

Period 2: 1607-1754

AP United States History

Four Colonizers, Four Strategies

Period 2 runs from **1607** to **1754** - from Jamestown to the eve of the Seven Years' War. Its central question is why European colonies turned out so differently from one another.

Each empire wanted something different, and that goal shaped everything else:

- **Spain** extracted wealth from the land, developing institutions built on **subjugating** 征服 native populations - the encomienda system carried over from Period 1.
- **France** and the **Netherlands** sent relatively few Europeans and relied on **trade alliances** 贸易同盟 with American Indians, especially in **fur** 毛皮.
- **Britain** attracted a comparatively large number of **male and female migrants** 男女移民, who came to settle and farm rather than only to extract.

That last difference matters most. Because British colonists arrived as families and wanted land, they displaced native peoples rather than trading with them - which made British-Indian relations more violent than French ones.

The Regions of British Colonies

	New England	Middle colonies	Chesapeake	Southern coast and West Indies
Geography	cold, thin soil, short growing season	fertile, temperate	warm, long season, navigable rivers	long growing season, subtropical
Main export	mixed farming, fishing, shipping	cereal crops (the 'bread colonies')	tobacco	rice and sugar
Labour system	family labour	family labour and indentured servants	indentured servants, then enslaved Africans	enslaved Africans, a majority in places
Society	Puritan towns, high life expectancy	most ethnically and religiously diverse	scattered plantations, high mortality	rigid racial hierarchy

geography → the crop → the labour system → the society

Four regions, four economies: geography set the crop, the crop set the labour system, and the labour system set the society

British North America was not one place. Four regions developed distinct societies.

- The **Chesapeake** 切萨皮克 and **North Carolina** grew prosperous exporting **tobacco** 烟草, a labour-intensive crop. Labour came first from **indentured servants** 契约仆役 and increasingly from enslaved Africans.
- The **New England** colonies, initially settled by **Puritans** 清教徒, developed around small towns with **family farms** 家庭农场, a mixed economy, and unusually high life expectancy.

- The **middle colonies** supported a flourishing export economy based on **cereal crops** 谷物, and attracted the broadest range of European migrants, producing the most **ethnically and religiously diverse** 族群与宗教多元 region.
- The colonies of the **southern Atlantic coast** and the **British West Indies** used long growing seasons for **rice** 稻米 and **sugar** 蔗糖, cash crops so labour-hungry that enslaved Africans became a majority of the population in places.

One political feature was shared. Distance from London, and Britain's initially **lax attention** 松散管理, let the colonies create **self-governing institutions** 自治机构 - colonial assemblies that later shaped resistance to imperial control.

Transatlantic Trade

An **Atlantic economy** 大西洋经济 developed in which goods - and enslaved Africans and American Indians - were exchanged around the ocean rim. Continuing trade increased the flow of goods in and out of American Indian communities, changing them too.

From the mid-seventeenth century, the British government tried to bring its colonies into a coherent imperial system, driven by **mercantilism** 重商主义 - the belief that colonies exist to enrich the mother country. The **Navigation Acts** 航海条例 required colonial trade to move in British ships through British ports.

Enforcement was loose for decades, a practice later called **salutary neglect** 有益的忽视. Colonists grew used to trading freely and governing themselves, which is exactly why tightening the rules after 1763 provoked such anger.

Interactions with American Indians

Contact produced both **accommodation** 调适 and **conflict** 冲突, and the balance differed by empire and region.

Where trade mattered most - New France, the Dutch fur trade - alliances and intermarriage were common. Where land mattered most, conflict followed. British expansion led to sustained **military conflict** 军事冲突 with American Indians over land, resources, and boundaries.

Resistance took organised forms. The **Pueblo Revolt** 普韦布洛起义 of 1680 drove the Spanish out of New Mexico for over a decade and forced lasting changes in Spanish policy - the clearest example in the course of native resistance succeeding.

Slavery in the British Colonies

All the British colonies participated in the **Atlantic slave trade** to varying degrees, because land was abundant and labour scarce.

As **chattel slavery** 动产奴隶制 became the dominant labour system in many southern colonies, colonial legislatures wrote new laws creating a **strict racial system** 严格的种族制度. Slavery became hereditary, lifelong, and defined by race - a legal structure, not merely a practice.

Enslaved Africans developed **overt and covert means of resistance** 公开与隐蔽的反抗: escape and revolt, and also the maintenance of family ties, languages, religious practices, and skills. The exam expects both kinds; an answer that mentions only rebellion misses most of the evidence.

Colonial Society and Culture

Two opposite processes ran at once.

Toward **diversity**: the presence of different European religious and ethnic groups produced a significant degree of **pluralism** 多元并存, most visibly in the middle colonies.

Toward **similarity**: the colonies experienced a gradual **Anglicization** 英国化, adopting British goods, print culture, legal norms, and political ideas even as they developed autonomous political communities.

Transatlantic exchange also brought the **Enlightenment** 启蒙运动 and, in the 1730s and 1740s, the religious revivals of the **First Great Awakening** 第一次大觉醒, which encouraged colonists to question established authority - religious first, political later.

The goals of European leaders and colonists increasingly **diverged** 分歧, and colonists' resistance to imperial control drew on local experience of self-government and evolving ideas about rights.

Comparison in Period 2

The unit ends with **comparison** 比较, the reasoning skill this period is built to teach: the regions differ enough that almost any claim about "the colonies" needs qualifying.

Worked example (a real AP exam question). The 2025 exam asked, as part A of a short-answer question, *"Briefly describe one political development in British North America from 1607 to 1753."* A full-mark answer is one specific development, named and located in time: *"Colonial assemblies such as the Virginia House of Burgesses developed powers over taxation and spending, which gave colonists practical experience of representative self-government before 1754."* Notice the shape: **Briefly describe** wants a specific development stated accurately - not a list, not an evaluation, and not an essay. Marks are lost here by writing too much about the wrong thing, or by staying vague ("colonies became more independent").

Exam tips

- Answer the **why** behind regional difference: geography set the crop, the crop set the labour system, and the labour system set the society.
- Never treat "the colonies" as one place. A comparison question wants New England *against* the Chesapeake, with evidence from each.
- **Mercantilism** is the theory, the **Navigation Acts** are the policy, and **salutary neglect** is the lax enforcement that made later enforcement feel like tyranny.

- For slavery, give **both** overt and covert resistance; and note that slave codes made slavery *racial and hereditary*, which is the change being tested.
- The **Pueblo Revolt** is the go-to example of successful native resistance; British-Indian conflict is the go-to contrast with French trade alliances.
- Match your answer to the task verb. **Briefly describe** takes one or two accurate sentences, while **Evaluate the extent** needs a thesis that takes a position.