

American Civilization



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Objectives

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the migration of early humans to North America.
2. Explore the Major Prehistoric Cultures of North America.
3. Analyze the Impact of Agriculture on Early American Societies.
4. Examine the Decline and Legacy of Early American Cultures.
5. Develop Critical Thinking and Historical Analysis Skills.
6. Learn why European powers like England, France, and Spain sought to colonize North America.
7. Examine how geography shaped the economies, cultures, and societies of the New England, Middle, and Southern Colonies.
8. Understand how the transition from indentured servitude to African slavery shaped colonial economies and societies.

I Pr-requisites

To be able to properly follow the lesson of American Early Cultures , the students must have some prior knowledge, likewise:

- Students should be familiar with regions like the Southwest and Midwest, and how the environment shaped different cultures.
- Learners should be familiar with one or more groups of Native American peoples.
- Students must know that the earliest peoples were hunters, gatherers, and nomads.
- Students must know how humans started farming, which allowed them to settle in one place and build villages.



pre

III Theme2: Colonial Period

1. Introduction

The Colonial Period of American (C.P.A.H) history* was a time of exploration, settlement, and transformation. Beginning in 1607 with the establishment of *Jamestown** and culminating in the years leading up to the American Revolution, this era saw the rise of European colonies in North America. Most settlers who came to the British colonies in the 1600s were English. Others came from The Netherlands, Sweden, Germany, France, and later from Scotland and Northern Ireland. Some left their homelands to escape war, political oppression, religious persecution, or a prison sentence. Some left as servants who expected to work their way to freedom. Black Africans were sold into slavery and arrived in shackles. By 1690, the population was 250,000. Less than 100 years later, it had climbed to 2.5 million.

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Depiction of the first encounters between European settlers and Native Americans

2. Development of the 13 Colonies



American Colonies

European nations had different goals when colonizing North America. Spain focused on resource extraction and religious conversion, France sought trade relationships with Native Americans, and England aimed to establish permanent settlements. Economic motives, such as the search for gold and the establishment of cash crops like tobacco, played a significant role. Additionally, religious groups, including the Puritans and Quakers, sought freedom from persecution, leading to diverse colonial societies. The development of *the thirteen colonies* unfolded along distinct regional lines, each shaped by *unique economic, cultural, and social characteristics*.

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[cf. Colonial America]

Example

Like:

1. **New England Colonies** (Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire):*

- **Puritan Values:** Dominated by Puritan religious ideals, communities like Boston and Salem emphasized strict moral codes and education. For example, Harvard College was founded in 1636 to train clergy.
- **Economy:** Small-scale farming (e.g., growing corn and wheat), fishing (e.g., cod fishing off the coast), and shipbuilding (e.g., shipyards in Boston) were key industries.
- **Governance:** Town meetings, such as those in Plymouth Colony, allowed for direct democratic participation among male landowners.

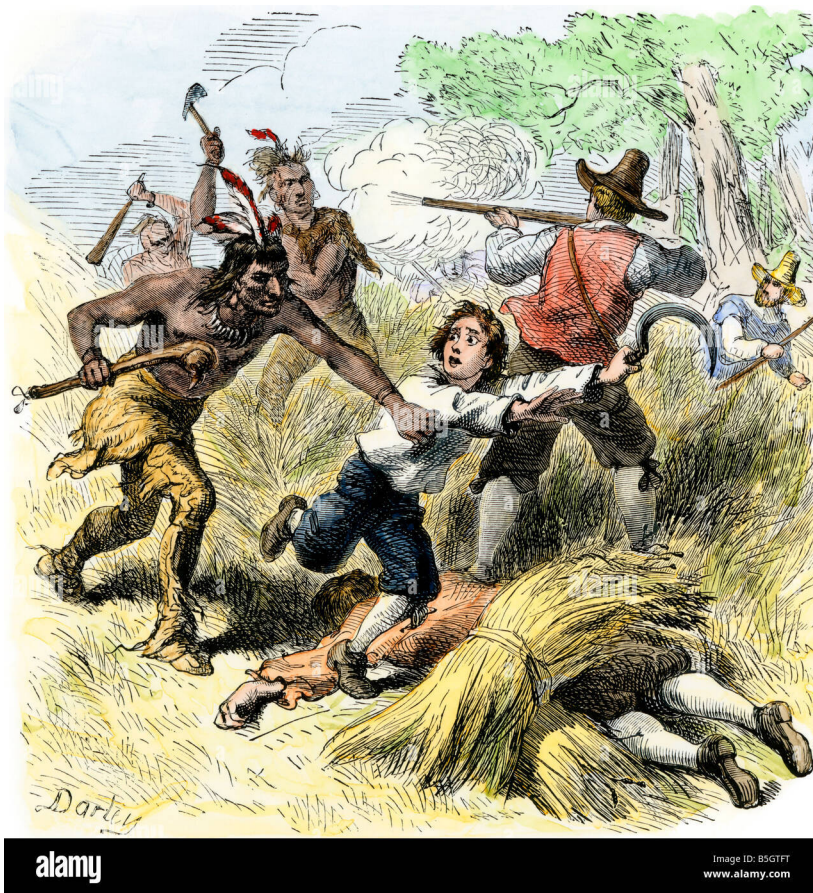
2. **Middle Colonies** (New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware):

- **Diversity and Tolerance:** Pennsylvania, founded by William Penn, became a haven for Quakers and other religious groups, while New York attracted Dutch, German, and Scottish immigrants.
- **Economy:** Known as the "breadbasket colonies," they produced wheat and other grains (e.g., in the fertile valleys of Pennsylvania). Cities like Philadelphia and New York City became major trade hubs.

- **Cultural Melting Pot:** The region's diversity was reflected in its newspapers, languages, and religious practices, such as the establishment of the first Lutheran church in America.

3. **Southern Colonies** (Virginia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia):

- **Plantation Economy:** Cash crops like tobacco (e.g., in Virginia) and rice (e.g., in South Carolina) dominated the economy. Georgia, initially founded as a buffer colony, later adopted plantation agriculture.
- **Labor Systems:** The transition from indentured servitude to African slavery was stark. For example, by the late 1600s, Virginia's tobacco plantations relied heavily on enslaved labor, and South Carolina's rice plantations became dependent on enslaved Africans' expertise in rice cultivation.
- **Social Structure:** The plantation system created a hierarchical society, with wealthy landowners like Virginia's planter elite (e.g., the Byrd family) at the top.



An illustration of King Philip's War

 Note

These regional differences, rooted in **geography**, **economy**, and **culture**, not only shaped the colonies' development but also **set the stage for future conflicts and divisions in American history**.

3. Colonial Society & Culture

Life in the colonies varied depending on location and social class. Families played a central role, with men typically working in agriculture or trade while women managed households. Education was highly valued in New England, leading to the establishment of institutions such as Harvard in 1636. Religion influenced governance and daily life, particularly in Puritan communities, where strict moral codes shaped society. The colonies also saw growing consumer culture, with imported goods playing an increasing role in daily life.

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A Puritan church gathering in New England

🔍 Example: Examples of colonial cultural life

- The rise of print culture, including the publication of newspapers and almanacs, with Benjamin Franklin's Poor Richard's Almanack (1732) being a prime example.
- Flourishing colonial music, art, and literature, with early American painters like John Singleton Copley gaining recognition.
- Social stratification, where wealthy landowners in the South lived in grand plantation homes while poorer farmers and laborers struggled for economic stability.

+ Extra

Slavery played an integral role in colonial society, especially in the Southern Colonies. The harsh conditions on plantations led to the development of distinct African American cultures, including the blending of African traditions with Christian practices. Enslaved people created rich oral histories, spirituals, and folk traditions that would persist through generations.

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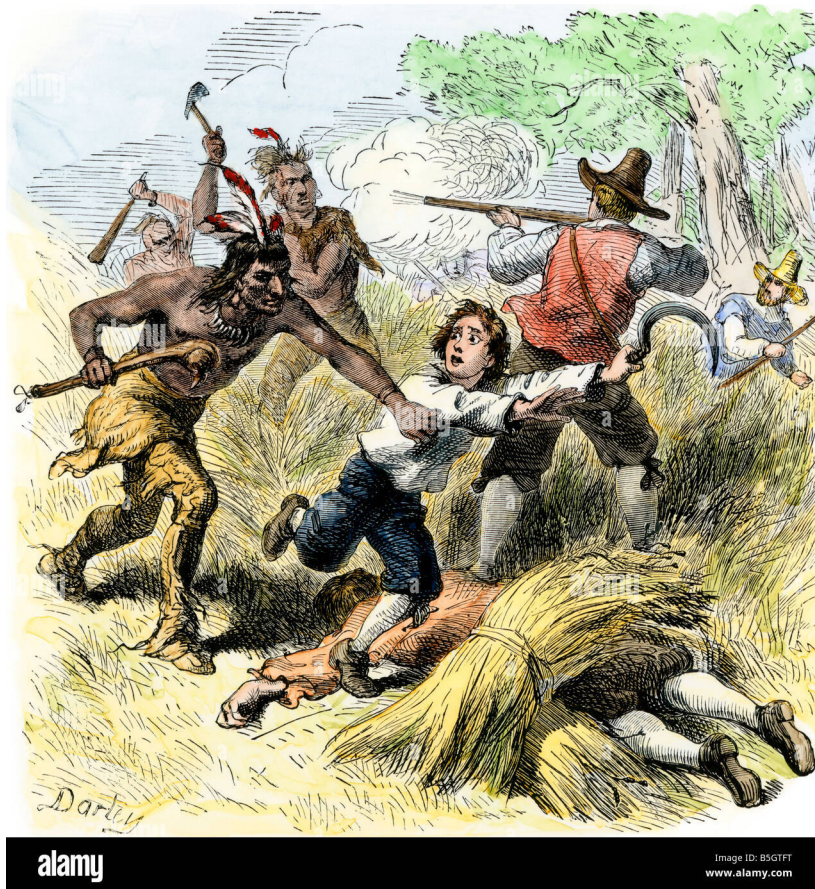
4. Relations with Native Americans

Relations between European settlers and Native Americans were complex, ranging from trade partnerships to violent conflicts. Early cooperation existed, as Indigenous people helped settlers adapt to the new environment. However, tensions grew as settlers encroached on Native lands, leading to conflicts such as:

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Example

- **The Pequot War (1636-1638):*** A conflict in New England where English settlers, allied with the Narragansett and Mohegan tribes, fought against the Pequot people, leading to the near destruction of the Pequot tribe.
- **King Philip's War (1675-1676):*** One of the deadliest conflicts in colonial history, in which the Wampanoag leader Metacom (King Philip) led an uprising against English settlers. The war resulted in widespread destruction and the near elimination of Indigenous resistance in New England.
- **The Yamasee War (1715-1717):** A significant but less well-known war in the Carolinas, where the Yamasee and other tribes fought against English settlers over trade disputes and land encroachments.
- **The French and Indian War (1754-1763):** A broader conflict between Britain and France, with various Native American tribes allying with either side. The war ended with British victory, leading to significant Native land losses and the Proclamation of 1763, which attempted (unsuccessfully) to limit colonial expansion westward.



An illustration of King Philip's War

5. Conclusion

The Colonial Period of American history was a transformative era marked by exploration, settlement, and the establishment of diverse societies. European colonization, driven by economic, religious, and political motives, led to the development of distinct regional cultures and economies across the thirteen colonies. While European settlers gained new opportunities, Indigenous peoples faced displacement and violence, and enslaved Africans endured unimaginable hardships. The legacy of this period continues to shape modern American society, influencing its democratic institutions, cultural diversity, and ongoing struggles with racial inequality. Understanding the complexities of the colonial era is essential for comprehending the roots of contemporary American identity and the challenges that persist today.

IV Exercice

[solution n°21 p.48]

1. The first permanent English colony in North America was established at in 1607.

V Exercice

[solution n°22 p.48]

The economic system in which colonies provided raw materials to the mother country in exchange for manufactured goods was called

VI Exercice

[solution n°23 p.48]

The War (1675-1676) was a violent conflict between Native Americans and New England settlers.

VII Exercice

[solution n°24 p.48]

The colony of Pennsylvania was founded by as a haven for Quakers.

VIII Exercice

[solution n°25 p.48]

The Compact was an agreement made by the Pilgrims to establish self-government in Plymouth Colony.

IX Exercice

[solution n°26 p.48]

What was the primary cash crop of Virginia?

- Cotton
- Tobacco
- Rice
- Wheat

X Exercice

[solution n°27 p.48]

Which colony was founded by the Pilgrims in 1620?

- Jamestown
- Rhode Island
- Plymouth
- New York

XI Exercice

[solution n°28 p.49]

What was a major reason for European colonization of North America?

- Scientific research
- The search for gold and religious freedom
- The abolition of slavery
- The creation of modern democracy

XII Exercise

[solution n°29 p.49]

Which of the following best describes the Middle Colonies?

- A society dominated by Puritan values and small farming
- An economy focused on plantation agriculture and enslaved labor
- A diverse society with religious tolerance and strong trade networks
- A colony primarily focused on fur trading and military alliances

XIII Exercice

[solution n°30 p.49]

What was the outcome of the French and Indian War?

- The British lost control of their colonies
- France gained new territories in North America
- The war resulted in Native American sovereignty
- Britain won and attempted to limit colonial expansion westward

XIV Exercice

[solution n°31 p.49]

How did geography influence the economic and social structures of the different colonial regions?

XV Exercice

[solution n°32 p.50]

What were the benefits and drawbacks of colonization for different groups, including European settlers, Indigenous peoples, and enslaved Africans?

XVI Exercice

[solution n°33 p.50]

How did religious beliefs shape colonial society and governance?

XVII Exercice

[solution n°34 p.50]

In what ways did the transition from indentured servitude to African slavery shape the Southern Colonies?

XVIII Exercice

[solution n°35 p.50]

What lasting impacts did the colonial period have on modern American society?

Conclusion

The early history of America, from its prehistoric roots to the colonial era, laid the groundwork for the nation's development. Indigenous cultures demonstrated remarkable adaptability and innovation, while European colonization introduced new social, economic, and political structures. These periods also brought profound challenges, including displacement, conflict, and the establishment of slavery. Understanding this history helps us appreciate the complexities of America's past and its enduring impact on modern society.

Exercises solution

> **Solution n° 1**

Exercice p. 17

What was Beringia?

- A large ice sheet that covered North America
- A land bridge connecting Asia and North America
- A prehistoric ocean between Europe and America
- A type of shelter used by early hunter-gatherers

> **Solution n° 2**

Exercice p. 18

Which of the following best describes the lifestyle of Paleo-Indians?

- They were primarily farmers
- They built large cities and temples
- They were hunter-gatherers who relied on large game
- They established complex trade routes across continents

> **Solution n° 3**

Exercice p. 18

What was a significant feature of the Adena culture?

- The development of written language
- The construction of burial mounds
- The creation of vast road networks
- The domestication of horses

> **Solution n° 4**

Exercice p. 18

The Hopewell culture is known for:

- Being the first civilization to use irrigation
- Expanding the Adena culture's traditions on a larger scale
- Developing the first written Native American language
- Domesticating large animals for farming

> **Solution n°5**

Exercice p. 18

The Mississippian culture was unique because:

- It introduced democracy to North America
- It developed large urban settlements like Cahokia
- It relied solely on hunting and gathering
- It was the first culture to reach South America

> **Solution n°6**

Exercice p. 19

What was a key characteristic of the Anasazi culture?

- They built pueblo-style dwellings
- They primarily lived in teepees
- They developed written records on stone tablets
- They were known for their large-scale conquests

> **Solution n°7**

Exercice p. 19

The decline of the Hohokam culture is believed to have been caused by:

- European colonization
- A sudden shift in climate and environmental changes
- A large-scale war with the Mississippians
- The spread of disease from South America

> **Solution n°8**

Exercice p. 19

The term "Anasazi" is often replaced with "Ancestral Puebloans" because:

- The term "Anasazi" means enemy ancestors in Navajo
- "Anasazi" was a name given by European explorers
- The Anasazi never actually lived in North America
- It was a term originally used for a different culture

> **Solution n° 9**

Exercice p. 19

Which of the following was NOT a primary crop cultivated by early Southwestern cultures?

- Maize
- Squash
- Potatoes
- Beans

> **Solution n° 10**

Exercice p. 20

What was a significant factor in the decline of the Anasazi culture?

- Overpopulation and resource depletion
- Conquest by the Spanish
- A major volcanic eruption
- Dependence on imported food

> **Solution n° 11**

Exercice p. 20

Was Beringia, and how did it help early humans migrate to North America?

Beringia was a land bridge that connected Asia and North America during the Ice Age. It allowed early humans to migrate from Siberia to Alaska in search of food and a better climate.

> **Solution n° 12**

Exercice p. 20

Who were the first known cultures to develop in early America, and what were their main characteristics?

The first known cultures included the Ancestral Puebloans (Anasazi), Adena, Hopewell, Mississippian, Hohokam, and Californian cultures. They were hunter-gatherers who later developed farming, built mounds, and created advanced societies with trade networks.

> Solution n° 13

Exercice p. 20

When did the first humans arrive in North America, and what evidence supports this timeline?

The first humans arrived in North America around 12,000–35,000 years ago. Evidence includes archaeological sites, stone tools, and genetic studies of Indigenous peoples.

> Solution n° 14

Exercice p. 20

Where did the Adena culture originate, and how did it influence later civilizations?

The Adena culture originated in the Ohio Valley and influenced later cultures like the Hopewell and Mississippian by introducing mound-building for burials and ceremonies.

> Solution n° 15

Exercice p. 20

Why did early hunter-gatherers move in small groups, and what survival strategies did they use?

They moved in small groups to follow food sources and avoid overhunting in one area. They hunted large animals like mammoths, gathered wild plants, and used stone tools for survival.

> Solution n° 16

Exercice p. 20

Where did the Hohokam culture thrive, and what was their most important innovation?

The Hohokam culture thrived in present-day Arizona. Their most important innovation was irrigation-based farming, which allowed them to survive in the desert.

> Solution n° 17

Exercice p. 20

Why did the Anasazi people build their homes in cliffs, and what advantages did this provide?

The Anasazi built cliff dwellings to protect themselves from invaders, extreme weather, and animals. These homes also provided better defense and insulation.

> Solution n° 18

Exercice p. 20

How did agriculture change the way early American cultures lived and organized their societies?

Agriculture allowed societies to settle in one place, build permanent villages, support larger populations, and develop social hierarchies and trade.

> Solution n° 19

Exercice p. 21

When did the Mississippian culture reach its peak, and what was its largest settlement?

The Mississippian culture peaked between 900–1400 CE, and its largest settlement was Cahokia, which had a population of about 20,000 people.

> **Solution n° 20**

Exercice p. 21

How did the arrival of new groups like the Apache and Navajo impact the older settled cultures?

The Apache and Navajo were nomadic and often raided farming settlements, which contributed to the decline of older cultures like the Anasazi and Hohokam. Later, they adapted to herding after contact with the Spanish.

> **Solution n° 21**

Exercice p. 28

1. The first permanent English colony in North America was established at Jamestown in 1607.

> **Solution n° 22**

Exercice p. 29

The economic system in which colonies provided raw materials to the mother country in exchange for manufactured goods was called Mercantilism.

> **Solution n° 23**

Exercice p. 30

The King Philip's War (1675-1676) was a violent conflict between Native Americans and New England settlers.

> **Solution n° 24**

Exercice p. 31

The colony of Pennsylvania was founded by William Penn as a haven for Quakers.

> **Solution n° 25**

Exercice p. 32

The Mayflower Compact was an agreement made by the Pilgrims to establish self-government in Plymouth Colony.

> **Solution n° 26**

Exercice p. 33

What was the primary cash crop of Virginia?

- Cotton
- Tobacco
- Rice
- Wheat

> **Solution n° 27**

Exercice p. 34

Which colony was founded by the Pilgrims in 1620?

- Jamestown
- Rhode Island
- Plymouth
- New York

> **Solution** n°28

Exercice p. 35

What was a major reason for European colonization of North America?

- Scientific research
- The search for gold and religious freedom
- The abolition of slavery
- The creation of modern democracy

> **Solution** n°29

Exercice p. 36

Which of the following best describes the Middle Colonies?

- A society dominated by Puritan values and small farming
- An economy focused on plantation agriculture and enslaved labor
- A diverse society with religious tolerance and strong trade networks
- A colony primarily focused on fur trading and military alliances

> **Solution** n°30

Exercice p. 37

What was the outcome of the French and Indian War?

- The British lost control of their colonies
- France gained new territories in North America
- The war resulted in Native American sovereignty
- Britain won and attempted to limit colonial expansion westward

> **Solution** n°31

Exercice p. 38

How did geography influence the economic and social structures of the different colonial regions?

Geography played a crucial role in shaping colonial economies. The New England Colonies had rocky soil and a cold climate, leading to small-scale farming, fishing, and trade. The Middle Colonies had fertile land and a moderate climate, promoting agriculture and commerce. The Southern Colonies had a warm climate and fertile soil, making plantation farming, particularly tobacco and rice cultivation, the dominant economic activity.

> **Solution n° 32**

Exercice p. 39

What were the benefits and drawbacks of colonization for different groups, including European settlers, Indigenous peoples, and enslaved Africans?

European settlers benefited from land, economic opportunities, and religious freedom, but also faced hardships such as disease and conflicts. Indigenous peoples suffered displacement, violence, and cultural loss. Enslaved Africans faced forced labor, brutal conditions, and loss of freedom, but also created resilient cultural traditions.

> **Solution n° 33**

Exercice p. 40

How did religious beliefs shape colonial society and governance?

Religion played a key role in the colonies, especially in New England, where Puritan values influenced laws and social norms. Religious groups such as the Quakers in Pennsylvania promoted tolerance, while in other colonies, religious leaders held significant political power. The Great Awakening also contributed to new ideas about equality and individual faith.

> **Solution n° 34**

Exercice p. 41

In what ways did the transition from indentured servitude to African slavery shape the Southern Colonies?

As the demand for labor grew, especially in tobacco plantations, reliance on enslaved Africans increased. This shift created a rigid racial hierarchy, institutionalized slavery, and shaped Southern society for generations, leading to significant economic and social disparities.

> **Solution n° 35**

Exercice p. 42

What lasting impacts did the colonial period have on modern American society?

The colonial period influenced modern American democracy, economic systems, and cultural diversity. Ideas such as self-government, religious freedom, and regional economic differences originated during this time. However, colonial legacies also include systemic racial inequalities and the displacement of Indigenous peoples.

Glossary

Colonial Period

The era in American history from the early 1600s to the late 1700s, marked by European exploration, settlement, and the establishment of colonies in North America.

hunter-gatherers

small groups of people who feed themselves by hunting animals and gathering plants.

Ice sheet

a very thick piece of ice that covers a large area of land for an extended period of time.

Jamestown

The first permanent English settlement in North America, established in 1607 in present-day Virginia.

King Philip's War (1675-1676)

A violent conflict between Native Americans, led by the Wampanoag leader Metacom (King Philip), and English settlers in New England. It resulted in widespread destruction and the near elimination of Indigenous resistance in the region.

land bridge

A small strip of land that connects two large land masses .

Mammoth

a large, prehistoric elephant-like animal covered with hair.

Pequot War (1636-1638)

A conflict in New England where English settlers, allied with the Narragansett and Mohegan tribes, fought against the Pequot people, leading to the near destruction of the Pequot tribe.

Abbreviation

C.P.A.H: The Colonial Period of American history

USA: United States Of America

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