

Exercise walk-through

1.7

Comparison in the Period from c. 1200 to c. 1450

AP World History: Modern

Comparison in the Period

The unit's reasoning skill is **comparison**. The productive comparisons are structural rather than evaluative:

- Centralised administration (Song China, Inca) against fragmented or decentralised rule (Europe, post-Abbasid Islamic states).
- Recruitment by examination against recruitment by birth.
- States funded by tribute (Mexico) against states funded by taxation (Song China).

Exam tips

- Learn each region through the same three questions – **state**, **belief system**, **economy** – so any comparison question already has a structure.
- **Song China** is the benchmark: examination-based bureaucracy, commercialised agriculture, and cultural influence on neighbours.
- For Dar al-Islam, remember the pattern is **fragmentation into new states** plus continued **expansion** by trade and Sufi missionaries.
- Give a named state for the Americas and Africa. **Mexica tribute**, **Inca labour obligation**, **Mali** and **Great Zimbabwe** gold are the reliable examples.
- Europe's distinguishing features are **fragmentation**, **feudalism**, and **coerced agricultural labour**.
- Write comparisons as **one feature across two societies**, never as two separate descriptions.

Belief systems, by what they did for authority

- **Centralised** administration (Song China, Inca) against **fragmented** or decentralised rule (Europe, post-Abbasid Islamic states).
- Recruitment by **examination** against recruitment by **birth**.
- States funded by **tribute** (Mexico) against states funded by **taxation** (Song China).

Worked example – one feature, two societies

“Identify one similarity” or “Explain one difference” between two regions in the period.

- **Full marks:** *“Both Song China and the Inca Empire used a centralised bureaucracy to govern a large territory, but Song China recruited officials through a competitive examination system while the Inca staffed administration through hereditary elites and a labour obligation.”*
- One **feature**, applied to **both** societies.

Describing each society in turn and leaving the reader to infer the comparison earns nothing. The comparison must be made in the sentence.

The belief systems, and where each spread

Buddhism

Theravada in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia; **Mahayana** in China, Korea and Japan; **Tibetan** Buddhism across the Himalayan world.

Neo-Confucianism

Neo-Confucianism answered Buddhism in Song China by absorbing its metaphysics into a Confucian frame – and it became the syllabus of the civil service exam.

Christianity

Christianity was split between Latin and Orthodox, and reached Ethiopia and the Nestorian communities of Central Asia.

Judaism and Islam

Judaism persisted in diaspora communities across the Mediterranean and Dar al-Islam, where trade and law were **commercialized** to an extent Europe had not reached.

For each belief system: where it began, along which route it travelled, and what it changed when it arrived.

Exercises 2.1·2.2

2.1 State the three things a comparison must contain. [3]

2.2 State one cross-regional similarity with its CED wording. [2]

Exercises 2.1-2.2

2.1 State the three things a comparison must contain. [3]

2.1

- a similarity; a difference; a stated basis of comparison
-

2.2 State one cross-regional similarity with its CED wording. [2]

2.2

- state formation demonstrated continuity, innovation and diversity in various regions

Exercise 2.3 (a)

2.3 Compare Song China and Europe on centralisation.

(a) State the basis of comparison.

[1]

Exercise 2.3 (a)

2.3 Compare Song China and Europe on centralisation.

(a) State the basis of comparison.

[1]

(a)

- how authority reached the governed

Exercise 2.3 (b)

2.3 Compare Song China and Europe on centralisation.

(b) State how each stands on it.

[2]

Exercise 2.3 (b)

2.3 Compare Song China and Europe on centralisation.

(b) State how each stands on it.

[2]

(b)

- the Song used a centralised bureaucracy and examination-based officialdom; Europe used decentralised monarchies and feudal obligation

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 Two descriptions placed side by side are

[1]

☐

A a comparison

B not yet a comparison

C a causation argument

D a continuity argument

3.2 The CED's cross-regional similarity is continuity, innovation and

[1]

☐

A decline

B diversity

C isolation

D conquest

Exercises 3.1-3.2

3.1 Two descriptions placed side by side are

[1]

☐

A a comparison

B not yet a comparison

C a causation argument

D a continuity argument

3.1 B

- the comparative sentence is still missing

3.2 The CED's cross-regional similarity is continuity, innovation and

[1]

☐

A decline

B diversity

C isolation

D conquest

3.2 B

- diversity is the third

Exercise 3.3

3.3 Write a comparison of state building in the Americas and in Africa.

[4]

Exercise 3.3

3.3 Write a comparison of state building in the Americas and in Africa. [4]

3.3

- a basis of comparison stated; a similarity with evidence; a difference with evidence; a sentence relating the two rather than listing them