

2025 - 2026 AP US History Summer Assignment

The Pre-Columbian Period and Making of the Atlantic World

Introductions and Directions

American History does not really begin with the formation of the English colonies and the Revolution as many people would assume. It really begins even before Columbus fateful voyage. This Period comprises the First Historical Period (1491-1607). The arrival of Europeans and later Africans blended with a culture that was already ancient; Native Americans. This blend created what came to be known as the "Atlantic World." The summer work for this year is designed to accomplish three important goals.

- First, you will research aspects of early history using primary and secondary sources.
- Secondly you will get your first experience analyzing sources using a method called HIPS that will be used all year as a quick way to analyze primary sources.
- Finally, this will allow us to move quickly into the Second Historical Period (1607-1754).
- Special Note: I do not want you to think that because you will be completing this task on your own that it is unimportant. Because of constant interruptions in the year we must work ahead. There are 4 parts of the AP exam. This summer work will NOT appear as part of the 2023-2024 AP Exam's DBQ essay but for the other 75% of the test, Unit One is fair game.

Your summer work will be due in class the first week of school (by mid-week) and will count for your first assessment grade of the year. This is a 40% grade. *My standard deduction is 30 points off per day late. So, don't procrastinate.* This research must be typed and no larger than 12-font.

Part I

Background Reading and Guided Questions.

For this section, you will be answering some guided reading questions using the online resource below. Here is an important strategy; always read the questions before starting the reading. It will help focus your attention. Additionally, pay close attention to two-part questions. I highlighted key terms, people, and concepts that you will see later on the exit-assessment once we start the school year.

<https://www.americanyawp.com/>

Introduction and the First Americans

1. Based upon the introduction section what is known as the **Columbian Exchange**?
2. Choose **TWO** of the creation stories handed down explaining the origins of the tribes and explain.
3. Briefly explain how scientists believe that the "new world" was first populated and, what types of archeological evidence underpins this theory.
4. How did geography shape the dietary needs of inhabitants? At what point did the earliest examples of farming begin and where?
5. What crops were known as the "**Three Sisters**" and, how did paleo era farmers prepare land for planting?
6. How did settling farming cultures experience both positive and negative social results?
7. How did Native kinship ties differ from those found among Europeans and modern Americans?
8. What were two of the largest Native culture groups found in North America and what was their general location?

9. At Pueblo Bonito what was the purpose of a **kiva** and, what evidence suggests that the Pueblo culture possessed an important working knowledge of astronomy?
10. Where is the ancient ruins of **Cahokia** found? Cite one example from the reading that shows the expanse of this ancient city.
11. How was the slavery that existed in Cahokia very different than the system that would later exist in 18th and 19th century America (**Give TWO good examples**)?
12. List and explain TWO factors that led to the demise of Cahokia.
13. What is a surprising feature of gender roles among the Lenape (Delaware) tribe and, what was a **sachem**?
14. What European settlers first encountered the Lenape people?
15. What was the most densely populated part of paleo North America? What was a **potlatch**?

European Expansion

16. Who were the first Europeans to make landfall in North America and, why do you think that for hundreds of years few knew about their discoveries?
17. What role had the **Crusades** and the **Renaissance** played in fostering European interest in exploration?
18. By the late 15th century and early 16th century what two European maritime powers led the way in colonization? What new improvements in sea-faring technology facilitated exploration?
19. What **pattern of settlement** established by the Portuguese in Africa would establish the pattern for all the European colonizers?
20. What crop was the most valuable export from Asia and, why was it so labor intensive. Where were the original enslaved people from (not Africans)?
21. What factors led to a new reliance upon African slaves?
22. Explain why the arrival of **Christopher Columbus** set the stage for later treatment of Native peoples.
23. **Bartolomé de Las Casas** chronicled the treatment of the **Arawak** people at the hands of Spanish **Conquistadores**. Why do historians find him to be a credible source for this time period?
24. What diseases are thought to have killed perhaps as much as 90% of Native peoples within a generation?

Spanish Exploration and Conquest

25. What were an **encomienda** and **repartimiento** systems?
26. When the Spanish arrived in modern day Mexico why would they not have faced **Mayans** as they would the **Aztecs**?
27. Explain the political structure of the Aztec Empire and, why was this structure easy for conquistador **Hernán Cortés** exploit?
28. What were some of the main reasons why the Aztecs, an empire of over one million people, were decimated by on a few hundred Spanish troops under Cortés?
29. How was **Francisco Pizarro** able to destroy the **Incan Empire** as Hernán Cortés had done to the Aztecs?
30. In the decades following the original wave of conquistadores a system of racial hierarchy called the **Casta System** developed in **New Spain**. What were **Peninsulares**, **Criollos** (sometimes spelled **Creole**) and, **Mestizos**?
31. Why did New Spain develop a more lenient racial system than would be later found in British North America?
32. In the final section choose TWO conquistadores and tell their area of conquest.

33. What was the paradox between the overall impact of European colonization in on New World populations and that on Old World populations? Be sure to explain your answer.

Part II Primary and Secondary Sources.

For this section, you will be answering some analysis questions based upon the HIPPS method. Before you start this section, be sure that you have read the instructions below. The HIPPS method is absolutely critical to your success on the AP Exams FRQ section. This includes 3 SAQ sections (euphemistically called **Short Answer Questions**), the DBQ essay (**Data Based Question**) and your LEQ (**Long Essay Question**).

*Analyzing Documents using **HIPS***

The acronym HIPPS provides students with prompts that provide them with a strategy for dissecting and interpreting primary documents/political cartoons for higher order synthesis when juxtaposed with specific information. When preparing a HIPPS assignment follow the outline below. Be aware that we will be doing this very extensively this year as nearly the entire AP European test is document based.

Historical Context

The first step in document analysis is understanding the historical context that forms the foundation of the source. Here is an example using a primary source excerpt:

"I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day down in Alabama with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, one day right down in Alabama little Black boys and Black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together."

Martin Luther King, Washington D.C. 1963

The historical context of the speech is the Civil Rights Movement and the March on Washington and the source is generally called the "I have a Dream" speech. Then you would add a few sentences of information to help the reader comprehend the background that led to the history behind the speech. This skill is not only important for document analysis. Historical context is critical to your essay writing this year.

Who are the Intended Audience?

Primary documents more than likely have an audience that they intend to address. It may be one person or a specific group of people. In determining the audience, students need to address the frame of reference and point of view of the audience while attempting to determine how the primary document addressed the needs of the intended audience. If the source is from a diary, then the audience might only be for that one person. Be careful Once the audience is established students can make inferences as to how this might affect the reliability of the primary document.

What is the Point of View?

Another key part of the speaker section and in many ways the most important is analyzing for *Bias/Tone/and POV (point of view)*. You must include this discussion to receive credit for this section. You are looking for key words and or phrases to reveal a certain viewpoint. Sometimes this is obvious and other times you might have to write "neutral". Please note that the credit here comes from how you explain this point. If a person has a bias, then say why you think so. If they have a neutral tone, then you must say why. Your assessment might be different from someone else's here. Therefore, you must explain your position. Take the source above as an example. One can clearly say that Dr. King spoke with a great passion and his point of view was racial equality. Then point an example from the excerpt that supports your position.

What prior knowledge do I have about the Source

This is a section that you may not always have to write down but more of something to ponder or even discuss below in significance. On written analysis of documents, I will not ask for this very often. However, when we read and discuss this in class I will frequently ask this question. Perhaps you have never heard of the I have a Dream Speech but chances are you can tell me about Dr. Martin Luther King

What is the Significance of the Source?

Why is this primary document important for historical researchers? After going through the process of fleshing out the information in the primary document, students should be able to compose a definitive statement(s). The definitive statement(s) may draw conclusions about the primary document in relation to a larger question asked or prior specific information the student had as prior knowledge. *Sometimes the Significance and Purpose can be the same depending upon the source.*

Often when interpreting primary documents, students need to be able to determine the time and place that prompted the documents creation. Where and when was the source produced? And, how might this affect the meaning of the document? Once determined, the occasion can help students interpret the larger experiences/events of the time that the primary document originated from, allowing for students to draw conclusions on the attitudes and emotions of the document. *In this section, you must always include a date(s) to receive full credit! In some cases, you may have to guess or estimate.* Also, the date of the source is what we are looking for and not when it was published as a source. Clearly, the source above is from 1963 but I borrowed it from a 2010 article from the NPR website!

Document A

“The Spaniards first assaulted the innocent Sheep, so qualified by the Almighty, like most cruel tigers, wolves, and lions, hunger-starved, studying nothing, for the space of Forty Years, after their first landing, but the Massacre of these Wretches, whom they have so inhumanely and barbarously butchered and harassed with several kinds of Torments, never before known, or heard (of which you shall have some account in the following Discourse) that of Three Millions of Persons, which lived in Hispaniola itself, there is at present but the inconsiderable remnant of scarce Three Hundred. Nay the Isle of Cuba, which extends as far, as Valladolid in Spain is distant from Rome, lies now uncultivated, like a Desert, and entombed in its own Ruins. You may also find the Isles of St. John, and Jamaica, both large and fruitful places, unpeopled and desolate. The Lucayan Islands on the North Side, adjacent to Hispaniola and Cuba,

which are Sixty in number, or thereabout, together with those, vulgarly known by the name of the Gigantic Isles, and others, the most infertile whereof, exceeds the Royal Garden of Seville in fruitfulness, a most Healthful and pleasant Climate, is now laid waste and uninhabited; and whereas, when the Spaniards first arrived here, about Five Hundred Thousand Men dwelt in it, they are now cut off, some by slaughter, and others ravished away by Force and Violence, to work in the Mines of Hispaniola, which was destitute of Native Inhabitants: For a certain Vessel, sailing to this Isle, to the end, that the Harvest being over (some good Christian, moved with Piety and Pity, undertook this dangerous Voyage, to convert Souls to Christianity) the remaining gleanings might be gathered up, there were only found Eleven Persons, which I saw with my own Eyes. There are other Islands Thirty in number, and upward bordering upon the Isle of St. John, totally unpeopled; all which are above Two Thousand miles in length, and yet remain without Inhabitants, Native, or People.”

Dominican Friar Bartolomé de Las Casas *Describes the Exploitation of Indigenous Peoples*, 1542

Questions

1. Briefly explain the *historical context* of the passage. In the first line how does the speaker describe the Natives and the Spanish?
2. Explain the *point of view* and *tone* of the passage.
3. Who do you believe to be the *intended audience* for de Las Casas’ passage?

Document Two

“During this same time, The Sun commanded that Montezuma and Itzcohuatzin, the military chief of Tlatelolco, be made prisoners. The Spaniards hanged a chief from Acolhuacan named Nezahualquenzin. They also murdered the king of Nauhtla, Cohualpopocatzin, by wounding him with arrows and then burning him alive. For this reason, our warriors were on guard at the Eagle Gate. The sentries from Tenochtitlan stood at one side of the gate, and the sentries from Tlatelolco at the other. But messengers came to tell them to dress the figure of Huitzilopochtli. They left their posts and went to dress him in his sacred finery: his ornaments and his paper clothing. When this had been done, the celebrants began to sing their songs. That is how they celebrated the first day of the fiesta. On the second day they began to sing again, but without warning they were all put to death. The dancers and singers were completely unarmed. They brought only their embroidered cloaks, their turquoises, their lip plugs, their necklaces, their clusters of heron feathers, their trinkets made of deer hooves. Those who played the drums, the old men, had brought their gourds of snuff and their timbrels. The Spaniards attacked the musicians first, slashing at their hands and faces until they had killed all of them. The singers-and even the spectators-were also killed. This slaughter in the Sacred Patio went on for three hours. Then the Spaniards burst into the rooms of the temple to kill the others: those who were carrying water, or bringing fodder for the horses, or grinding meal, or sweeping, or standing watch over this work. The king Montezuma, who was accompanied by Itzcohuatzin and by those who had brought food for the Spaniards, protested: “Our lords, that is enough! What are you doing? These people are not carrying shields or macanas. Our lords, they are completely unarmed!” The Sun had treacherously murdered our people on the twentieth day after the captain left for the coast. We allowed the Captain to return to the city in peace. But on the following day we attacked him with all our might, and that was the beginning of the war.”

An Aztec account of the Spanish attack, 1520

Questions

4. What was the historical context of the passage?
5. How did the Spanish distract the Aztec defenders of the city?
6. What is the historical significance of the passage?

Document Three

“.....Above all, it leaves out the fact that this encounter was inevitable. This is not simply to state the obvious: that if Columbus hadn't set sail in 1492, some other European voyager would have made the trip soon afterward. The key point is that whoever made the first crossing and whenever it occurred, the consequences for the people of the Western Hemisphere would not have been much different. To expect otherwise is to ask that history should be rolled back long before 1492 and that its course be plotted along other lines entirely. European civilization would have to be recast. What drove Columbus westward was not just a search for a lucrative new trade route to Asia. It is too simplistic to picture him and the other European explorers as mere money-grubbers, early real-estate developers who lucked into an entire continent to subdivide. Money was obviously important to them, but they were also animated by a certain restlessness and curiosity. The voyage into the unknown, after all, had been part of European culture since the days of Odysseus. To some degree this questing instinct was bound up with religious zeal: look, for example, at the search for the Holy Grail and the history of the Crusades. On a more mundane level, it was often a social necessity: families were large, houses were small, land was scarce, and so young people were encouraged to leave home and seek their fortune. Missionaries set out to preach the Gospel. Merchants set out to find new goods and new markets to sell them in. Armies sometimes led this process, sometimes followed. The spread of Western civilization was built on intrusion.”

Kenneth Auchincloss, *When Worlds Collide* Newsweek Fall/Winter 1991

Questions

7. The author of this passage is responding to assertions that Columbus' arrival and actions were an act of genocide. After reading the passage explain his point of view and what points that he makes to prove his argument.

8. List and explain ONE social and economic cause that the author cites as evidence for why Europeans began exploring and colonizing

Document Four

“The charge of genocide is largely sustained by figures showing the precipitous decline of the Indian population. Although scholars debate the exact numbers, in Alvin Josephy's estimate, the Indian population fell from between fifteen and twenty million when the white man first arrived to a fraction of that 150 years later. Undoubtedly the Indians perished in great numbers. Yet although European enslavement of Indians and the Spanish forced labor system extracted a heavy toll in lives, the vast majority of Indian casualties occurred not as a result of hard labor or deliberate destruction but because of contagious diseases that the Europeans transmitted to the Indians. The spread of infection and unhealthy patterns of behavior was also reciprocal. From the Indians, the Europeans contracted syphilis. The Indians also taught the white man about tobacco and cocaine, which would extract an incalculable human toll over the next several centuries. The Europeans, for their part, gave the Indians measles and smallpox. (Recent research has shown that tuberculosis predated the European arrival in the new world.) Since the Indians had not developed any resistance or immunity to these unfamiliar ailments, they perished in catastrophic numbers.”

Dinesh D'Souza, “The Crimes of Christopher Columbus,” 1995

Questions

9. What is the **point of view** of the speaker as to whether Columbus was responsible for genocide?

10. What does the author point out about the reciprocal negative impact that the Columbian Exchange had upon both cultures.

Part III

If you completed the questions above you'll have an exit assignment, the first/second week of school.

If you complete the summer assignment BEFORE the first day of school, then you'll get an extra 10 points added to your grade. I rarely give extra credit so this is unusual.

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