

The Global Tapestry

AP World History ■ Unit 1

AP World History



What we will cover

1 Reading the World in 1200

2 East Asia

3 Dar al-Islam

4 South and Southeast Asia

5 The Americas and Africa

6 Europe

Reading the World in 1200

Unit 1 surveys the major regions of the world around 1200 to 1450, just before the great connecting networks of Unit 2. Its purpose is comparison: by the end you should be able to say how any two of these societies were governed, what held them together, and how they made their living.

- **How is the state organised?** Who rules, through what officials, and paid for how?
- **What belief system shapes society?** Religion supplies law, education, and legitimacy in every region here.
- **What is the economic base?** Agriculture almost everywhere, but with very different labour systems and levels of trade.

East Asia

Government ran through a **bureaucracy** 官僚体系 staffed by the **civil service examination** 科举制度, which recruited officials on merit and gave the state unusual administrative depth.

Dar al-Islam

As the **Abbasid Caliphate** 阿拔斯哈里发国 fragmented, new Islamic political entities emerged, most of them **Turkic** 突厥人 in origin – among them the **Seljuk Empire** 塞尔柱帝国, the **Mamluk sultanate of Egypt** 埃及马穆鲁克苏丹国, and the **Delhi Sultanate** 德里苏丹国.

Muslim rule continued to expand across Afro-Eurasia through **military expansion**, **merchant activity** 商人活动, and the work of **missionaries** 传教士, especially **Sufis** 苏非派, whose adaptable practice helped Islam spread.

South and Southeast Asia

State formation showed the unit's theme of continuity and diversity: the **Delhi Sultanate** ruled much of the north, **Vijayanagara** 维查耶纳伽尔 arose in the south, and in Southeast Asia the sea-based **Majapahit** 满者伯夷 and the land-based **Khmer Empire** 高棉帝国 organised power in different ways.

The Americas and Africa

	East Asia	Dar al-Islam	South and SE Asia	The Americas	Africa	Europe
How is the state organised?	examination-based bureaucracy	new Turkic states after the Abbasids	sultanates and regional kingdoms	city-states, tribute and labour empires	trading states and old kingdoms	fragmented, decentralised
What belief system shapes society?	Neo-Confucianism, Buddhism	Islam; Sufi missionaries	Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism	state religion tied to rulers	Islam and Christianity	Christianity: the Church
What is the economic base?	commercialised agriculture	trade and intellectual exchange	sea and land trade routes	intensive farming, tribute	gold, salt and cattle trade	agriculture with serfdom

a comparison answer takes ONE row and TWO columns

the distinction this unit turns on

The Americas and Africa

In the **Americas**, state systems showed continuity, innovation, and diversity: the **Maya** 玛雅 city-states, the **Mexica** 墨西哥人 (Aztec) with tribute-based expansion, and the **Inca** 印加 with a centralised administration, labour obligation, and road system.

In **Africa**, state systems likewise varied: **Great Zimbabwe** 大津巴布韦 grew on gold and cattle, **Ethiopia** 埃塞俄比亚 was a long-established Christian kingdom, and the **Hausa Kingdoms** 豪萨城邦 sat on trans-Saharan trade routes.

Europe

Europe was **politically fragmented** 政治上分裂, characterised by decentralised monarchies and by **feudalism** 封建制度 – a system of land held in exchange for service. Monarchs slowly consolidated power, but nothing here approached the administrative reach of Song China.

Europe was **largely agricultural**, dependent on **free and coerced labour** 自由与强制劳动, including **serfdom** 农奴制.

Comparison in the Period

The unit's reasoning skill is **comparison** 比较. 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.