

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

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Reading the World in 1200

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.

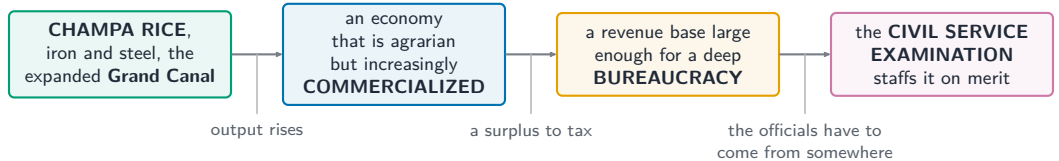
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East Asia

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.

The Song engine



This is the benchmark every other 1200 state is compared against: recruitment by **merit** rather than birth, paid for by a **commercialised** agrarian economy

3

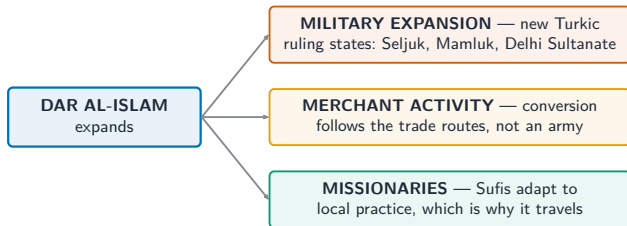
Dar al-Islam

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.

Three routes, three kinds of evidence



Islam spread by three routes: military expansion, **merchant activity** 商人活动, and **Sufi** 苏非派 missionaries.

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South and Southeast Asia

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.

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The Americas and Africa

The same three questions, asked of six regions

Ask the same three questions of each region: who held power, how was it paid for, and what made it last?

What was carried, and what it changed

East Asia

Chinese cultural traditions continued and influenced neighbouring regions – Korea, Japan and Vietnam adopted **Confucianism** 儒学, **Buddhism** 佛教 and the writing system

the Song engine

Champa rice 占城稻, the **Grand Canal** 大运河, and an increasingly **commercialised** 商业化 economy

filial piety 孝道

the Confucian obligation that structured family and, by extension, the state

Dar al-Islam

Muslim states encouraged significant **intellectual innovations and transfers** – advances in mathematics, medicine and astronomy, and the preservation and translation of Greek texts

South and Southeast Asia

Hinduism 印度教, Islam and Buddhism continued to shape the region

their meeting

produced new forms – the **bhakti movement** 虔信运动, Sufism, and syncretic states

Belief systems in this period are best compared by what they **did politically**: who they legitimated, and which social order they underwrote.

The same three questions, asked of six regions, in detail

	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

One framework, six regions: state, belief system, and economic base are what comparison questions actually ask about

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.

The outer walls of Great Zimbabwe



The outer walls of Great Zimbabwe - dry-stone construction, and a state built on the gold trade

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Europe

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.

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Comparison in the Period

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.

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.

Belief systems, by what they did for authority, in detail

REGION	BELIEF SYSTEM	WHAT IT DID FOR AUTHORITY
Song China	Neo-Confucianism	ordered society by obligation — filial piety, and deference expected of women
Dar al-Islam	Islam	gave rulers of very different origins one shared source of legitimacy
Europe	Christianity, alongside Jewish and Muslim communities	sanctioned a fragmented order in which lords, not a state, held power
South and Southeast Asia	Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam together	bhakti and Sufi devotion crossed the boundaries rulers drew

Recruitment by **examination** against recruitment by **birth**.

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Recap

Unit 1 – key takeaways

1

Regions

state, belief, economy – the same
three questions

2

Song

exam bureaucracy;
commercialised agriculture

3

Islam

new states plus expansion by
trade and Sufis

4

Named states

Mexica tribute; Inca labour; Mali
/ Great Zimbabwe gold

Check yourself

- 1 What three questions structure any regional comparison?
- 2 Why is Song China the benchmark?
- 3 Name one American and one African state with a mechanism.
- 4 Name Europe's three distinguishing features.

Answers: state / belief / economy ▪ exams and commercial agriculture ▪ Mexica tribute, Mali gold ▪ fragmentation, feudalism, coerced labour