

Chapter 1 Rapid Review: U.S. History

Colonial America

- Economic difficulties in Europe, the desire to acquire raw materials and religious tensions all caused Europeans to become interested in the Americas
- Cortes, Pizarro, and other Spanish conquistadores entered much of Central America, South America, the southwestern section of North America, and the area now known as Florida, conquering the Aztecs, the Incas and other Native American tribes. Guns, horses, and diseases brought from Europe all aided the Spanish in their efforts to defeat the native tribes.
- French settlers in Canada were less oppressive than the Spanish. Jesuit priests converted thousands of Native American to Christianity; French settlers became increasingly interested in fur trading.
- Puritans and other religious dissidents came to the Americas because they felt the Church of England was too close to Catholicism.
 - The first English settlement in America was the Jamestown colony, founded in 1607.
Tobacco became the main crop in Jamestown, and the first slaves arrived in 1619.
- A group of religious Separatists arrived in Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1620. The first year of settlement was difficult for these Pilgrims, who had to rely on help from the Native Americans to survive.
- The Massachusetts Bay colony was established in 1629 by the Puritans. This colony was established as a “city upon a hill,” where the will of God could be manifested. A limited representative government was established. Religious dissent was not tolerated in this colony. Dissenters were thrown out and founded new colonies in Rhode Island, Connecticut and Portsmouth.
- The ecosystem of the Americas was tremendously altered by European settlement.

British Empire in America (1650-1750)

- The dominant economic theory of the era was mercantilism, British mercantilist measures such as the Navigation Acts created resentment in the American Colonies.
- The importation of African slaves became increasingly important for the continued economic growth of several southern colonies.
- The Salem Witch Trials demonstrated the social conflict present in the American colonies.
- Eighteenth-century European wars between the British and the French spilled over to the Americas, with British and French colonists becoming involved.
- In the early eighteenth century, colonial assemblies became increasingly powerful and independent in several colonies, including Massachusetts.
- Even during the era of “salutary neglect” the British attempted to increase their economic control over the colonies.
- The religious revival called the Great Awakening caused some in the colonies to question many of the religious, social and political foundations of which colonial life was based.

Resistance and Rebellion

- Tensions between the British and the French intensified in the 1740s when land speculators from the English Colonies began to acquire land in the Ohio Valley.
- The Seven Years War (the French and Indian War in American textbooks) was between the English and colonial militias and the French; Native Americans fought on both sides, although most sided with the French early on.
- The defeat of the French in this war largely ended influence in the Americas; after the war, the British attempted to make the colonies pay their fair share of the war effort.
- Parliamentary efforts during this era to produce money for Great Britain by imposing various taxes and duties on the colonies resulted in great unrest in the Colonies.
- The impact of the Stamp Act on the colonies was great; as a result, nine colonies met at the 1765 Stamp Act Congress and the Sons of Liberty formed in Boston.
- Boston remained a center of opposition to British policy; the Boston Massacre in 1770 and the Boston Tea Party in 1773 helped to create resistance to the Crown in other colonies as well.
- The 1774 Intolerable Acts, which closed the port of Boston and curtailed freedom of speech in Massachusetts, outraged many in the colonies.

- The 1774 First Continental Congress passed a resolution that firmly stated the colonies would firmly resist measures that taxed them without their consent. At this meeting it was also decided that individual colonies should start to raise and train state militias.

Revolutionary War

- The first armed resistance to the British army occurred at Lexington and Concord.
- The Second Continental Congress began to prepare the American colonies for war against the British, but by passing the Olive Branch Petition, they tried to accommodate colonial interests with those of the Crown.
- The impact of the message presented in *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine was widespread throughout the Colonies.
- Many loyalists lived in the colonies at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War; many were members of the economic elite.
- Blacks and women played a large role in the war effort of the colonies.
- The defensive tactics of George Washington as leader of the continental forces proved decisive, since a longer war was disadvantageous to the British army.
- French assistance to the continental war effort proved invaluable; the French navy proved to be especially critical as the war progressed.
- The Treaty of Paris ended the Revolutionary War. In this treaty, American independence was recognized by the British and large amounts of territory west of the Appalachian became American territory.
- The Articles of Confederation created a weak national government, partially to avoid replicating the "tyranny" of the Crown in England.
- To many colonial observers, Shay's Rebellion demonstrated that a stronger national government was needed.

Creation of New Political Systems (1787-1800)

- The 1787 meeting on amending the Articles of Confederation turned into a historical session where the Constitution of the United States was drafted.
- The importance of James Madison in the formulation of the Constitution cannot be overemphasized ("Father of the Constitution").
- The format of the bicameral legislature, the branches of power established at the federal level, the division of powers between federal and state governments made the U.S. Constitution a unique document for its time.
- The division between the Federalists and Antifederalists demonstrated that very different visions of America and the scope of the federal government existed in the United States at this time.
- The Bill of Rights established the basic freedoms that every American cherishes today.
- During the Washington administration, very different visions of America were expressed by Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson; the ideas of Hamilton helped spur American economic growth during the Washington administration.
- The United States had a great deal of trouble convincing the British and the French that the United States was a major power during this era.
- Many critics viewed the Alien and Sedition Acts of John Adams as gross overextensions of the power given to the federal government by the Constitution.

The Jeffersonian Revolution

- The election of Thomas Jefferson in 1800 is called the "Revolution of 1800," as the new president had a completely different vision of America than the Federalists whom he replaced.
- Thomas Jefferson was one of the most brilliant men ever to serve as president, and he instituted many "Republican" policies during the eight years he was in office.
- The role of the federal courts was greatly strengthened during the tenure of John Marshall as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.
- The Louisiana Purchase more than doubled the size of the United States and allowed the "empire of liberty" to continue to expand.
- The Napoleonic wars greatly impacted the relationship between the United States, England and France.
- America entered the War of 1812 because President Madison convinced the nation that America's rights as a neutral power had been violated and because many in Congress felt that the British were encouraging resistance by Native American tribes.