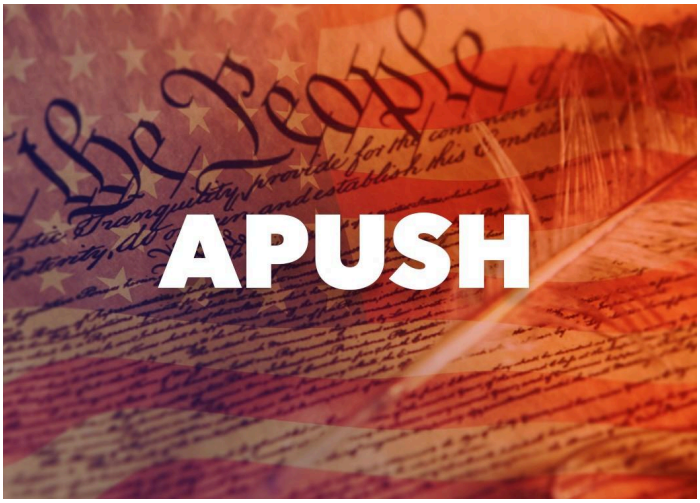
AP United States History Summer Assignment (2026–2027)

Welcome to AP U.S. History!

Welcome to AP United States History. This assignment is designed to introduce you to the skills used in APUSH and review important ideas from Periods 1 and 2 (1491–1754). You are not expected to know everything before entering the course. The goal is to begin thinking like a historian and familiarize the class with the initial units of APUSH. The pace of the class is advanced as we will cover early American civilization to present day in preparation for the AP Exam at the beginning of May 2027.



How To Be R.E.A.D.Y. in APUSH

- **R** - Read! - Given the amount of information we cover, it is imperative that you keep up with the readings that are assigned outside of class and complete the outlines as it will enrich your learning in class.
- **E** - Everybody struggles from time to time - While it is expected that you try your best, it is important to understand that it's OK not to always get an A in APUSH. There will be moments where you do not do well, it is normal and it is part of the learning process.
- **A** - Ask questions - If you do not understand something, you are probably not the only person. Ask questions, get clarification; it will benefit you as well as the rest of the class.
- **D** - Determination - APUSH is a difficult class and is the equivalent of an introductory college history class. It is a commitment and it is expected that you give your best effort everyday.
- **Y** - You can do this! - APUSH is not impossible and although it is difficult, you will be supported throughout your time in this class.

Course Expectations

APUSH emphasizes:

• Historical thinking skills
• Evidence-based arguments
• Reading and analyzing documents
• Connections across time
• Understanding causes, effects, and change over time

Part I — Introduction to APUSH Skills (8 points)

How AP Multiple Choice Works

Most AP multiple-choice questions begin with a stimulus. A stimulus may be a document, image, map, chart, political cartoon, or historical interpretation. From there, the document will also have a corresponding multiple choice question to answer. Documents could be both primary sources or secondary sources. Secondary sources are often written or created by second-hand sources such as historians, researchers, etc., while primary sources are first-hand accounts from the individuals who took part in the events being studied, with this being seen in the writing, imagery, and context of the document.

Steps:

1. Read the source.
2. Identify author and audience.
3. Think about historical context.
4. Eliminate clearly incorrect choices.
5. Select the strongest answer.

How Historians Read Documents

Observe - Is the document written, a picture, etc.? What is happening in the text or image?
Contextualize - What is the historical context of the document? How might this influence the document?
Audience - Who was the intended audience of the document? How does this influence the document?
Purpose - What was the author's purpose for creating the argument? Does it affect the message or meaning of the document?
Point of View - What is the point of view of the document?
Historical Significance - Why is the document historically significant or what does it depict of historical significance?

1. **Explain one reason sources may contain bias. (2 Points)**

Please write your answer in the space provided below:

2. **Explain the difference between primary and secondary sources. (2 Points)**

Please write your answer in the space provided below:

3. **Why does historical context matter? (2 Points)**

Please write your answer in the space provided below:

4. **Why do historians compare multiple sources? (2 Points)**

Please write your answer in the space provided below:

Part II — Historical Foundations Readings (18 points)

Reading 1: Native America and European Contact

Long before Europeans arrived in North America, the continent was home to millions of people organized into diverse societies with different political systems, cultures, economies, and traditions. Native peoples adapted to the environments in which they lived and developed ways of life based on the resources available to them. Because geography varied greatly across North America, Native societies also developed differently from one another.

In the Southwest, Pueblo peoples created farming communities supported by sophisticated irrigation systems that allowed crops such as corn, beans, and squash to grow in dry climates. In the Eastern Woodlands, many Native groups relied on agriculture, hunting, and extensive trade networks that connected different communities. Along the Pacific Coast, abundant natural resources allowed societies to establish permanent settlements and complex social structures. On the Great Plains, some groups followed migrating animal populations, while others created more permanent communities near rivers and fertile land. Although these societies had important differences, they all developed systems of government and cultural traditions that shaped daily life.

One of the strongest political systems in North America was the Iroquois Confederacy. Several nations, including the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca peoples, joined together in an alliance that encouraged cooperation and conflict resolution among its members. Decisions often involved discussion and agreement among leaders rather than rule by a single individual. The Confederacy demonstrated that Native societies could establish organized political systems and long-lasting alliances. These societies were highly developed and varied significantly across regions.

European exploration increased during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries for several reasons. Competition among European nations encouraged exploration and empire building as countries sought wealth and power. Historians often summarize these motivations as **"God, Gold, and Glory."** Many leaders wanted access to trade routes and valuable resources, particularly routes to Asia and opportunities for trade in spices, silk, and other goods. Others hoped to spread Christianity to new regions and increase the influence of their nations. Technological developments also made exploration increasingly possible. Improvements such as the compass, astrolabe, and more advanced ships allowed sailors to travel greater distances with increased accuracy.

Interactions between Europe and the Americas created major changes through the **Columbian Exchange**, a movement of plants, animals, diseases, and ideas between the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. Corn and potatoes spread from the Americas and eventually supported population growth in Europe and other parts of the world. Europeans introduced animals such as horses, cattle, and pigs to the Americas. Horses changed life for many Native societies, especially on the Great Plains, by improving transportation and hunting. However, the Columbian Exchange also had devastating consequences. Diseases such as smallpox, measles,

and influenza spread rapidly among Native populations because many had little immunity to these illnesses. Historians estimate that disease caused significant population declines in many Native communities. The exchange transformed societies on both sides of the Atlantic and permanently changed world history.

1. **Identify one Native society from the reading. Explain the society. (3 Points)**

Please write your answer in the space provided below:

2. **Explain two reasons for European exploration. (3 Points)**

Please write your answer in the space provided below:

3. **Explain one positive and one negative effect of the Columbian Exchange. (3 Points)**

Please write your answer in the space provided below:

Reading 2: Colonial Development and British America

As England established colonies in North America during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, important regional differences developed. Geography, climate, economic opportunities, and religious goals all influenced how colonies evolved. Over time, distinct regions formed with different economies and social structures.

The Chesapeake colonies, including Virginia and Maryland, relied heavily on agriculture, especially tobacco farming. Tobacco quickly became an important cash crop because of its popularity in Europe. Large plantations required significant amounts of labor, creating a strong demand for workers. During the early years of colonization, many laborers came as **indentured servants**. These individuals agreed to work for a set number of years in exchange for passage to America, food, and shelter. After completing their contracts, they were supposed to receive their freedom and sometimes land or supplies.

As the colonies grew, however, landowners increasingly turned to enslaved labor. Plantation owners viewed slavery as a more permanent and profitable labor system. Over time, the use of enslaved Africans expanded significantly throughout the southern colonies. The transition from indentured servitude to slavery gradually created a social system based on racial hierarchy that would shape American society for centuries.

New England colonies developed differently from the Chesapeake region. Many settlers in New England, particularly Puritans, migrated in family groups rather than as individuals seeking economic opportunity. Puritans hoped to establish communities based on religious principles and believed they were creating a model society that others would follow. Because New England had rocky soil and a shorter growing season, large plantations were less common. Instead, the region's economy relied more heavily on fishing, shipbuilding, trade, and small farms. Towns often centered around churches and local communities played an important role in daily life.

Colonial development was also influenced by economic ideas such as **mercantilism**. Under mercantilism, colonies existed largely to benefit the mother country. Colonies supplied raw materials, including tobacco and timber, while serving as markets for manufactured goods produced in England. Laws known as the **Navigation Acts** attempted to regulate colonial trade and ensure economic benefits flowed primarily to England. Although these laws established rules over colonial commerce, enforcement was often inconsistent, allowing colonists a degree of economic independence.

During the eighteenth century, major intellectual and religious movements also influenced colonial society. The **Enlightenment** emphasized reason, science, and natural rights. Thinkers argued that governments existed to protect citizens and that people possessed certain rights simply because they were human. These ideas encouraged colonists to question authority and think more critically about government.

At the same time, the **Great Awakening** spread throughout the colonies. Religious leaders encouraged emotional religious experiences and challenged established church authority. Preachers such as Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield attracted large audiences and

emphasized personal faith rather than strict religious tradition. The movement encouraged many colonists to question traditional institutions and authority figures.

Together, these economic, religious, and intellectual developments helped shape colonial society. They also introduced ideas about liberty, rights, and self-government that later contributed to revolutionary thought and the movement for independence.

1. **Compare Chesapeake and New England colonies. (3 Points)**

Please write your answer in the space provided below:

2. **Explain why slavery expanded. (3 Points)**

Please write your answer in the space provided below:

3. **Explain one effect of either the Enlightenment or Great Awakening. (3 Points)**

Please write your answer in the space provided below:

Part III — AP Stimulus Sets (14 points)

Stimulus Set A

Historical Context:

In 1492 Christopher Columbus sailed across the Atlantic while searching for a route to Asia. Following his voyage he wrote letters describing the lands and people he encountered.

Primary Source Excerpt: Letter from Christopher Columbus Describing His First Voyage (1493)

"They are all of good stature and handsome appearance and well dressed… They do not bear arms, nor are they acquainted with them, for I showed them swords and they grasped them by the blade and cut themselves through ignorance. They have no iron. Their spears are made of cane… They should be good servants and intelligent, for I observed that they quickly took in what was said to them. I believe they would easily become Christians, because it seemed to me that they belonged to no religion."

1. Columbus's description most directly reflects which motivation for exploration? (1 Point)

A. Industrial growth
B. Wealth and empire
C. Progressive reform
D. Isolationism

2. The ideas expressed above would most likely contribute to: (1 Point)

A. European colonization efforts
B. Reduced colonization
C. Native political power
D. Less Atlantic trade

3. Explain one way Columbus's perspective influenced his writing. (2 Points)

Please write your answer in the space provided below:

Stimulus Set B

Historical Context:

Puritans migrated to North America hoping to establish communities based on religious principles.

Primary Source Excerpt: John Winthrop's "A Model of Christian Charity" (1630)
"For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us; so that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall become a story and a byword throughout the world. We shall open the mouths of enemies to speak evil of the ways of God and all believers."

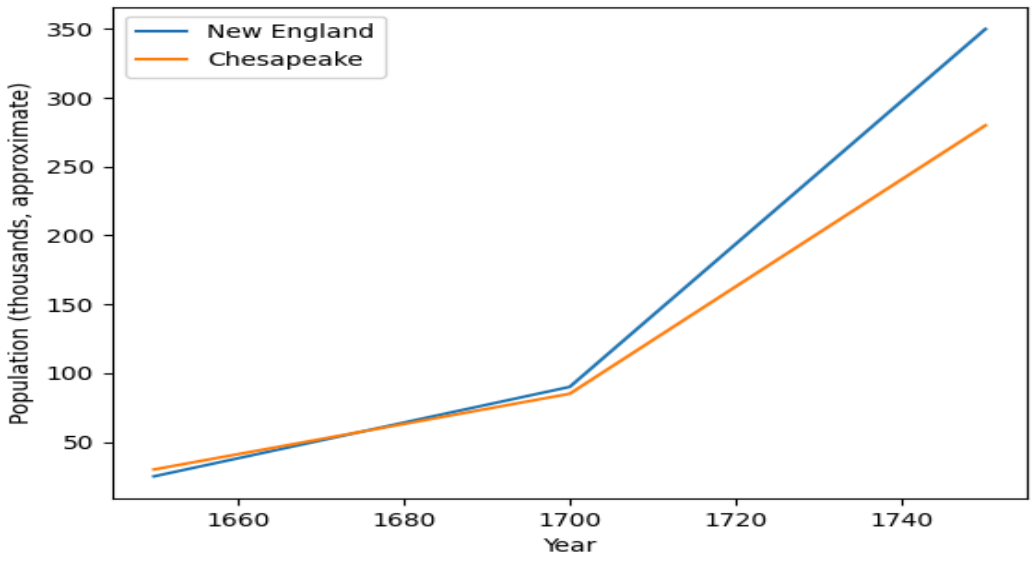
1. Winthrop's statement most directly reflected: (1 Point)
A. Enlightenment principles
B. Industrial capitalism
C. Puritan beliefs
D. Manifest Destiny

2. Which colony was most associated with Puritan settlement? (1 Point)
A. Virginia
B. Pennsylvania
C. Georgia
D. Massachusetts Bay

3. Explain one way religion influenced colonial development. (2 Points)

Please write your answer in the space provided below:

Stimulus Set C: Visual Source



1. Identify one trend shown in the chart. (2 Points)

Please write your answer in the space provided below:

2. Explain one reason for that trend based on the readings as well as historical context. (2 Points)

Please write your answer in the space provided below:

3. Which region relied more heavily on plantation agriculture? (2 Points)

Please write your answer in the space provided below:

Final Reflection (No Points)

After completing the assignment:

- List one topic that interested you.
- List one topic that confused you.
- Write one question you have about American history
- Write one thing you are most looking forward to/one goal for APUSH

Please write your answer in the space provided below: