

AP World History Course Key Concepts

Period 6 – Global Fragmentation and Realignments, c. 1900 to Present

Key Concept 6.1 Science and the Environment

Rapid advances in science altered the understanding of the universe and the natural world and led to the development of new technologies. These changes enabled unprecedented population growth, which altered how humans interacted with the environment, and threatened delicate ecological balances at local, regional and global levels.

I. Researchers made rapid advances in science that spread throughout the world, assisted by the development of new technology.

- A. New modes of communication and transportation virtually eliminated the problem of geographic distance.
- B. New scientific paradigms transformed human understanding of the world (such as the theory of relativity, quantum mechanics, the Big Bang theory or psychology).
- C. The Green Revolution produced food for the earth's growing population as it spread chemically and genetically enhanced forms of agriculture.
- D. Medical innovations (such as the polio vaccine, antibiotics or the artificial heart) increased the ability of humans to survive.
- E. New energy technologies (such as the use of oil or nuclear power) raised productivity and increased the production of material goods.

II. Humans fundamentally changed their relationship with the environment.

- A. Humans exploited and competed over the earth's finite resources more intensely than ever before in human history.
- B. Global warming was a major consequence of the release of greenhouse gases and other pollutants into the atmosphere.
- C. Pollution threatened the world's supply of water and clean air. Deforestation and desertification were continued consequences of the human impact on the environment. Rates of extinction of other species accelerated sharply.

III. Disease, scientific innovations and conflict led to demographic shifts.

- A. Diseases associated with poverty (such as malaria, tuberculosis or cholera) persisted, while other diseases (such as the 1919 influenza pandemic, ebola or HIV/AIDS) emerged as new epidemics and threats to human survival. In addition, changing lifestyles and increased longevity led to higher incidence of certain diseases (such as diabetes, heart disease or Alzheimer's disease).
- B. More effective forms of birth control gave women greater control over fertility and transformed sexual practices.
- C. Improved military technology (such as tanks, airplanes or the atomic bomb) and new tactics (such as trench warfare or fire bombing) led to increased levels of wartime casualties (such as Nanjing, Dresden or Hiroshima).

Key Concept 6.2 Global Conflicts and Their Consequences

At the beginning of the 20th century, a European-dominated global political order existed, which also included the United States, Russia and Japan. Over the course of the century, peoples and states around the world challenged this order in ways that sought to redistribute power within the existing order and to restructure empires, while those states in power attempted to maintain the status quo. Other peoples and states sought to overturn the political order itself. These challenges to, and the attempts to maintain, the political order manifested themselves in an unprecedented level of conflict with high human casualties. In the context of these conflicts, many regimes in both older and newer states struggled with maintaining political stability and were challenged by internal and external factors, including ethnic and religious conflicts, secessionist movements, territorial partitions, economic dependency, and the legacies of colonialism.

I. Europe dominated the global political order at the beginning of the 20th century, but both land-based and transoceanic empires gave way to new forms of transregional political organization by the century's end.

- A. Older land-based empires (such as the Ottoman, Russian or the Qing) collapsed due to a combination of internal and external factors (such as economic hardship, political and social discontent, technological stagnation or military defeat).
- B. Some colonies negotiated their independence (such as India or the Gold Coast from the British Empire).
- C. Some colonies achieved independence through armed struggle (such as Algeria and Vietnam from the French empire or Angola from the Portuguese empire).

II. Emerging ideologies of anti-imperialism contributed to the dissolution of empires.

- A. Nationalist leaders (such as Mohandas Gandhi, Ho Chi Minh or Kwame Nkrumah) in Asia and Africa challenged imperial rule.
- B. Regional, religious and ethnic movements (such as that of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the Quebecois separatist movement or the Biafra secessionist movement) challenged both colonial rule and inherited imperial boundaries.
- C. Transnational movements (such as communism, Pan-Arabism or Pan-Africanism) sought to unite people across national boundaries.
- D. Within states in Africa, Asia and Latin America, movements promoted communism and socialism as a way to redistribute land and resources.

III. Political changes were accompanied by major demographic and social consequences.

- A. The redrawing of old colonial boundaries led to population resettlements (such as the India/Pakistan partition, the Zionist Jewish settlement of Palestine or the division of the Middle East into mandatory states).
- B. The migration of former colonial subjects to imperial metropolises (such as South Asians to Britain, Algerians to France or Filipinos to the United States) maintained cultural and economic ties between the colony and the metropole even after the dissolution of empires.
- C. The proliferation of conflicts led to genocide (such as Armenia, the Holocaust, Cambodia or Rwanda) and the displacement of peoples resulting in refugee populations (such as the Palestinians or Darfurians).

IV. Military conflicts occurred on an unprecedented global scale.

- A. World War I and World War II were the first "total wars." Governments used ideologies, including fascism, nationalism and communism, to mobilize all of their state's resources, including peoples, both in the home countries and the colonies or former colonies (such as the Gurkha soldiers in India or the ANZAC troops in Australia), for the purpose of waging war. Governments also used a variety of strategies, including political speeches, art, media and intensified forms of nationalism, to mobilize these populations.

- B. The varied sources of global conflict in the first half of the century included: imperialist expansion by European powers and Japan, competition for resources, ethnic conflict, great power rivalries between Great Britain and Germany, nationalist ideologies, and the economic crisis engendered by the Great Depression.
- C. The global balance of economic and political power shifted after the end of World War II and rapidly evolved into the Cold War. The United States and the Soviet Union emerged as superpowers, which led to ideological struggles between capitalism and communism throughout the globe.
- D. The Cold War produced new military alliances, including NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and promoted proxy wars in Latin America, Africa and Asia.
- E. The dissolution of the Soviet Union effectively ended the Cold War.

V. Although conflict dominated much of the 20th century, many individuals and groups — including states — opposed this trend. Some individuals and groups, however, intensified the conflicts.

- A. Groups and individuals challenged the many wars of the century (such as Picasso in his *Guernica*, the antinuclear movement during the Cold War or Thich Quang Duc by self-immolation), and some promoted the practice of nonviolence (such as Tolstoy, Gandhi or Martin Luther King) as a way to bring about political change.
- B. Groups and individuals opposed and promoted alternatives to the existing economic, political and social orders (such as the Non-Aligned Movement, which presented an alternative political bloc to the Cold War; the Tiananmen Square protesters that promoted democracy in China; the Anti-Apartheid Movement; or participants in the global uprisings of 1968).
- C. Militaries and militarized states often responded to the proliferation of conflicts in ways that further intensified conflict (such as the promotion of military dictatorship in Chile, Spain and Uganda; the United States' promotion of a New World Order after the Cold War; or the buildup of the "military-industrial complex" and arms trading).
- D. More movements (such as the IRA, ETA or Al-Qaeda) used terrorism to achieve political aims.
- E. Global conflicts had a profound influence on popular culture (such as Dada, James Bond, Socialist Realism or video games).

Key Concept 6.3 New Conceptualizations of Global Economy, Society and Culture

The beginning of the 20th century witnessed a great deal of warfare and the collapse of the global economy. In response to these challenges, new institutions of global governance emerged and continued to develop throughout the century. Scientific breakthroughs, new technologies, increasing levels of integration, changing relationships between humans and the environment, and the frequency of political conflict all contributed to global developments in which people crafted new understandings of society, culture and historical interpretations. These new understandings often manifested themselves in, and were reinforced by, new forms of cultural production. Institutions of global governance both shaped and adapted to these social conditions.

I. States, communities and individuals became increasingly interdependent, a process facilitated by the growth of institutions of global governance.

- A. New international organizations (such as the League of Nations or the United Nations) formed to maintain world peace and to facilitate international cooperation.
- B. New economic institutions (such as the IMF, World Bank or WTO) sought to spread the principles and practices associated with free market economics throughout the world.
- C. Humanitarian organizations (such as UNICEF, the Red Cross, Amnesty International, Doctors Without Borders or WHO) developed to respond to humanitarian crises throughout the world.
- D. Regional trade agreements (such as the European Union, NAFTA, ASEAN or Mercosur) created regional trading blocs designed to promote the movement of capital and goods across national borders.
- E. Multinational corporations (such as Royal Dutch Shell, Coca-Cola or Sony) began to challenge state authority and autonomy.
- F. Movements throughout the world protested the inequality of environmental and economic consequences of global integration.

II. People conceptualized society and culture in new ways; some challenged old assumptions about race, class, gender and religion, often using new technologies to spread reconfigured traditions.

- A. The notion of human rights gained traction throughout the world (such as the U.N. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, women's rights or the end of the White Australia Policy).
- B. Increased interactions among diverse peoples sometimes led to the formation of new cultural identities (such as negritude) and exclusionary reactions (such as xenophobia, race riots or citizenship restrictions).
- C. Believers developed new forms of spirituality (such as New Age Religions, Hare Krishna or Falun Gong) and chose to emphasize particular aspects of practice within existing faiths and apply them to political issues (such as fundamentalist movements or Liberation Theology).

III. Popular and consumer culture became global.

- A. Sports were more widely practiced and reflected national and social aspirations (such as World Cup Soccer, the Olympics or cricket).
- B. Changes in communication and transportation technology enabled the widespread diffusion of music and film (such as reggae or Bollywood).