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APUSH

Period 4

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APUSH Test 1

America Before Columbus

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Native Americans are descendants of the Clovis people, who crossed the Bering Strait into North America approximately 11,000 years ago. These people used newly developed stone tools and other hunting techniques to chase large animals into America from Siberia. These people populated America and began the Archaic Period, which lasted from 8000 to 5000 BCE and was the period in which Americans developed fishing, farming, and new technologies. In 800 CE, the Mayans of Meso-America developed written language, numerical systems, calendar, and many more sophisticated innovations. They created trading routes across America, trading with many different cultures. These Mayans eventually became the Mexica, who were at the end of their civilization’s lifetime when they were invaded by Spain and their diseases. The Northern Civilizations were also diverse, from the fishing Eskimos of the Northern Circle, farming and nomadic tribes in the southwest, and warring, densely populated northeastern tribes. The peoples of America were diverse, complex, and civilized, much different than how Europeans saw them.

Europe Looks Westward

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After the Black Death, population in Europe boomed, and consequently, trade. Better shipbuilding and interest in exploration boomed after the Marco Polo travels in the 14th centuries. Larger, united governments across Europe were looking for sea routes to India and Asia and were able to use the new merchant class to find sea routes across the globe. Christopher Columbus embarked on a sea route west to East Asia, sponsored by The Spanish Crown, and discovered the New World. Columbus was a deeply religious man, but the conquistadors that followed him a few years later were not and explored the Americas in search of gold. Hernando Cortes went to the Aztecs of Mesoamerica and triumphed in battle. He was followed by many successors, who brought plague and destruction to the Natives of America, but also wealth back to the Spanish. This wealth led to the Spanish Empire at High Tide, peaking at the 16th century and containing vast lands across America.

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The Arrival of the English

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The English were firm believers of Mercantilism and saw the clear benefits of colonization after Spain’s success. After the destruction of the Spanish Armada, the English merchant class were able to get charters from the King to create colonies in the New World and set out in hopes of gold and silver. These people needed colonists, however, and the religious conditions of England provided a great incentive for them. The English Reformation, along with Calvinism, Puritan Movement, and the oppressive Catholic church in England and Europe incentivized minorities and the oppressed to move to the colonies. This, combined with the high population and the enclosure movement, created a population ready to emigrate. In the 1560s and 1570, the English set out for Ireland, and started their colonization. Here they set up plantations, pockets of England in foreign land, and brutally suppressed the native population, who they viewed as savages. These habits would carry on to their colonization of the New World, starting with failures at Roanoke.