

Period 2: 1607-1754

AP US History ■ Period 2

AP US History



What we will cover

- 1 Four Colonizers, Four Strategies
- 2 The Regions of British Colonies
- 3 Transatlantic Trade
- 4 Interactions with American Indians
- 5 Slavery in the British Colonies
- 6 Colonial Society and Culture



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.

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

Four Colonizers, Four Strategies, continued

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 goal predicts the relationship

EMPIRE	WHAT IT WANTED	WHAT FOLLOWED
SPAIN	wealth extracted from the land	encomienda labour, a formal caste system
FRANCE & the NETHERLANDS	trade, above all in fur	few settlers, alliances and intermarriage with American Indians
BRITAIN	land to settle and farm	many male and female migrants, displacement, sustained conflict

An empire that came to **trade** made allies; an empire that came to **settle** displaced people. The goal predicts the relationship



Four regions, one set of questions

- The **Chesapeake** and **North Carolina** grew prosperous exporting **tobacco** , a labour-intensive crop.
- The **New England** colonies, initially settled by **Puritans** , developed around small towns with **family farms** , a mixed economy, and unusually high life expectancy.

Four regions, one set of questions, in detail

	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

The Regions of British Colonies

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

- The **Chesapeake** and **North Carolina** grew prosperous exporting **tobacco** , a labour-intensive crop. Labour came first from **indentured servants** and increasingly from enslaved Africans.
- The **New England** colonies, initially settled by **Puritans** , developed around small towns with **family farms** , a mixed economy, and unusually high life expectancy.
- The **middle colonies** supported a flourishing export economy based on **cereal crops** , and attracted the broadest range of European migrants, producing the most **ethnically and religiously diverse** region.
- The colonies of the **southern Atlantic coast** and the **British West Indies** used long growing seasons for **rice** and **sugar** , cash crops so labour-hungry that enslaved Africans became a majority of the population in places.

The Regions of British Colonies, continued

One political feature was shared.

Distance from London, and Britain's initially **lax attention**, let the colonies create **self-governing institutions** – colonial assemblies that later shaped resistance to imperial control.

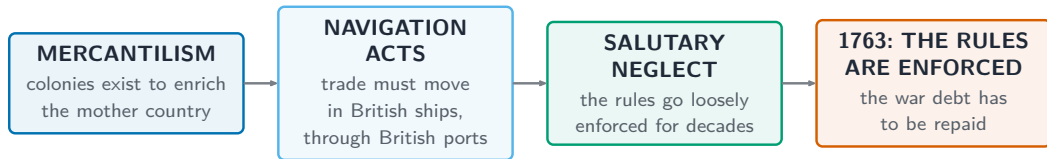


Transatlantic Trade

An **Atlantic economy** 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.

The **Navigation Acts** required colonial trade to move in British ships through British ports.

The laws were old; the enforcement was new



In between, colonists grew used to **trading freely and governing themselves**. The anger of the 1760s is a reaction to the **change**, not to the laws – which were already a century old



Interactions with American Indians

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

British expansion led to sustained **military conflict** with American Indians over land, resources, and boundaries.

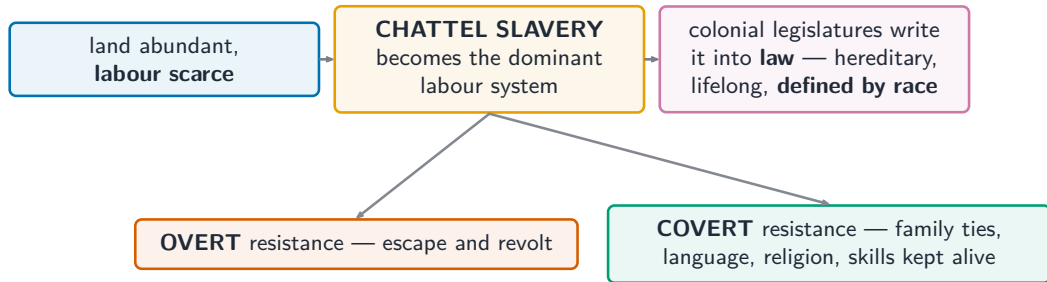


Slavery in the British Colonies

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

Slavery became hereditary, life-long, and defined by race – a legal structure, not merely a practice.

From a labour shortage to a legal racial system



The exam expects **both** kinds. An answer that mentions only rebellion has left out most of the evidence

How slavery hardened into law

Chattel slavery

Chattel slavery made a person property in law – inheritable, saleable, and permanent.

A strict racial system

Colonial statutes built a **strict racial system**: status followed the mother, and conversion no longer brought freedom.

Resistance

Enslaved people used **overt and covert means of resistance** – revolt and escape, and also work slowdowns, feigned illness, sabotage, and keeping family and religion alive.

Why the law changed

Life expectancy rose and indentured servants became harder to control, so planters wrote a permanent, inheritable status into law.

Slavery in the colonies was not one system. Say which colony and which decade – the difference is usually the point of the question.



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**, most visibly in the middle colonies.

Convergence and divergence in colonial society

toward similarity

a gradual **Anglicization** – British goods, print culture, legal forms and political vocabulary

the Enlightenment

crossed the Atlantic with the same trade, supplying the political language of the 1770s

the First Great Awakening

the religious revivals of the 1730s and 1740s – and the first genuinely intercolonial experience

toward difference

the goals of European leaders and colonists increasingly **diverged**

resistance

colonists opposed imperial control by **overt and covert means** long before 1775

the Pueblo Revolt

1680 – organised resistance that drove the Spanish out of New Mexico for over a decade

Anglicization and divergence happen **at the same time**, and that tension is what the period's comparison prompts are built on.



Comparison in Period 2

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

Worked example – “briefly describe”

2025 short answer, part A: “*Briefly describe one political development in British North America from 1607 to 1753.*”

- **Scoring:** *“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.”*
- One specific development, named and located in time.

Not a list, not an evaluation, not an essay. Marks are lost by writing too much about the wrong thing, or by staying vague.

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.



Period 2 – key takeaways

1

Regions

geography → crop → labour → society

2

Empire

mercantilism / Navigation Acts / salutary neglect

3

Slavery

racial and hereditary; overt *and* covert resistance

4

Compare

never “the colonies”; New England vs Chesapeake

Check yourself

- 1 Why did Chesapeake labour differ from New England's?
- 2 Mercantilism, Navigation Acts, salutary neglect – which is the policy?
- 3 What did slave codes change about slavery?
- 4 Name one successful Native resistance in this period.

Answers: tobacco needed bound labour ▪ Navigation Acts ▪ racial and hereditary ▪ Pueblo Revolt