

AP World History – Summer Reading 2024-2025

Greetings,

For this summer, I am delighted to give you a few required videos and readings. During the first week of class, we will check whether or not you were able to absorb the ideas. Basically, I will ask you to write an assignment called “The Key to Understanding Unit One.”

So, here’s the strange thing: I would go through this material twice: first, after a couple of weeks of enjoying a relaxing start to summer, watch the videos. Then, as you notice that summer is almost over, watch the videos again and do the reading. You should come into class prepared to talk about and write about the key concepts from Unit One.

Email me if you have questions: bschmoll@missionprep.org

Have a fabulous summer break!

Dr. Schmoll

Video #1:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDkPq5KcbS4>

This video is called “Heimler AP World UNIT 1 REVIEW (Everything you NEED to KNOW!)”

Video #2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2-ceqnQEcQ>

This video is called “Freeman UNIT 1: GLOBAL TAPESTRY REVIEW (AP WORLD HISTORY)”

Reading #1: Print this out:: Mongols and the Silk Roads

The Pax Mongolica, Latin for “Mongol peace,” describes a period of relative stability in Eurasia under the Mongol Empire during the 13th and 14th centuries. The Pax Mongolica brought a period of stability among the people who lived in the conquered territory.

After the death of the first Mongol emperor, Genghis Khan, in 1227, the resulting empire extended from the China’s Pacific coast to Eastern Europe. This meant that the Silk Road network, which had been dangerous to travel due to the warring kingdoms along the route, fell completely under Mongol control.

The resulting stability brought by Mongol rule opened these ancient trade routes to a largely undisturbed exchange of goods between peoples from Europe to East Asia. Along the Silk Road, people traded goods such as horses, porcelain, jewels, silk, paper, and gun powder. European travelers, such as the Venetian merchant Marco Polo, were able to go all the way to China and back. Polo went on to describe his experience in distant lands in a chronicle that captivated the European audience.

The “Silk Road” started from Chang’an (Xi’an), the capital of the ancient Chinese Han Empire, and continued through the cities of Gansu province (Lanzhou-capital city) and Xinjiang, passing through Central Asian countries and reaching India, Persia, Arabia, the Mediterranean Sea, Rome, and France.

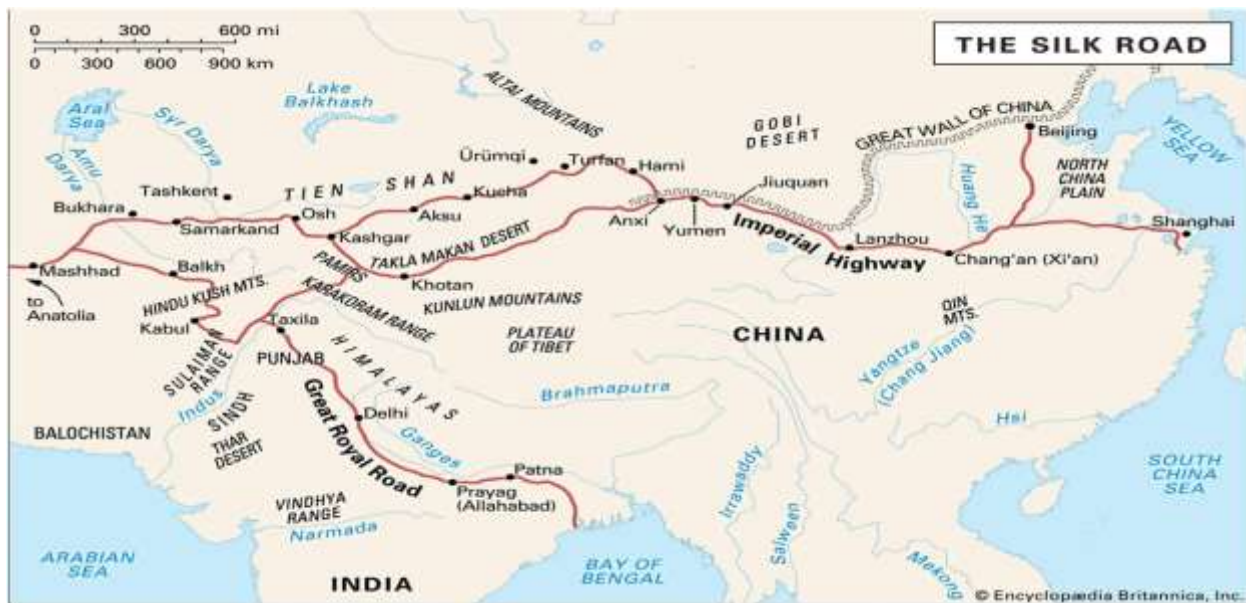
Venetian merchant explorer Marco Polo (1254–1324) was the first European who traveled through the Silk Road route to China. He met with Kublai Khan and wrote many beautiful notes (Polo 1987) about the wealth and life of the East, which is famous not only in Europe but also in the world. His notes are said to

have been read by the great geographical discoverer Christopher Columbus when he crossed the Atlantic Ocean. The note is called “Book of the Marvels of the World” (later known in English as The Travels of Marco Polo) and the term “Silk Road” is not used in the note, but it is mentioned that Kharkhorin in Mongolia was the central trade route of Asia. Researchers believe that German geographer and traveler Ferdinand von Richthofen first used the term Silk Road in his work “China” in 1877, according to Mark (2018) Ferdinand von Richthofen designated them ‘Seidenstrasse’ (Silk Road) or ‘Seidenstrassen’ (silk routes). Both of these people were recorded as traveling along the route and transporting goods eastward.

During the time of the Mongol Empire, foreign policy and its procedures were steadily developed by sending envoys with special stamps to foreign countries, receiving foreign envoys, and negotiating treaties.

Aside from facilitating trade, the Mongol influence also improved the communication along the Silk Road by establishing a postal relay system. The Mongols culturally enhanced the Silk Road by allowing people of different religions to coexist. The merging of peoples and cultures from conquered territories brought religious freedom throughout the empire. Across the vast steppes of Asia, a traveler might encounter Muslims and Christians living and working alongside Mongols, who continued to practice their traditional religion.

But some of the things that made the Pax Mongolica so efficient are what caused its decline and fall in the mid-1300s. The efficient trade routes led to the rapid and unchecked spread of the bubonic plague, also known as the Black Death. The plague originated in central Asia, making its way westward to Europe where it spread further. In addition to disease, the fragmented empire endured increasing turmoil from within. This prevented further expansion and hastened its inevitable decline.



Reading #2: Print this: State Building in the Americas, 1200-1450

When talking about North, Central, and South America in the time period before 1200, the lack of unity and consistency needs to be understood. Because of its limited population and large amount of land, Native Americans were able to live in smaller, regional tribes. Some of these tribes developed into larger civilizations and even empires.

The Mississippian culture is a civilization in modern-day southeastern United States. The Mississippian people created large earthen mounds demonstrating their unity to build large monumental structures. Instead of tracing family lineage through the father's family, the [Mississippian culture](#) was matrilineal, passing social standing through the mother's blood line.

Major Empires of the Americas

The Maya and Aztecs each dominated a region of Mesoamerica between 250 CE and 1550 CE. The Maya thrived in the rainforest of the Yucatan peninsula. Largely a kingdom of city-states that worked for mutual benefit, the Maya were able to build large temples, cities, and trade networks.

Because of internal conflict and lack of food, the [Maya empire](#) collapsed around 900 CE. Before they collapsed, the Maya thrived, building a famous accurate calendar, a complex writing system, and pyramids that rival those of the Middle East.

The [Aztec Empire](#) came years after the collapse of the Maya and occupied modern-day Mexico City and south. Their capital, [Tenochtitlan](#), is where Mexico City is today. The city was enormous, housing nearly 200,000 people at a time when London had 50,000! The Aztecs built a series of great pyramids in their city, demonstrating their power and authority. The amazing part of this city is that it was built on Lake Texcoco. Aztecs would build [chinampas](#), or floating gardens, in the lake to grow a bounty of food. These [chinampas](#) would be filled in over time, creating a larger and larger city.



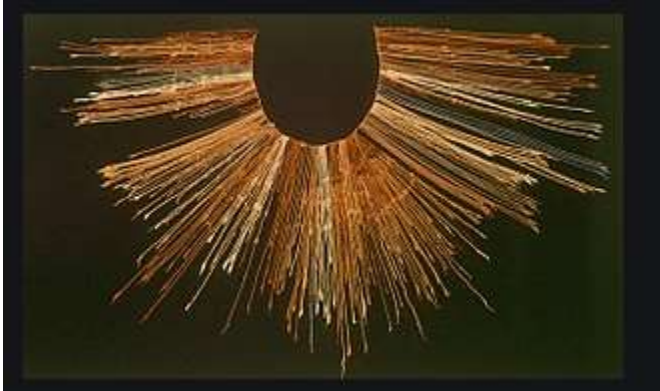
Aztec [Chinampas](#).

The Aztecs practiced human sacrifice. Many of the temples in [Tenochtitlan](#) were used for these rituals. The people sacrificed were either captured in battle or were tributes given to the Aztecs by neighboring city-states that did not want to be attacked. These prisoners and tributes were often sacrificed to the sun god, [Huitzilopochtli](#). This process of human sacrifice was both part of their polytheistic religion and part of the political rule of the region. The Aztecs were very militaristic, had a thriving merchant class, and promoted education for many of its men.

The [Incan Empire](#) thrived around the same time as the Aztecs. They dominated a north to south region along the [Andes Mountains](#) in South America. They had a lot of clear contrasts with the Aztecs:

1. They were much more of a united monarchy, while the Aztecs were largely a city-state empire controlled by [Tenochtitlan](#).
2. The Aztecs practiced human sacrifice as part of their religion. They believed that sacrificing humans to their gods would appease them and prevent natural disasters from occurring. The Aztecs also believed that sacrificing humans allowed the gods to renew their own strength, and that the sacrifice of humans would bring about the rebirth of the world. The Aztecs sacrificed prisoners of war, criminals, and slaves, as well as people who were chosen by the gods through a lottery system. The Aztecs believed that the sacrifice of humans was necessary for the continuation of the world and the maintenance of the natural order. The Inca also practiced animal sacrifice, specifically the sacrifice of llamas. Llama sacrifice was an important part of Inca religion and was believed to appease the gods and bring good fortune. Llama sacrifice was performed during important ceremonies and events, such as the coronation of a new ruler or the dedication of a new temple. The llamas were generally adorned with decorative items and were given a special meal before being sacrificed. The blood of the sacrificed llama was collected and offered to the gods, while the meat was often shared among the people as a sacred offering.
3. The Aztec civilization, which flourished in Mexico from the 14th to the 16th centuries, had a complex and extensive trade network that stretched throughout much of Mesoamerica. The Aztecs traded a wide variety of goods, including luxury items such as feathers, jade, and gold, as well as practical items such as food, clothing, and tools. The Aztecs used a system of trade routes that connected their capital, [Tenochtitlan](#), to other parts of the empire and to neighboring regions. They also established a number of markets, called [tianquiztli](#), where merchants could buy and sell goods. The Aztecs traded with a variety of partners, including other Mesoamerican civilizations, such as the Maya, and more distant regions, such as Central and South America. The Aztec trade network played a key role in the prosperity and expansion of the empire. The Inca Empire, which flourished in South America in the 15th and 16th centuries, was a state-led society that was characterized by a highly centralized and organized system of government. The Inca state was led by the [Sapa Inca](#), who was the supreme ruler of the empire and was considered to be the descendant of the gods. The [Sapa Inca](#) was assisted by a number of officials and administrators, who helped to manage the affairs of the state and ensure that the laws and policies of the empire were enforced. The Inca state was also supported by a complex bureaucracy, which included a system of record-keeping known as the [quipu](#), as well as a system of labor obligations known as the [mita](#). The Inca state was able to exert a strong degree of control over its subjects, and it played a central role in shaping the culture, economy, and society of the empire.
4. [Mita](#) was a system of labor obligations in the Inca Empire in South America. Under the [mita](#) system, all male citizens of the empire were required to perform a certain amount of labor for the state each year. The labor that was required varied depending on the individual's age, occupation, and social status. The [mita](#) system was an important part of the Inca economy and was used to construct and maintain public works, such as roads, bridges, and irrigation systems, as well as to support the military and the bureaucracy. The [mita](#) system was also used to redistribute wealth and to prevent the concentration of power in the hands of a few wealthy individuals. The [mita](#) system was abolished by the Spanish conquistadors in the 16th century, but it has had a lasting impact on the history and culture of the Andean region.
5. A [quipu](#), also known as a khipu or talking knot, is a system of record keeping used by the Inca civilization in South America. Quipus were made of strings or cords that were knotted in a complex pattern to represent

numbers and other information. Quipus were used for a variety of purposes, including keeping track of tax payments, census data, and records of military campaigns. Quipus were also used for communication, as they could be used to transmit messages over long distances. The [quipu](#) system was an important part of the Inca bureaucracy and played a central role in the administration and management of the empire. However, the [quipu](#) system was largely destroyed by the Spanish conquistadors, and today much of what we know about quipus comes from the accounts of early Spanish chroniclers.



6. Both the Aztec and Inca were animists and polytheists. [Animism](#) is a belief system that holds that all objects, places, and creatures possess a distinct spiritual essence. According to animist belief, everything in the natural world, including animals, plants, and even inanimate objects, has a soul or spirit that is worthy of respect and reverence. [Animism](#) is an ancient belief system that has been practiced by indigenous cultures around the world for thousands of years. It is often associated with nature-based religions and shamanistic traditions, and it is based on the idea that the natural world is interconnected and that all living things are connected to one another through a spiritual network. [Animism](#) is a broad term that encompasses a wide range of beliefs and practices, and it has been influential in shaping the worldviews and cultures of many indigenous societies. This is why they both have sun gods ([Huitzilopochtli](#) and [Inti](#)). [Polytheism](#) is the belief in multiple gods or deities. It is a type of religion that worships multiple deities, each of which is believed to be responsible for a particular aspect of the natural or spiritual world. Polytheistic belief systems have existed throughout human history and have been practiced by cultures around the world. Some well-known polytheistic religions include ancient Greek and Roman mythology, Hinduism, and many traditional indigenous religions. Polytheistic belief systems often involve the worship of gods and goddesses through rituals and offerings, and they often include a complex mythology that explains the origin and nature of the gods and their relationships to one another and to the world. [Polytheism](#) is often contrasted with monotheism, which is the belief in one supreme deity. Both the Aztecs and Inca had hundreds of gods.

Key Terms to Review

[Andes Mountains](#): The Andes Mountains are a vast mountain range extending over 7,000 km through seven South American countries. They're known for being home to several indigenous cultures including the Incas.

[Animism](#): The belief that objects, places, and creatures all possess a distinct spiritual essence. It's one of the oldest forms of religion.

[Aztec Empire](#): The Aztec Empire was a Mesoamerican civilization that existed from 1345 to 1521 in what is now central Mexico. They're known for their rich mythology, impressive architecture, and complex social structure.

Chinampas: Chinampas are man-made islands created by weaving reeds together and anchoring them with mud from the lake bottom. They were used for agriculture by ancient Mesoamerican societies like the Aztecs.

Huitzilopochtli: Huitzilopochtli was the Aztec god of sun and war. He was one of the most important deities in the Aztec pantheon, and his worship involved human sacrifice.

Incan Empire: The Incan Empire was a pre-Columbian civilization in the Andes of South America, existing from the 13th to the 16th century. It was the largest empire in pre-Columbian America.

Inti: Inti is the ancient Incan sun god. He was considered to be the ancestor of the Incas.

Maya Empire: The Maya Empire was an ancient civilization based in Central America from about 2000 BCE until around 900 CE. They're known for their advanced writing system, architecture, mathematics, calendar systems, and astronomical knowledge.

Mississippian culture: The Mississippian culture was a Native American civilization that existed in the Mississippi River Valley from approximately 800 CE to 1600 CE. They were known for their complex societies, large cities, and impressive mound-building.

Mita: Mandatory public service in the society of the Inca Empire. Citizens were required to contribute labor as a form of tax.

Polytheism: Polytheism is the belief in or worship of more than one god.

Quipu: A system used by the Inca to record information, consisting of variously colored threads knotted in different ways.

Sapa Inca: The Sapa Inca was the emperor or ruler of the Incan Empire, considered by his subjects to be a direct descendant of the sun god.

Tenochtitlan: Tenochtitlan was the capital city of the Aztec Empire, located on an island in Lake Texcoco in central Mexico. It was one of the largest and most sophisticated cities in the world during its peak.