

AP United States History Summer Assignment 2026

Assignment

You are to watch five EdPuzzle videos from the *Unfinished Nation* video lecture series. Topics covered include: native people living in the Americas before Europeans arrival, the exploration and colonization of the Americas by European powers, the motives for European exploration and colonization, the economic, political, and religious issues associated with colonization, racial complexities and environmental challenges amid the cultural issues that arose as a result of colonization, the diversity of the different colonies in the Americas, and the similarities and differences between the three English colonial regions in North America.

There are several questions embedded in each video. All questions must be answered. You can make a copy of this document, save it to your Google drive, and fill in the answers below each question, or you can answer the questions in your notebook. Please take the time to rewatch the segments if you miss an answer. You are encouraged to use additional sources to add to your answer as needed.

If you have any questions please email Mr. Graffeo (mgraffeo@opschools.org) or Mr. Janas (gjanas@opschools.org). Do not wait until the last minute to complete this assignment or to email your questions.

This assignment is due by the start of class on Monday, September 14, 2026.

Please Note: In June, account passwords were reset to your 900# -- If you're unable to log in to your account, please email the helpdesk: technology@opschools.org.

[Video #1: From Days Before Time](#)

This video recounts the first wave of Spanish exploration and colonization in the Americas, emphasizing the Spanish influence on North America and its impact on future historical events. Beginning with the arrival of the Paleo-Indians and the establishment of various Native American cultures and societies, the program chronicles the journeys of Christopher Columbus and other explorers who landed in Central and South America while searching for a route to the East. Noted historians discuss the savage and domineering rule of the conquistadors over the Aztec and Incan people as well as highlight the more gentle attempts by Franciscan missionaries to spread Christianity among the native population. The Spanish colonial system is highlighted, including the monarchy's desire for gold and silver that created the slave trade in the New World. A look at the Spanish influence on Native American society and agriculture reveals the complex relationship between the colonizer and the colonized.

1. Compare and contrast American agricultural crops with European crops, and comment on the domestication of animals in the Americas.
2. Explain what contributed to the diversity to the native people in America, and what contributed to the unity of the people.
3. Cortes is reported to have said, "I and my companions suffer from a disease of the heart that can be cured only with gold." Beyond pure economic value, what was the significance of obtaining gold?
4. What were the goals of the Spanish conquistadors, and what were the results?
5. Explain how the actions of the conquistadors negatively impacted the long term goals of the Spanish monarchy. Why did the Franciscan missionaries clash with the conquistadors?
6. Describe the relationships that developed between the Franciscan missionaries and the native people.
7. What two 'incentives' encouraged further Spanish exploration and colonization of the New World? Explain these 'incentives'.
8. Explain how and why slavery became a reality for the Spanish colonizers.

9. Characterize the Spanish approach to colonization. What type of administrative structure did the Spanish envision?
10. In 1680 the Spanish were driven out of Nuevo Mexico as a result of the Pueblo Revolt. Give some details of this uprising (you may need an additional source). What was ironic about the Pueblo people uniting?
11. What were some positive results for Indians due to contact with the Spanish?
12. The Spanish empire did not have the 'capacity for expansion' by the end of the 16th and early 17th century. What does this mean? Explain why this was the case.

[Video #2: Turbulent Virginia: Pirate Base, Royal Colony](#)

Turbulent Virginia: Pirate Base, Royal Colony documents the failures and achievements of England's first American colonies during the seventeenth century. This program emphasizes how trade competition with Spain, France, and the Netherlands prompted the founding of American settlements. Beginning with the failed Roanoke Colony and ending with the more successful Jamestown settlement, the program discusses the relationships between settlers and Native Americans while stressing the importance of family life and the cultivation of corn and tobacco. In-depth analysis of early colonial life and the economic, financial, and religious motivations behind it make this program a fascinating study of seventeenth century American history.

1. Explain the emergence of Spain as the dominant power in Europe. To challenge Spain's status, what did leaders in England decide? Describe the problems and assets facing England at the time.
2. What motivated French efforts in the region of the St. Lawrence River? Compare and contrast French relations with the native people to the Spanish relations with native people.
3. How did the Dutch emerge as a player in gaining colonies? What specific lands did the Dutch claim and colonize?
4. Explain the 'Black Legend of Spanish conquest'. How did it help England achieve the goal of colonies in the New World?
5. What were some advantages and disadvantages of the location of the Roanoke colony? Why was this location chosen?
6. Historically, what characteristics describe the first people who attempted to colonize the New World? What did Raleigh do differently in his second attempt to establish a colony? Explain a reason for conflict with the native population.
7. What are some theories as to what happened to the colony at Roanoke? Why is the failure of Roanoke called a 'failure on the English side'?
8. Explain how the involvement of English merchants changed the success of early colonies.

9. What was the goal or objective of many of the men who came to establish Jamestown in 1607? Why was Jamestown an attractive venture to some?
10. Describe the demographic make-up of most people who came to the New World in the early to mid 1600's. What was the long term plan of many who came to these new settlements?
11. Describe the conditions faced by the settlers at Jamestown, and detail the results in the early years.
12. What role did the Indians play in the survival of Jamestown? Explain the significance in the different methods used to grow beans and corn.
13. What explanation is offered as to why the Indians were willing to help the English settlers at Jamestown and Roanoke?
14. To explain the actions of the English towards the Native Americans at Jamestown, the term 'cultural retribution' is used. Break down the meaning of this and give examples.
15. What major ideas on the development of colonies are credited to Captain John Smith?
16. Explain the role that agriculture played in helping to save the Jamestown colony.
17. The Virginia Company's charter was revoked in 1624. What did this mean? What were some results of this? What benchmark proved the stability of the Jamestown colony in the 1680's and 1690's?

[Video #3: Saints and Strangers](#)

This video clarifies the challenges encountered by the Puritans after landing on Plymouth Rock in 1620. The program depicts the characteristics of Puritan society to provide a well-rounded glimpse into early American life. The procedures of town hall meetings, the people's relationship with God, the church dynamic, and their submissive nature are each explored in-depth. In addition, the program features engaging commentary from several historians who discuss Charles I, John Smith, King Philip's War, Anne Hutchinson, the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and the Mayflower Compact and the impact of these people, events, and laws on an emerging society

1. Identify the religious ideals of the Puritans, and explain why the Puritans were in conflict with the Church of England.
2. What characteristics defined the Puritans who traveled to New England? Compare and contrast this with the early settlers of Jamestown.
3. What was the goal or objective of many of the Puritans who came to the New World?
4. The early Puritan settlers are described as 'Englishmen and English women living in a new world'. What does this mean culturally, socially and politically?
5. How did initial experiences of explorers result in 'two different expectations' in dealing with Native Americans?
6. How did the Puritans use the Massachusetts Bay Charter to set up a self-governing colony?
7. Explain the concept of the town meeting, and identify how this reflected some democratic values. How did this move the colony further from the control of the King?
8. Explain the power of the New England congregation and the power that came from becoming a member of the church.
9. How was land divided up in Puritan settlements? How did this impact relations among neighbors/townspeople?

10. According to one historian, at the very heart of Puritanism is an 'extraordinary level of subversiveness'. Explain this interpretation. How do the actions of Anne Hutchinson fit into this interpretation?
11. In determining the success of the Puritans establishing a 'godly community', several factors are given that limited success. Explain these factors, including a detailed account of the impact played by the availability of land.
12. Why did New Englanders not need to expand geographically? Compare and contrast this to the Jamestown colony.
13. Explain the thesis that the 'peaceful farmer' made conflict with Native Americans inevitable. Give some details and results of the Pequot War of 1637.
14. What was the purpose of a Puritan 'praying town'? What happened at a 'praying town'?
15. What were some of the consequences of King Philip's War of 1675-1676?

[Video #4: The Lure of the Land](#)

The Lure of Land examines early life in the Atlantic, middle, and southern American colonies, defining the characteristics of each region and analyzing colonists' changing relationship with Great Britain. This program analyzes key events in early United States history, including the impact of the Navigation Acts and the origins of early American political ideology. It assesses how the colonies related to England through the changing policies of British rulers James I, Charles I, Oliver Cromwell, Charles II, and James II. Finally, this program analyzes the impact of the Glorious Revolution in America, looking especially to the Pennsylvania Quakers as key figures in spreading notions of gender equality, religious toleration, and other ideas later used by the Founding Fathers in forming the United States Constitution. Primary documents and expert commentary give this program insight on the issues leading up to the Revolutionary War.

1. Due to its small population and lack of a standing army, other European powers did not take England seriously. What was the one strength England did have that would turn out to be critical in future years?
2. In the 1660's, there was renewed interest in the colonies after the Restoration. Why was this so? What were some interests?
3. The Virginia Charter and later the Maryland Charter were different from the earliest model for setting up colonies. How were they different? What did they involve?
4. Why did the arrival of immigrants slow down by the end of the 1600's? What is ironic about this? Why did the Middle Colonies become an attractive destination for some?
5. What was different about the role played by Quaker women compared to other religious groups? How did others view Quaker women?
6. Describe the relationship between Quakers and Native Americans. When and why did this relationship change?
7. What is considered by some to be the most significant legacy of the Quakers? How does this compare to other religious groups in North America? What were some practical advantages of Quaker practices?

8. One historian discusses the 'diversity' and 'dynamism' of the Middle Colonies. Give examples of both.
9. List some facts about the development of the Carolina colony.
10. List some facts about the development of the colonies of Florida and Georgia.
11. What did England realize about trade involving the Colonies? What was the purpose of the Navigation Acts of the 1650's - 1696?
12. Why was the Crown so focused on gaining control of New England?
13. What was the Dominion of New England, and for what purpose did James II create this Dominion?
14. Explain three changes that occurred after the creation of the Dominion of New England. What were the results of these actions?
15. How did the Glorious Revolution in the Colonies impact life in the Colonies?
16. What reasons are given to argue that the Atlantic Ocean was not a barrier between England and the Colonies? How effective were the Navigation Acts by the end of the 1600's?
17. Explain the 'paradox' of the Colonies that began to develop in the 1700's.

[Video #5: Coming to America: Portrait of Colonial Life](#)

This lecture captures the harsh conditions that confronted early immigrants during their assimilation into the American colonies, including the perils of the transatlantic voyage and the difficult life of indentured servitude. The program carefully analyzes how indentured servitude gradually evolved into slavery. The informative presentation contains insightful interviews with renowned historians that discuss how immigration was the key to American history, the marriage relationship, and the roles and responsibilities of men, women, and children during the 1700s. Plantation life, diversity, and religion are dominant themes in this memorable analysis of history.

1. List some of the different groups that populated the colonies in the 1600's and 1700's.
2. Explain the system of indentured servitude. How did it help populate the colonies?
3. The gender ratio was skewed, about six men for every one woman who came to the colonies. Why was this so? What problems did this present, and how did they try to address this? What change did this signal in attitudes regarding immigration to the colonies?
4. What factors impacted the contract length of an indentured servant? What were some experiences of indentured servants after they served their contract?
5. What were some major demographic differences between the New England colonies and the Southern colonies?
6. What role did family play in New England? What could a person learn from family?
7. Explain the relationship between husbands and wives in the Puritan marriage contract. What is so unique about this?
8. List some facts on the self sufficient household. What jobs needed to be completed? What gender roles existed?
9. Explain the 'transition' from using indentured servants to African slaves as the primary labor force in the Americas. What factors drove this transition?

10. What transformed the United States (after the American Revolution) into the great slave-owning society of the Western world?
11. List some facts detailing the German immigration experience.
12. List some facts detailing the Scots-Irish immigration experience.
13. Describe some reaction to the immigrants who arrived in the colonies.

Short Answer Questions

Answer each question below in a detailed paragraph or paragraphs. You do not need to write an introduction or a conclusion. Be sure to answer all parts of the question, and use specific facts from the video to back up your answer. Your teacher may use these short answer questions as the foundation for an early essay writing assignment.

1. Compare and contrast the settlement patterns of the Spanish, French and English. Focus your answer on specific geographic regions, economic developments, and relations with Native Americans.
2. Although the Atlantic colonies were all settled by the English, they became three distinct regions (Chesapeake/Southern, Middle, and New England Colonies). Analyze the factors that made each region different from the other English colonies. Use information regarding demographics, economics, political structure and religious influences in your answer.

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