



UNIT 4

GLOBAL INTERACTIONS (1450-1750)

Short Cut

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GENERAL REMARKS

Between 1450 and 1750, the world's civilizations became truly connected for the first time in history. The most significant trend of this era was the emergence of fully **globalized networks of communication and exchange**. Regrettably, much of this interaction consisted of warfare, exploitation, and slavery. Nonetheless, trade, discovery, cultural interchange, and the faster and easier movement of peoples brought the world's societies into greater proximity.

One of the primary causes of this greater interaction was the massive **European campaign of exploration and colonization**. Driven by scientific curiosity, the quest for power, the hope of spreading Christianity, and a desire for wealth, European explorers during the 1400s and 1500s sought out oceanic routes that would link them directly with China, India, Japan, and elsewhere in Asia. They also encountered the Americas: a “New World” that, for millennia, had lain outside the bounds of Afro-Eurasian knowledge.

Within decades, European traders, missionaries, and conquerors had spread throughout the world. The Europeans were the first in history to sail around the globe, and they established a presence in many parts of coastal Africa, Southeast Asia, and East Asia. Most dramatically, European colonizers occupied and transformed North and South America. The opening of the Americas to the rest of the world was done brutally and out of greed, but also tremendously shifted the world's economic, linguistic, religious, and cultural patterns. It changed forever the environments of the Americas, Africa, and Eurasia, as new animals, foods, and diseases were passed back and forth in a phenomenon known as the **Columbian Exchange**.

Another trend of this era was the **rise of Europe**, caused by **state rivalries** and **imperial expansion**. Until the 1400s, Europe had been weak and backward, compared with civilizations such as China and the Ottoman Empire. But during the 1500s and 1600s, Europe pulled even with China and the Islamic east's **gunpowder empires** (Ottoman Turkey, Safavid Persia, and Mughal India) in terms of scientific advancement, global power, and wealth. During the 1700s, Europe overtook these other cultures, becoming the strongest, most technologically adept, and richest civilization in the world. By the middle of the 1700s, Europe was poised to dominate the rest of the globe, militarily and economically—and did so in the 1800s.

Technological development and scientific knowledge increased in many parts of the world at this time. Many societies based their economies increasingly on **commerce**. In some places by the 1600s, **proto-industrial** practices were laying the foundation for fuller industrialization during the late 1700s and 1800s.

In addition, **peasant labor intensified**. In most societies, agricultural production increased, leading to a huge rise in population worldwide—from 350 million in 1400 to 610 million in 1700, the fastest rate of growth seen to that date. The bulk of this era’s economic growth depended on **coerced labor** in many forms.

BROAD TRENDS

State Building, Expansion, and Conflict, 1450–1750	
Europe	<p>absolutist vs. parliamentary nation-states (Louis XIV and divine right theory vs. English Bill of Rights)</p> <p>European age of exploration (Henry the Navigator, Christopher Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Ferdinand Magellan)</p> <p>from Franco-Habsburg rivalry (1500s–1600s) to Anglo-French rivalry (1600s–1700s)</p> <p>Protestant-Catholic religious wars (1500s–early 1600s) + Thirty Years’ War (1618–1648)</p> <p>Seven Years’ War (1756–1763)</p>
Middle East	<p>gunpowder empires = Ottoman empire (1299–1922) and Safavid Persia (1501–early 1700s)</p> <p>Ottoman-Safavid rivalry over trade and Sunni-Shiite disputes</p> <p>Ottoman conquest of Constantinople (1453) and campaigns of Suleiman the Magnificent (1520s)</p> <p>Ottoman siege of Vienna (1683)</p> <p>“circle of justice” and Sharia law</p>
Africa	<p>impact of European arrival (1410s+)</p> <p>Songhai (Askia Mohammed; 1400s–1500s)</p> <p>Kongo and Ashanti kingdoms (1600s+)</p> <p>Omani Arabs in East Africa (1650s)</p>
East (and Central) Asia	<p>impact of European arrival (1500s+)</p> <p>Ming dynasty (1368–1644) in China and Li Zicheng’s revolt (1630s–1640s)</p> <p>Qing dynasty (Kangxi; 1644–1912) in China</p> <p>mandate of heaven</p> <p>daimyo feudalism in Japan (late 1100s–early 1500s)</p> <p>reunification of Japan (late 1500s) and Tokugawa shogunate (Tokugawa Ieyasu; 1603–1868)</p> <p>mandate of heaven</p>
South (and Southeast) Asia and Oceania	<p>impact of European arrival (1490s+)</p> <p>gunpowder empire = Mughal Empire (Akbar the Great; 1500s to mid-1800s)</p> <p>the Sikh and Maratha states (late 1600s to mid-1800s)</p> <p>joint-stock companies = British East India Company, Dutch East India Company</p>

State Building, Expansion, and Conflict, 1450–1750	
Americas	<p>impact of European arrival (1490s+) and colonies</p> <p>conquistadors defeat Aztecs and Incas (early 1500s)</p> <p>piracy in the Caribbean (1500s–1700s)</p> <p>joint-stock company = Hudson's Bay Company</p>
Global and Interregional	<p>greater political centralization and new bureaucratic elites</p> <p>global impact of European age of exploration = trading-post and maritime empires (1400s+)</p> <p>Dutch and English rivalry with Portugal and Spain over trade routes and colonies (1500s–1600s)</p> <p>Omani-European competition over East Africa and Indian Ocean basin (1650s+)</p> <p>global impact of Seven Years' War, especially in Canada and India (1756–1763)</p>

State Building, Expansion, and Conflict

- During the 1500s and 1600s, global might was concentrated in China and the Islamic world's gunpowder empires: Ottoman Turkey, Safavid Persia, and Mughal India.
- The nations of Europe grew more powerful. By the early 1700s, they were overtaking the civilizations listed above in military, scientific, and technological aptitude.
- The most dramatic development of the era was the European campaign to explore (and, where possible, to colonize) the rest of the world. Numerous European states—Portugal, Spain, the Dutch Republic, England, and France, for example—created trading-post empires and maritime empires with a truly global reach.
- European colonization of the Americas, the African coast, and parts of Asia set the stage for a massive burst of imperial activity during the 1800s. It also sparked competition among European powers for global dominance, including during the Seven Years' War (1756–1763), which raged not only in Europe, but also in North America and India, and can be considered one of history's first “world wars.”
- Several states, including Russia, Ottoman Turkey, Mughal India, and China under the Manchus, created expansive land empires.
- In addition to multicultural and multiethnic land empires, nation-states in the contemporary sense of the word emerged. These were political units with relatively fixed borders, a sense of national unity, and populations that were largely (though never completely) homogeneous in terms of language and ethnicity.
- State consolidation in many regions led to greater political centralization and sophistication. Features of modern government—such as bureaucracies, treasuries, and state banks—became more commonplace. Rulers devised more reliable means to collect taxes and conscript soldiers.
- State-building techniques included impressive displays of architecture and art, as well as continued reliance on religious concepts to legitimate the authority of the regime.

- Most monarchies remained traditionally autocratic or absolutist, but some nations experimented with forms of government that were more representative, including parliamentary monarchy.
- The increased importance of gunpowder weaponry meant that, from this time forward, military strength depended even more on technological aptitude than before.

Culture, Science, and Technology, 1450-1750	
Europe	Renaissance continues (late 1200s-early 1600s; Miguel Cervantes, William Shakespeare) Enlightenment begins (1700s) Protestant Reformation (1500s; Martin Luther) heliocentric theory (1500s) Scientific Revolution and Newtonian physics (1600s-1700s) improvements in navigational and marine technology (compass, sailing ships) Versailles (1600s)
Middle East	widening of the Sunni-Shiite split miniature painting in Persia and Ottoman Turkey carpet-weaving Blue Mosque (1600s)
Africa	sculpture and carving textile weaving and basketry oral tradition (griots) <i>Sundiata</i> epic (1300s+) <i>The Epic of Askia Mohammed</i> (1500s+)
East (and Central) Asia	porcelain <i>Journey to the West</i> (1500s) Summer Palace (1700s) kabuki theater ukiyo-e woodblock prints
South (and Southeast) Asia and Oceania	Sikhism (1500s; Guru Nanak) miniature painting in Mughal India Taj Mahal (1600s) Red Fort (1600s)
Americas	religious syncretism (Vodun, Latin American cult of saints) creole, mestizo, and other “mixed” traditions Mesoamerican codices (1500s)
Global and Interregional	growing impact of the printing press increased availability of culture to non-elite classes gunpowder revolution in Eurasian states impact of Europe’s age of exploration global spread of Christianity

Culture, Science, and Technology

- After the European encounter with the Americas, networks of communication and exchange moved beyond the level of transregional and became truly global. The Atlantic basin itself became a gigantic cauldron of economic, cultural, religious, ethnic, political, and military interaction.
- Most major societies had well-defined artistic and literary traditions. Increased technological aptitude enabled the production of arts and crafts of high quality.
- The level of scientific knowledge and technological achievement was especially high in civilizations such as China, Ottoman Turkey, Mughal India, and Safavid Persia.
- Europe made exceptional strides in terms of scientific knowledge and technological achievement. The Renaissance, Scientific Revolution, and Enlightenment all furthered the intellectual growth of Europe, to the point that, during the late 1600s and 1700s, it overtook the civilizations listed above.
- The increased influence of the printing press led to the rapid spread of information, scientific knowledge, religious debates, and new ideas. By creating more materials to read—and more incentive to read—the printing press boosted literacy rates.
- Aside from printing, the technologies with the biggest global impact during this era were gunpowder weaponry and advances in maritime and navigational technology, such as the compass and European sailing ships like the caravel, carrack, and fluyt.
- Art, literature, and drama became more accessible to wider segments of society and popular audiences—including the emerging middle classes, and in some cases the lower classes—not just to elite classes.
- Architecture and art continued to be used for political purposes, especially to show off the power and grandeur of various rulers and regimes.
- New and syncretic religions appeared during this era, including Vodun (voodoo) in the Caribbean, the cult of saints in Latin America, and Sikhism in India.
- Within established religions, schisms appeared or widened. The Sunni-Shiite split in Islam grew more pronounced during this era, as did the influence of Sufism within Islam. Europe experienced a religious earthquake, the Protestant Reformation, that affected not just matters of faith, but cultural life, military and political affairs, and the way Europeans spread Christianity to other parts of the world.
- The movement of Europeans and Africans (mainly slaves) altered the patterns of North and South American ethnicity, religion, language, art, and music.
- Buddhism and Christianity spread particularly far during these years, thanks to missionary activity, trade, and colonization.

Economic Systems, 1450–1750	
Europe	<p>joint-stock companies (including Dutch East India Company, Hudson's Bay Company, British East India Company)</p> <p>investment disasters (“bubbles”): tulipmania, Mississippi Bubble, South Sea Bubble</p> <p>mercantilism</p> <p>cottage industry and proto-industrialization</p>
Middle East	<p>decline of Silk Road</p> <p>Omani-European rivalry in Indian Ocean and East Africa</p> <p>Ottoman-Persian competition over Indian Ocean trade</p> <p>carpets</p>
Africa	<p>arrival of European traders</p> <p>Omani-European rivalry in Indian Ocean and East Africa</p> <p>Arab slave trade continues</p> <p>Atlantic slave trade begins and intensifies</p>
East (and Central) Asia	<p>decline of Silk Road</p> <p>appearance of European traders</p> <p>porcelain and tea</p>
South (and Southeast) Asia and Oceania	<p>appearance of European traders</p> <p>Omani-European rivalry in Indian Ocean</p> <p>Ottoman-Persian competition over Indian Ocean trade</p> <p>cotton and spices</p>
Americas	<p>European piracy and privateering in Caribbean</p> <p>rise of plantation and cash-crop agriculture</p> <p>increased reliance on slavery and coerced labor</p> <p>sugar, cotton, tobacco, coffee, silver</p>
Global and Interregional	<p>global circulation of trade goods (finished products and raw materials)</p> <p>piracy, privateering, and state competition over trade routes</p> <p>triangular trade in the Atlantic</p> <p>influx of New World silver into world economy</p> <p>increased agricultural production (plantation/agriculture)</p> <p>increased manufacturing and the emergence of proto-industrial production</p> <p>increased resource extraction (mining, fishing, hunting)</p>

Economic Systems

- The incorporation of the Americas into existing networks of exchange led to the emergence of a truly global economic system, complete with the worldwide circulation of raw materials and finished products.
- The emergence of a “triangular” Atlantic trade system, combined with the Europeans’ ability to circumnavigate the globe, disrupted and altered traditional trade routes, particularly land routes such as the Silk Road.
- Competition over trade routes, especially maritime ones, affected state relations in several parts of the world, including the Atlantic Ocean (and the Caribbean Sea) and the Indian Ocean.

- Agriculture remained dominant as a mode of economic production and as the form of labor practiced by the vast majority of people worldwide. Even so, trade and manufacturing became steadily more important during these years.
- The rise in global productivity and wealth rested on a foundation of coerced labor, which took many forms. The Atlantic and Arab slave trades were extensive. Serfdom was common in Europe (especially Russia) and other parts of the world. Plantation and cash-crop agriculture in the Americas was largely based on unfree labor.
- Mercantilism became the dominant economic principle of states that formed maritime or trading-post empires. Joint-stock companies and monopolies with royal charters financed and carried out much of this era's exploration and colonization. These include the Muscovy Company, the Dutch East India Company, the Hudson's Bay Company, the Company of New France, and the British East India Company.
- During the 1500s and 1600s, Spanish and Portuguese extraction of precious metals—especially silver—from the Americas affected economies around the world. This huge and sudden influx of coinage into so many economies created a harmful glut of precious metals, leading to severe inflation in places as diverse as China and Europe.
- In several civilizations, primarily Europe, proto-industrial modes of production began to appear, especially during the 1700s. By the late 1700s, the concept of capitalism was emerging as well. Both of these trends would have a profound impact on economic life in the 1800s.
- Interregional trade was affected by the global cooling that led to the Little Ice Age.

Social Structures, 1450–1750	
Europe	<p>serfdom (declining in Western Europe, increasing in Russia) German Peasants' War (early 1500s) + Russian serf and Cossack uprisings (1600s–1700s)</p> <p>rise of the burgher and bourgeoisie (middle) classes elite adjustments for European nobles (nobility of the sword vs. nobility of the robe; Russia's Table of Ranks)</p> <p>Protestant-Catholic religious strife anti-Semitism</p> <p>patriarchy continues, with slightly improved opportunities for women of middle and upper classes</p>
Middle East	<p>elite adjustments (janissaries and devshirme civil servants) devshirme (Ottoman slave-recruiting system) Arab slave trade</p> <p>jjizya tax for subject non-believers (dhimmi) mudarra ("moderation") policy and the millet (Ottoman system for religious minorities)</p> <p>Islam and patriarchy (veiling, seclusion, polygamy, the harem)</p>
Africa	<p>Arab slave trade in North and East Africa growth of Atlantic slave trade (1400s–1800s; Middle Passage, triangular trade)</p> <p>matrilinear social organization in certain areas impact of the Arab and African slave trades on family structure</p>

Social Structures, 1450-1750	
East (and Central) Asia	<p>intensification of peasant labor (silk)</p> <p>elite adjustments (mandarin bureaucrats in China; salaried samurai in Japan)</p> <p>Li Zicheng's peasant revolt and the fall of China's Ming dynasty (1630s-1640s)</p> <p>serfdom and social stratification in Tokugawa Japan</p> <p>Neo-Confucianism and patriarchy (foot binding)</p> <p>samurai patriarchy and geisha courtesans</p>
South (and Southeast) Asia and Oceania	<p>intensification of peasant labor (cotton)</p> <p>elite adjustments (zamindar landowners)</p> <p>tolerance and tensions among India's Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs (Akbar the Great vs. Aurangzeb)</p> <p>Hinduism and patriarchy (sati, seclusion)</p> <p>Islam and patriarchy (veiling, seclusion, and polygamy)</p> <p>role of Southeast Asian women in early encounters between European traders and Asian populations</p>
Americas	<p>encomienda system (1500s)</p> <p>Spanish adaptation of mit'a system</p> <p>plantation monoculture (sugarcane, cotton, tobacco)</p> <p>Atlantic slave trade (1400s-1800s; Middle Passage, triangular trade)</p> <p>indentured servitude in North America</p> <p>creole and mixed populations (República de Indios and race-based hierarchies in Latin America)</p> <p>role of women in encounters between European arrivals and native populations (Malinche, Pocahontas)</p>
Global and Interregional	<p>increased agricultural production and increased tax and conscription burdens on peasants</p> <p>greater urbanization and greater class diversification</p> <p>growth of artisan (craftsman) and urban working classes</p> <p>growth and ambiguous status of middle and merchant classes</p> <p>political and economic adjustments for elite classes</p> <p>coerced labor and chattel slavery become increasingly common</p> <p>patriarchy continues</p>

Social Structures

- Agriculture remained dominant as the form of labor practiced by the vast majority of people worldwide. Most people lived in rural settings.
- As the centralizing power of the state expanded, especially its power to gather taxes and conscript soldiers, pressure on peasant communities increased, occasionally leading to peasant revolts and rebellions.
- New forms of peasant labor (including plantation farming and cash-crop monoculture) arose to take their place alongside traditional methods.
- The rise in global productivity and wealth rested on a foundation of coerced labor, which took many forms, including chattel slavery, or direct ownership of other human beings. The Atlantic and Arab slave trades were extensive. Serfdom was common in Europe

(especially Russia) and other parts of the world. Plantation and cash-crop agriculture in the Americas was based on unfree labor.

- Social diversification resulted from the increased importance of banking, commerce, trade, shopkeeping, artisanry, and manufacturing. Growth in these sectors led to the creation of middle and urban working classes. These were small to begin with, but grew in numbers and in cultural and social influence.
- Urbanization continued. This trend was often related to an increase in social mobility.
- Elite classes in many regions faced new challenges, either because of political centralization on the part of their monarchs or because of greater importance now being placed on trade and money-based wealth, rather than on land—which, for centuries, had been the source and measure of power and riches for traditional elites.
- In more societies, merit became important as a criterion for social advancement and even for entry into the elite classes.
- Diasporic communities and foreign enclaves continued to form in many towns and ports, due to the expansion of interregional and global trade.
- Colonization, particularly in the Americas, created mixed populations, such as mulattos, mestizos, and creoles. New hierarchies emerged in Europe's New World colonies.
- Ethnic and religious minorities were treated differently in various parts of the world. In some cases, they enjoyed freedom and equal status. More often, though, they were persecuted, treated as second-class citizens, or restricted in various ways.
- Family and gender relations underwent restructuring. In Europe, for example, families tended to grow smaller.
- In most parts of the world, women continued to occupy a secondary status in terms of social roles, economic opportunities, and political influence. In parts of Europe, a limited awareness that the treatment of women was unjust began to develop.
- Individual women from small but important segments of society—from the aristocracy or emerging middle class, for example—gained educations, became active in business, made scientific discoveries, and became artists and writers.
- Local women often played crucial roles during economic or political encounters between their own people and European colonizers and traders.

Humans and the Environment, 1450–1750	
Europe	arrival of corn/maize, potatoes, and other crops via Columbian Exchange
Middle East	coffee spreads throughout region (1400s–1500s)
Africa	arrival of corn/maize, manioc, and other crops via Columbian Exchange
East (and Central) Asia	arrival of corn/maize, potatoes, and other crops via Columbian Exchange
South (and Southeast) Asia and Oceania	arrival of corn/maize, potatoes, chili peppers, and other crops via Columbian Exchange

Humans and the Environment, 1450–1750	
Americas	<p>arrival of horses, pigs, cattle, and other animals via Columbian Exchange</p> <p>arrival of sugarcane, cotton, okra, rice, coffee, and other crops via Columbian Exchange</p> <p>Afro-Eurasian diseases (smallpox, measles, and influenza) kill at least 25 to 50 percent of indigenous Americans</p> <p>plantation and monoculture agriculture (sugarcane, cotton, coffee, tobacco)</p> <p>silver mining</p>
Global and Interregional	<p>Little Ice Age reaches its peak (ca. 1500 to mid-1800s)</p> <p>environmental impact of mining, manufacturing, and urbanization increases in many regions</p> <p>environmental impact of fishing and whaling increases, especially in the Atlantic</p> <p>environmental impact of fur hunting increases, especially in Siberia and North America</p>

Humans and the Environment

- The European age of exploration brought the Americas into contact with Afro-Eurasia at the end of the 1400s. The transmission of foodstuffs, animal species, and disease pathogens between these geographical areas is known as the Columbian Exchange.
- The introduction of Afro-Eurasian diseases (especially smallpox, measles, and influenza) into the Americas caused a massive demographic crisis, killing at least one-fourth to one-half of the indigenous population, and perhaps much more.
- The importation of corn (maize), potatoes, and manioc dramatically altered the diets and agricultural practices of Europe, Africa, and eventually Asia. Tomatoes had an impact as well, and American-grown crops like tobacco and cacao (from which chocolate is made) were highly desired by Europeans. Populations rose significantly throughout Europe, Africa, and Asia as a result of the new foods.
- To the Americas, Europeans and Africans brought the horse, pigs, and cattle. Afro-Eurasian crops transplanted to the Americas include okra, rice, citrus and other fruits, sugarcane, coffee, and cotton.
- The introduction of European modes of economic production into the Americas, especially plantation agriculture and the cultivation of cash crops like sugar and tobacco, radically altered North and South American ecosystems.
- Fishing, whaling, and the hunting of fur bearing animals—activities with a significant environmental impact—became increasingly important to the economies of European nations, especially as they intensified their efforts to explore and colonize larger parts of the world.
- Manufacturing and mining increased in importance, leading to greater resource extraction and a heavier environmental impact.
- The movement of peoples between Afro-Eurasia and the Americas, whether voluntary or involuntary, ranks as one of the most important migrations in history.
- After a gradual cooling during the 1300s and 1400s, the Little Ice Age hit its peak between the early 1500s and the early to mid-1800s.

QUESTIONS AND COMPARISONS TO CONSIDER

- Consider various forms of state consolidation during this era, as well as the state-building techniques (use of religious concepts, improvements in bureaucracy and infrastructure, better tax gathering, displays of art and architecture, and so on) used to maintain, expand, and legitimize power.
- How were states in Africa and the Americas similar to and different from those in Europe and Asia? Also compare European monarchies with Asian states.
- Discuss transformations and intensifications of labor, both in the agricultural sector and elsewhere.
- Compare the emerging Atlantic slave trade with other systems of coerced labor, such as serfdom in Russia, the Arab slave network in Africa and the Mediterranean, the *encomienda* and *hacienda* systems in Latin America, and the Ottoman *devshirme*.
- What technologies and innovations facilitated exploration and imperial expansion? What made European exploration different from earlier campaigns of exploration and long-range oceanic navigation?
- Examine the emergence of gunpowder weaponry, the way it spread, and the consequences of its invention, both military and political.
- Compare elite classes, such as Europe's noble class, zamindars in Mughal India, mandarin civil servants in China, and the daimyo in Japan. What other elites existed or emerged? Did the criteria for elite status include wealth, birthright, or merit? What challenges did traditional elites face during this era, whether because of the increased centralization of states or because of the rising economic importance of trade, commerce, and manufacture?
- What were the consequences of the rise of trade and commerce in different regions? How did trade and commerce enrich and/or disrupt existing social, political, and cultural practices?
- How did elites in non-European regions interact with European traders and colonizers?
- What were the environmental effects of the European encounter with the Americas? The economic effects? The social and cultural consequences? What mixed populations came into being as a result?
- Examine the development of popular and more easily accessible forms of culture, such as drama, or poetry and the novel, or painting.
- Where did literacy improve most quickly? What impact did the printing press have on this development? What were the implications?
- Compare religious developments in various parts of the world. To what degree did religious schisms and disputes affect social and political life more widely? How did inter-regional interactions affect religion?
- Consider key state rivalries during this period. Also consider the way competition over trade affected the global balance of power and patterns of international commerce.
- Contemplate the restructuring of gender and family relationships during this era.