

# Period 1: 1491-1607

## In a Nutshell

On a North American continent controlled by American Indians, contact among the peoples of Europe, the Americas, and West Africa created a new world.

## Key Concepts

### Part 1

- A. Before the arrival of Europeans, native populations in North America developed a wide variety of social, political, and economic structures based in part on interactions with the environment and each other.
- B. As settlers migrated and settled across the vast expanse of North America, they developed quite different and increasingly complex societies by adapting to and transforming their diverse environments.

### Part 2

- C. European overseas expansion resulted in the Columbian Exchange, a series of interactions and adaptations among societies across the Atlantic.
- D. The arrival of Europeans in the Western Hemisphere in the 15th and 16th centuries triggered extensive demographic and social changes on both sides of the Atlantic.
- E. European expansion into the Western Hemisphere caused intense social/religious, political, and economic competition in Europe and the promotion of empire building.

### Part 3

- F. Contacts among American Indians, Africans, and Europeans challenged the worldviews of each group.
- G. European overseas expansion and sustained contacts with Africans and American Indians dramatically altered European views of social, political, and economic relationships among and between white and nonwhite peoples.
- H. Native peoples and Africans in the Americas strove to maintain their political and cultural autonomy in the face of European challenges to their independence and core beliefs.

## Significant Topics

### 1. Economic Development and Social Diversification Among Native Societies

The spread of maize (corn) cultivation from present-day Mexico northward into the American Southwest and beyond supported economic development and social diversification among societies in these areas; a mix of foraging and hunting did the same for societies in the Northwest and areas of California.

- a. Pueblo

b. Chinook

2. **Mobile Lifestyles in Native Societies**

Native societies responded to the lack of natural resources in the Great Basin and the western Great Plains by developing largely mobile lifestyles.

3. **Native Societies in the Northeast and Atlantic Seaboard**

In the Northeast and along the Atlantic Seaboard some societies developed a mixed agricultural and hunter–gatherer economy that favored the development of permanent villages.

a. Iroquois

b. Algonquin

4. **Spanish and Portuguese Exploration and Conquest**

Spanish and Portuguese exploration and conquest of the Americas led to widespread deadly epidemics, the emergence of racially mixed populations, and a caste system defined by an intermixture among Spanish settlers, Africans, and Native Americans.

a. smallpox

b. Mestizo

c. Zambo

5. **Spanish and Portuguese Slave Trade**

Spanish and Portuguese traders reached West Africa and partnered with some African groups to exploit local resources and recruit slave labor for the Americas.

6. **Spanish Economics in the New World**

The introduction of new crops and livestock (e.g. horses and cows) by the Spanish had far-reaching effects on native settlement patterns, as well as on economic, social, and political development in the Western Hemisphere.

a. Columbian Exchange

7. **Indian Labor and African Slavery in the Spanish Colonies**

In the economies of the Spanish colonies, Indian labor, used in the *encomienda* system to support plantation-based agriculture and extract precious metals (e.g., silver), and other resources (e.g., sugar), was gradually replaced by African slavery.

a. *encomienda* system

8. **European Colonization in the New World**

European exploration and conquest were fueled by a desire for new sources of wealth, increased power and status, and converts to Christianity.

a. Christopher Columbus

b. Juan Ponce de León

c. St. Augustine, 1565

d. Walter Raleigh

e. Roanoke, 1586

9. **European Economics in the New World**

New crops (e.g., corn and potatoes) from the Americas stimulated European population growth, while new sources of mineral wealth facilitated the European shift from feudalism to capitalism.

10. **Developments Making Colonization Possible**

Improvements in technology and more organized methods for conducting international trade helped drive changes to economies in Europe and the Americas.

- a. sextant
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. joint stock companies

**11. Treatment of Native Americans**

With little experience dealing with people who were different from themselves, Spanish and Portuguese explorers poorly understood the native peoples they encountered in the Americas, leading to debates over how American Indians should be treated and how “civilized” these groups were compared to European standards.

- a. Juan de Sepúlveda
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. Bartolomé de Las Casas

**12. Beliefs in White Superiority**

Many Europeans developed a belief in white superiority to justify their subjugation of Africans and American Indians, using several different rationales.

**13. Native American Resistance to European Colonization**

European attempts to change American Indian beliefs and worldviews on basic social issues such as religion, gender roles and the family, and the relationship of people with the natural environment led to American Indian resistance and conflict.

- a. Spanish Mission System
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. Juan de Oñate

**14. African Culture in the New World**

In spite of slavery, Africans’ cultural and linguistic adaptations to the Western Hemisphere resulted in varying degrees of cultural preservation and autonomy.

- a. Maroons

b. African American Religion

## **Additional Information**

### **Example**

1. astrolabe
  
2. conquistadors

## **Topic Number**

#10—Developments  
Making Colonization  
Possible

#11—Treatment of  
Native Americans