The West's First Outreach: Maritime Power

- By 1500, Europeans had become more aware of the wider world. Ignorance, however, hampered their explorations. Early voyages on small ships brought small returns.
- Technological change rapidly impacted both the scope and nature of European voyages. Mastery of the compass, added to the use of the cannon, changed everything. Europeans were now able to go farther and protect themselves on the seas.
- The Portuguese led the way, moving down the coast of Africa, and eventually around the Cape of Good Hope. Vasco da Gama's arrival in India brought Europe into direct contact with the east. Spanish ships reached the Americas in 1492, and Ferdinand Magellan sailed around Cape Horn into the Pacific in 1519.
- Northern European nations joined the competition late, but soon took the lead. The French claimed Canada, in 1534, and the British followed. The Dutch and the British focused on commerce, forming East India Companies with monopolies on trade.

Toward a World Economy

- As the voyagers crossed, they brought plants, animals, and microbes in both directions: the Columbian Exchange. Diets on both sides of the Atlantic were affected, and populations were decimated by imported disease. The ecological impact was immense.
- Europeans began to dominate trade, although still limited to the coastlines in most areas. Trading outposts dotted the shores of Africa and the Indian subcontinent. In more resistant areas, merchants gathered in areas set aside for them in towns.
- Competition between European nations was spurred by mercantilism, which dictated that colonizers had the monopoly on exports to their colonies, which, in turn, furnished raw goods at low prices. The practice resulted in large areas of the world dependent on European goods.
- In this first phase of colonization, the impact of Europeans was growing but still limited. At the same time, new systems of forced labor took root.
- Was there a world economy at this time? Chinese adherence to tradition kept western influence to a minimum. Japan and Korea also limited contact, and even withdrew from trade. In India and the Middle East, the level of trade was so low that no impact was felt.
- The volume of trade increased in the 17th century. Britain turned India into a
Colonial Expansion

- Colonization of the American mainland began in Panama. Francisco Pizarro was one of many adventurers who gained their own empires. The Inca and Aztec were conquered. Missionaries accompanied these enterprises.

- North American colonies took a different path, often as havens for religious refugees. France and Britain vied for dominance, yet the commercial attractions were not great. The lower density of natives in North America made European inroads easier.

- Europeans maintained their tradition of nuclear families in their North American colonies, and, in general, more closely resembled the home country than colonies in Latin America.

- For the most part, colonization in Africa in this first phase was restricted to coastal trading posts. The Portuguese search for slaves in Angola and the Dutch Cape Colony were important exceptions. As Britain and France struggled for control of India, their impact intensified, as they made Indian leaders part of their rivalry. In the late 1700’s, Britain took a more active role in administering the colony.

- The impact of European colonization was initially greater at home than abroad. The Seven Years’ War was the culmination of British-French overseas competition, and the growing European reliance on imports changed tastes at home.

- Globally, Europeans intensified their use of forced labor. At the same time, some areas benefited by the movement of goods made possible by world trade.
CHAPTER 17

The Transformation of the West: 1450–1750

First Big Changes: Culture and Commerce, 1450–1650

- Francesco Petrarch was one of the first Europeans to typify the new spirit of the Renaissance.
- The Italian Renaissance, after an abortive start in the 1300s, took shape in the 1400s. Humanism, the intellectual basis of the movement, looked to ancient Greece and Rome for inspiration. Humanity, particularly in a secular setting, was the focus of artistic and intellectual endeavor.
- The Northern Renaissance, starting some time after the Italian, but also spurred by merchant wealth, took its own direction. It focused on the perfection of man in a Christian context with extraordinary writers such as Shakespeare and Rabelais. Monarchy experienced a period of cultural and political dynamism.
- Communication was deeply changed by the adoption of the printing press in the 1400s. In a different sphere, the enduring European-style family became prevalent, based on the nuclear family.
- The Protestant Reformation, begun by Martin Luther, reshaped the religious, then the political, map of Europe. Reformers promoted public education, particularly in Calvinist areas. The role of the Catholic Church was curtailed. However, responding to the Reformation, the Catholic Church finally acquiesced to the attempts of its members to reform itself.
- Religious strife both led to and inflamed growing nationalist conflicts. The Thirty Years War between Spain and the Holy Roman Empire was fought over religious and nationalist issues. In England, the Civil War was fought over religion, the extent of parliamentary control, and royal claims to sovereignty. While the religious conflicts that afflicted Europe were resolved, the balance of political power had been seriously upset. Social changes also resulted, with some improvement in women’s roles.
- An influx of gold and silver from Latin America, and markets that grew as colonization advanced, transformed the European economy. Commercial agriculture became the rule in Europe. Material wealth for the average European greatly increased.
- Others were hurt by economic change, notably the emerging proletariat. Popular uprisings were common in the 1600s, often leading to calls for a greater political voice. At the same time, persecution of witches burst out, fueled by fear and hatred on the part of the dispossessed poor.
Science and Politics: The Next Phase of Change

I The impact of the Scientific Revolution spread beyond its immediate sphere, deeply transforming all areas of thought in Europe.

I Copernicus discovered, or possibly passed on, the heliocentric theory, revolutionizing the western view of the cosmos. Regardless of how he developed the theory, it had an immense influence on scientific studies.

I The work of Copernicus was furthered by Kepler's planetary observations, and Galileo’s research using the telescope. Broad, fundamental work done by Descartes and Newton established the scientific approach to knowledge. Scientific study became popular, and influenced the philosophy known as Deism. According to Locke, everything could be known through the sense, with the use of reason.

I Led by France, monarchy entered a new phase: absolutism. Larger bureaucracies and elaborate court ritual raised monarchs to new heights. Central Europe, monarchs followed the French model, their power strengthened by the defeat of the Turks. At the same time, ideas of the sovereignty of the people developed. In Britain and the Netherlands, representative law-making bodies limited the power of monarchs.

I All of the European countries had commonalities as nation-states: people bounded by common culture, within clearly defined boundaries, constantly at odds with other nations-states.

The West by 1750

I Political forms crystallized around 1750, with few important developments. Only Prussia under Frederick the Great showed any dynamism, improving agriculture and expanding religious toleration.

I The Enlightenment, the spread of the Scientific Revolution to all areas of intellectual endeavor, took hold in the 18th century. With great faith in the goodness and capacity of humanity, and the power of the human intellect, Enlightenment thinkers set out to fix the world. The movement took place in salons, in coffee-houses, in lecture halls, and was promoted by the growth of scholarly journals.

I Consumer demand for imported products influenced colonization. Agriculture developed with improved drainage and the importation of New World crops. Manufacturing, fueled by capitalism and employing large numbers of workers, increasingly drove the economy.

I Developments in commerce, the economy, and political forms were largely independent, but together they transformed the West.

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. The Protestant Reformation in Germany was equally a religious...
CHAPTER 18

The Rise of Russia

Russia's Expansionist Politics Under the Tsars

- Mongol dominance of Russia lasted until the mid-15th century. Under Ivan III, Russia was liberated, and began its rise to power.
- Russian culture was not deeply changed by Mongol rule, but it had stagnated. The tsars began the process of reviving and recreating Russian culture, largely by tying its past to that of the Byzantine Empire.
- For the tsars, Russian independence meant territorial expansion, pushing back the Mongols. Cossacks, peasant-adventurers, were used to settle the newly-taken lands. The lands, in turn, could be used to buy the loyalty of the boyars or nobility. Russian expansion put an end to the periodic emergence of nomadic peoples from central Asia.
- The tsars began a deliberate policy of contact with the West, both commercially and culturally, establishing the enduring practice of following the Western lead. The Time of Troubles, a period of rebellion and invasion, was ended by the new Romanov dynasty.

Russia's First Westernization, 1690–1790

- Peter I, the Great, looked with confidence to the west for guidance in restructuring his empire.
- Ruling as autocrat, Peter the Great used bureaucrats to avoid reliance on the nobility. He also instituted the long-lived tradition of a secret police force.
- Peter regularized the organization of Russia's government, including provincial and urban governments. These changes, along with increased manufacturing output, added to the power of the central government. The tsar also undertook cultural changes, attempting to bring Russian dress and manners in line with other European countries. While his reforms brought change, they were also partial and were deeply resented by many.
- Catherine the Great, taking control of the Russian government from her husband, Peter III, continued many of Peter I's policies. Her reforms, too, were selective, restricting the freedom of peasants, and intellectuals wanting further reforms. Her dynamic leadership added to the territory of the Russian state, and improved the position of Russia in European politics. The reigns of Peter I and Catherine completely changed the political and cultural place of Russia in European developments.
Themes in Early Modern Russian History

- Russian nobles had a more important role than their western counterparts, who, by this period, were largely ornamental.
- The position of serfs declined in the 1600s and 1700s, satisfying the nobility, who, in turn, effectively managed this agrarian population for the tsars. In fact, Russian serfdom closely resembled slavery. In other areas of eastern Europe, peasants were similarly exploited. While peasant society was largely self-governed, the status of the peasants declined throughout the 18th century.
- Russian society tended towards polarization, with only a small merchant class. Agricultural practices saw little improvement.
- Russian intellectuals, influenced by western ideas, called for reform. Peasant revolts were brutally repressed, including the Pugachev rebellion, put down by Catherine the Great.
- Eastern Europe in this period tended to fall into the western European sphere in this period. Copernicus, a Pole, was an example of an intellectual with close ties to western European developments. Some smaller countries were engulfed by more powerful neighbors. Poland is a notable example.