AP World History: Modern

Revision Sheet · 考前速记

Learn these by heart before the exam. 考试前把这些内容背熟。

The Nine Units

1200-1450 The Global Tapestry. Song China's bureaucracy and commerce; Dar al-Islam's scholarship after Abbasid fragmentation; Delhi Sultanate; Mali and Great Zimbabwe; Aztec and Inca states; feudal, fragmented Europe.

1200-1450 Networks of Exchange. Silk Roads, Indian Ocean and trans-Saharan routes; the Mongol Empire lowers the cost of travel; diasporic merchant communities; the Black Death rides the same roads.

1450-1750 Land-Based Empires. Ottoman, Safavid, Mughal, Qing, Russia: gunpowder, bureaucracy, tax-collection systems, and religion used to legitimise rule.

1450-1750 Transoceanic Interconnections. Caravel, astrolabe and lateen sail enable Atlantic voyages; Columbian Exchange; silver economy links Potosi to China; Atlantic slave trade; new racial hierarchies.

1750-1900 Revolutions. Enlightenment ideas of natural rights; American, French, Haitian and Latin American revolutions; nationalism and unification; industrialisation begins in Britain then spreads.

1750-1900 Consequences of Industrialization. Factory system and urbanisation; new social classes; imperialism and the Scramble for Africa; economic imperialism in China and Latin America; migration and resistance.

1900-present Global Conflict. Causes of the First World War; total war and mobilisation; the interwar depression; fascism; the Second World War, the Holocaust and mass atrocity.

1900-present Cold War and Decolonization. Capitalism versus communism, proxy wars, non-alignment; independence in India, Africa and Southeast Asia; new states choosing an economic path.

1900-present Globalization. Communication and transport technology; multinational corporations and trade blocs; disease and environmental change; rights movements; culture that travels.

The Six Themes

Governance 治理: how states are built, legitimised, administered, resisted and dissolved

Economic systems 经济体系: production, labour systems, trade and the technology that reorganises them

Cultural developments and interactions: religion, science and art, and what happens when belief systems meet.

Humans and the environment: how geography enables and constrains, and how people reshape the environment in turn.

Social interactions and organization: class, gender, race and kinship as systems of power.

Technology and innovation: the technology comes first, the social consequence follows. Say which technology, then what it made possible.

Comparisons the Exam Rewards

Land empires (Ottoman, Qing) versus maritime empires (Portuguese, Dutch): both extract, but one controls territory and the other controls routes.

Labour systems: chattel slavery, serfdom, indentured servitude, mit'a, and free wage labour - who is coerced, and by what.

Revolutions compared: the same Enlightenment vocabulary produces very different outcomes in France, Haiti and Latin America. Explain the difference.

Industrialisation compared: Britain first, then state-driven industrialisation in Japan and Russia; the state's role is the variable.

Responses to imperialism: rebellion (Sepoy, Boxer), reform (Meiji, Ottoman Tanzimat, Self-Strengthening), and accommodation.

Decolonisation compared: negotiated in India, violent in Algeria and Vietnam; explain what made the difference.

Historical Thinking Skills

Contextualization 情境化: place the topic in the wider processes of its era, then connect that context to your argument

Causation 因果分析: separate immediate from long-term causes; a strong answer ranks causes and says why

Continuity and change 延续与变迁: name what stayed the same as well as what changed - most answers only do half

Comparison: identify a similarity AND a difference, then explain the reason behind it.

Sourcing 史料分析: explain how a document's point of view, purpose, situation or audience shapes its content

Periodisation: the dates in a prompt are a claim. Ask whether the turning point really belongs where the prompt puts it.

Exam technique

Write a thesis that answers the whole prompt with a defensible claim and a line of reasoning, in the introduction or conclusion.

For the document-based question, use most documents as evidence, describe them accurately, and add specific outside evidence that appears in no document.

Source several documents by explaining WHY the author's position or purpose matters for the argument, not merely stating it.

For the long essay, all evidence is yours. Choose two or three specific developments you can describe in detail rather than a list of names.

Short answers: answer each lettered part directly with one specific example. No thesis, no introduction.

Global scope wins marks. Reach beyond Europe: a comparison across two world regions is worth more than depth in one.

Respect the dates. A brilliant example from the wrong century earns nothing.

Complexity comes from qualifying your claim: an exception, a region that behaves differently, or a change that was only partial.