

# AP World History: Modern

## Midterm Exam Study Guide (Units 1 & 2)

This study guide is designed to help you prepare effectively for the midterm exam. It summarizes the **key content, skills, and thinking strategies** you are expected to know. It does **not** include specific test questions.

### How the Midterm Is Structured

#### Section I: Multiple Choice (70 questions)

- All questions are **stimulus-based**
- Emphasis on **historical reasoning**, not memorization
- Slightly more weight on **Unit 2 (trade networks and exchange)**

#### Section II: Short-Answer Questions (SAQs)

- 10 independent SAQs
- Each response: **2–4 sentences**
- Focus on **specific evidence + explanation**

#### Section III: Long Essay Question (LEQ)

- Choose **ONE** prompt (Unit 1-focused OR Unit 2-focused)
- Write a full argument with evidence and analysis

## Unit 1 Review: States, Belief Systems, and Social Organization

### Core Themes You Must Understand

#### 1. State Building (Africa, Europe, Asia, Americas)

- How rulers gained and maintained power
- Use of **trade, religion, tribute, labor systems, and bureaucracy**
- Different regions used different methods based on geography and culture

#### Africa

- Mali, Ghana, Songhai: power from **trans-Saharan trade** and taxation
- Great Zimbabwe: wealth from **gold trade** and regional control
- Ethiopia: **religious legitimacy** (Solomonic Dynasty)
- Hausa city-states: trade + **religious syncretism**

#### Europe

- Feudalism and the **manorial system**
- Role of the **Catholic Church** in legitimizing rulers
- Divine right, tithes, land ownership

#### 2. Religion and Legitimacy

- Religion used to justify authority and social hierarchy
- Christianity in Europe; Islam in Africa and parts of Asia
- Religious institutions influenced law, education, and culture

#### Be able to explain:

- **HOW** religion legitimized power
- **WHY** people accepted this authority

#### 3. Social Organization

- Europe: serfdom, peasants, rigid hierarchy
- Africa: hierarchy tied to trade, tribute, and lineage
- Religious minorities (e.g., Jewish communities) often faced restrictions despite contributions

#### 4. Intellectual Life

- Scholasticism: faith + reason in Europe
- Preservation and expansion of knowledge in the Islamic world
- Growth of universities and centers of learning (e.g., Timbuktu)

### Unit 2 Review: Networks of Exchange and Empire

#### Core Themes You Must Understand

##### 1. Causes of Trade Expansion After 1200

- New **commercial practices** (credit, bills of exchange, paper money)
- Improved **transportation technologies**
- Increased demand for **luxury goods**
- Political stability (especially under the Mongols)

##### 2. Major Trade Networks

###### Silk Roads (Land-Based)

- Caravan trade across Eurasia
- Cities like Samarkand and Kashgar
- Importance of caravanserai and credit systems

###### Indian Ocean Trade (Sea-Based)

- Monsoon winds
- Lateen sails, compass, astrolabe
- Port cities like Kilwa, Calicut, Malacca

###### Trans-Saharan Trade

- Camels, camel saddles, oasis routes
- Gold–salt trade
- Growth of West African states

Be able to **compare** these networks.

##### 3. Mongol Empire and Exchange

- Largest contiguous land empire
- **Pax Mongolica**: safety, stability, communication
- Relay (yam) system
- Religious tolerance and use of local administrators

Know both:

- Positive effects (trade, diffusion)
- Negative effects (violence, disease spread)

##### 4. Cultural Diffusion and Interaction

- Diasporic merchant communities
- Spread of Islam through trade
- Swahili Coast as an example of **syncretism**
- Zheng He's voyages: diplomacy, not colonization

##### 5. Consequences of Trade

- Economic growth and urbanization
- Cultural exchange and blending
- Spread of technologies
- Spread of disease (Black Death)

Be prepared to discuss **intended and unintended consequences**.

## Key Vocabulary You Should Be Able to Use Correctly

- Caravanserai
- Credit / bills of exchange
- Luxury goods
- Diaspora
- Syncretism
- Pax Mongolica
- Monsoon winds
- Manorial system
- Divine right
- Tribute system

You should be able to **define these AND use them in context.**

## How to Succeed on Each Section

### Multiple Choice Tips

- Always read the **stimulus first**
- Ask: *What historical skill is being tested?* (cause, effect, comparison, continuity)
- Eliminate answers that are:
  - Outside 1200–1450
  - Too absolute ("all," "never")
  - Historically accurate but irrelevant

### SAQ Tips

- Answer the question **directly**
- Use **specific evidence** (named states, technologies, practices)
- Explain **why** or **how**, not just what

A strong SAQ = **Claim + Evidence + Explanation**

### LEQ Tips

- Start with a **clear thesis** that answers the question and addresses **extent**
- Use **multiple pieces of evidence** from different regions
- Apply a reasoning skill:
  - Causation
  - Comparison
  - Continuity and Change
- Show **complexity** (limits, counterexamples, or connections)

## Final Study Checklist

Before the exam, make sure you can:

- Explain how states gained power in different regions
- Compare land-based and sea-based trade networks
- Describe how technology and environment shaped exchange
- Explain how religion legitimized authority
- Use historical evidence clearly and accurately

**Remember:** This exam rewards **thinking like a historian**, not memorizing facts.  
Focus on patterns, processes, and explanations.