact with Europeans?

- (A) They experienced frequent epidemic diseases.
- (B) They had developed wheeled vehicles pulled by livestock.
- (C) They exchanged goods with African societies.
- (D) They were engaged in frequent conflicts with other American Indian groups.

Questions 4–7 refer to the map below.



The Columbian Exchange

4. The primary positive benefit of the Columbian Exchange was

- (A) the exchange of food products between Europe and the Western Hemisphere.
- (B) the introduction of horses into Europe.
- (C) the introduction of cattle into Europe.
- (D) the exchange of architectural design techniques between the two continents.

5. The primary negative consequence of the Columbian exchange was the exchange of

- (A) food products that led to debilitating illnesses for both American Indians and Europeans.
- (B) concepts of autocratic governments that delayed the development of democracy.
- (C) epidemic diseases introduced from Europe into the Americas.
- (D) modern methods of warfare introduced to Europeans by American Indians.

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6. Prior to European contact, North American Indians were
- (A) dominated by the Plains Indians, who possessed horses.
 - (B) dominated by the eastern woodland tribes, who possessed firearms.
 - (C) dependent on imports of foodstuffs from Mexican tribes for survival.
 - (D) distinct societies with different economies and lifestyles.
7. As the Spanish explored North America prior to 1600, they discovered
- (A) a Northwest Passage (an all-water route) to Asia.
 - (B) massive storehouses of precious metals among American Indian tribes.
 - (C) little of interest to keep them pushing north to Canada.
 - (D) evidence that Europeans had significant contact with American Indians prior to 1492.

END OF MULTIPLE-CHOICE SECTION

Short-Answer Question

Answer a, b, and c.

- a) Identify one key way in which the French and American Indians interacted economically in the Western Hemisphere prior to 1650.

- b) Identify one key way in which the Spanish and American Indians interacted economically in the Western Hemisphere prior to 1650.

- c) Provide one piece of evidence to suggest how the interaction shaped relationships between and French and American Indians or the Spanish and American Indians.

END OF SHORT-ANSWER SECTION