

AP World History: Modern Exam — Period 2 Notes (1450-1750)

AP World History: Modern Key Takeaways — Period 2 (1450-1750)

1. The Americas became part of the global trade network, spurred by the Columbian Exchange. New diseases, crops, people, and cultures were distributed throughout the world.
2. Technological improvements in shipbuilding and gunpowder weapons allowed European empires to form and exercise a more prominent role in world affairs, eventually leading to colonialism.
3. Indigenous populations in the Americas died by the millions due to their exposure to previously unknown European diseases. This led to the forced migration of African people to work the sugar plantations in the New World, changing social structures and creating the Triangular Trade route.
4. New social structures emerged in the Americas based on racial hierarchies, such as those of the peninsulares, Creoles, mestizos, and mulattos of the Spanish colonies.
5. Land-based empires in Asia grew to their greatest extent in the Qing Empire of China, the Mughal Empire, and the Ottoman Empire. Meanwhile, maritime powers like the Portuguese and the Dutch spread throughout the world following the voyages of Magellan, de Gama, and Columbus.
6. Social changes occurred in Europe as the Renaissance, the Protestant Reformation, and the Scientific Revolution challenged the power of the Catholic Church and weakened traditional bases of authority, while also creating the conditions for rapid growth in European economies and populations in later centuries.

Key Terms: Period 2 (1450-1750)

Remember that the AP World History exam tests you on the depth of your knowledge, not just your ability to recall facts. While we have provided brief definitions here, you will need to know these terms in even more depth for the AP exam, including how terms connect to broader historical themes and understandings.

The Age of Exploration

- **Christopher Columbus:** Italian navigator who attempted to find a westward route to Asia under the sponsorship of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain; first European to discover the New World.

The Development of the Global Economy

- **Conquest of Constantinople:** In 1453, the Ottomans conquered the Byzantine capital and ended the Eastern Roman Empire, giving rise to the Ottoman Empire, which lasted until WWI.
- **Caravel:** Inspired by the Arab dhow, a compact ship of Portuguese origin that featured triangular sails and a sternpost rudder making it capable of crossing oceans; used during the Age of Exploration.
- **Lateen sail:** Triangular sail that allowed ships to sail against the wind, increasing maneuverability and making early oceanic sailing possible.
- **Carrack:** Large sailing vessel with multiple masts with a large cargo capacity; stable in rough seas, which enabled voyages of several months through difficult waters; originally developed in Europe by the Portuguese in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.
- **Fluyt:** Dutch-built cargo ship with comparatively light construction, usually unarmed; allowed for quick construction and smaller crew requirements, which facilitated the growth of Dutch maritime trade.
- **Joint-stock companies:** Large, investor-backed companies that sponsored European exploration and colonization in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; precursors to modern corporations; a famous example is the British East India Company.

Columbian Exchange

- **Columbian exchange:** Beginning with the explorations of Christopher Columbus, the interchange of plants, animals, pathogens, and people between the Old World and the New World.
- **Mercantilism:** Economic system focused on maintaining a positive balance of exports to imports that encouraged domestic employment; measured the economic strength of a state relative to its neighboring states.
- **Sugar cultivation:** Specialized resource extraction process that relied on African slave labor after indigenous populations were decimated by disease; foreshadowed the intensive manufacturing of the Industrial Revolution.

State-Building

- **Gunpowder:** Chemical explosive developed by the Chinese; spread along trade routes like the Silk Road; Europeans introduced a slow-burning propellant to maximize the potential of explosive weapons.
- **Mughal Empire:** Empire that reunified India in 1526, advocated religious tolerance, and sponsored great art and architecture projects; later collapsed because of Hindu/Muslim conflict and the competition of European traders.
- **Songhai:** Successor of the Mali Empire in West Africa in the 1500s; instituted administrative and economic reforms throughout their realm; conquered by the Moroccans in 1591.
- **Creoles:** Persons of Spanish blood who were born in the Americas; descended from the peninsulares who came from the continent.

- **Mestizos:** Persons of mixed European and indigenous descent in the Spanish colonies.
- **Mulattos:** Persons of mixed African and Spanish descent in the Spanish colonies.
- **Manchu:** Nomadic group from Northeast China who were the principal rulers of the Qing Dynasty; created a multiethnic Chinese state; later came into conflict with Europeans, particularly the Russian Empire.
- **Peter the Great:** Tsar of Russia from 1682 to 1725, he rapidly modernized Russia under autocratic rule; moved the capital to St. Petersburg to provide better access to Europe.
- **Tokugawa shogunate:** Ruled Japan from 1600 to 1867; isolated Japan from the rest of the world, banned Christianity, and ejected foreign merchants other than a small number of Dutch and Chinese ships annually.
- **Daimyo:** The class of lords in a feudal system centered on the relationship between lord and warrior or peasant, which was reformed during the Tokugawa shogunate.

Systems of Forced Labor

- **Triangular trade:** Trade route between Europe and Africa (manufactured goods), Africa and the New World (enslaved peoples), and the New World and Europe (raw materials like precious metals, sugar, and other agricultural products).
- **Encomienda:** Spanish system of land grants that allowed colonists in the Americas to force labor from indigenous populations.
- **Haciendas:** Spanish system of landed estates in the colonies; owners practiced the encomienda system and later the repartimiento system of labor, where workers were paid.

Intellectual Changes

- **Printing press:** Invented in Europe by Johannes Gutenberg in 1456; made mass literacy possible and contributed to several important social movements, such as the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment.
- **Protestant Reformation:** Movement questioning the practices of the Catholic Church during a period of social upheaval, particularly the selling of indulgences; commonly held to start with Martin Luther in Germany and his 95 Theses at Wittenburg; led to other reformers like John Calvin in Switzerland and John Wesley in England.
- **Peace of Westphalia:** Series of treaties in 1648 that ended the Thirty Years' War; laid the basis for the modern state system.

Scientific Revolution

- **Scientific Revolution:** Period in which scientists challenged traditional accounts of reality by investigating the nature of natural phenomena like astronomical events; led to the scientific method and progress in all of the natural sciences; early figures such as Galileo Galilei were persecuted by the Catholic Church.