

# Civics Study Packet 5: U.S. History (Part I)

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## NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORY

The story of the United States begins with the colonization of the Americas by Europeans. “Extensive European colonization began in 1492, when a Spanish expedition headed by Christopher Columbus sailed west to find a new trade route to the Far East but inadvertently landed in what came to be known to Europeans as *the New World*” (Wikipedia, 2017). At first, colonization was primarily a Spanish program, but the English began claiming their own colonies in North America about a century later.

However, long before Columbus or any other European arrived, there were already tens of millions of people who lived in America. *These were the American Indians*. They were called *Indians* because Columbus assumed he had landed in the East Indies when he had arrived in the Caribbean. (The word “American” is often added as an adjective to distinguish them from the people of India.) Today, some sources refer to these people as *Amerindians*, but the term *Native American* has become more common in modern society.



Tecumseh was a Shawnee leader who attempted to organize an alliance of tribes throughout North America. (Wikipedia, 2017)

## NOTES

The Native American population is quite diverse. In fact, there are numerous tribes, ethnicities, languages, and cultures that are included under the American Indian label. Some of the largest tribes still found within the borders of the United States today include the *Cherokee*, *Navajo*, *Sioux*, *Chippewa*, *Pueblo*, and *Apache* peoples. In total, these and other Native American peoples make up only about one percent of the modern population of the United States. However, they represent well over four percent of the permanent population of Arizona.



American Indian tribes and communities in Arizona

#### > REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who lived in America before the Europeans arrived?
2. Name at least two American Indian tribes.

## THE ENGLISH COLONIES OF NORTH AMERICA

## NOTES

The earliest European colonies in North America belonged to Spain. For example, Juan Ponce de León claimed Florida for Spain as early as 1513. These earliest colonies were established as part of the *conquista* program authorized by the Crown of Castile.

British colonization in North America began in the seventeenth century. *The first permanent English colony was Jamestown, Virginia*, which was established in 1607. Plymouth Colony was established shortly thereafter in 1620. This second English colony was founded by Pilgrims who wished to form their own churches independent from the Church of England. They could only do this by leaving their home country. Thus, the Pilgrims became the first example of *English colonists who came to America to gain religious freedom*.

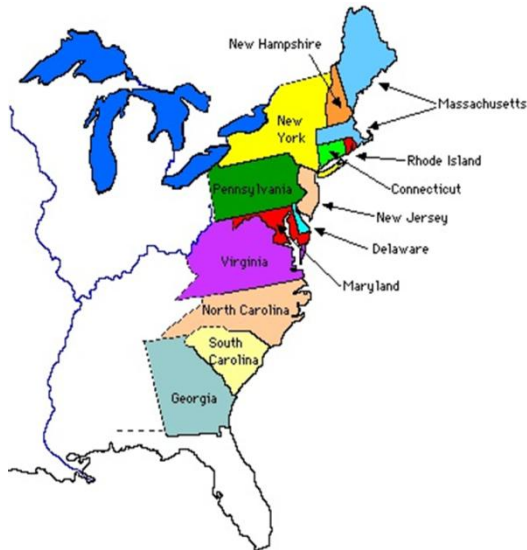
The tragic institution of slavery began almost immediately in the British colonies. In fact, “the first 19 or so Africans to reach the English colonies arrived in Jamestown, Virginia in 1619.” These slaves were “brought by Dutch traders who had seized them from a captured Spanish slave ship” (Wikipedia, 2017). Aside from African slaves, there were also white indentured servants in the colonies, who were basically slaves who would be freed after a prearranged period of years. There were also cases of American Indians being enslaved. Nonetheless, *the vast majority of slaves in the British colonies were Africans who were forcibly brought to America* for that purpose.

### > REVIEW QUESTIONS

3. Name at least one reason colonists came to America from England.
4. What group of people was taken to America and sold as slaves?

## TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

In the late eighteenth century, an increasing number of English *colonists in North America began objecting to taxes* imposed upon them from the British Parliament. The overall complaint was that the legislature in London passed laws directly affecting the colonists in North America even though no Member of Parliament was responsible to represent the people of those colonies. This situation is often referred to as “taxation without representation.” It was a major factor leading to the American Revolution.



By this time, there were thirteen British colonies in North America. These were: *Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, and Virginia*. These colonies organized their own Continental Congress in 1774 to represent the issues of the colonists. In 1776, the Congress finally issued a Declaration of Independence to formally announce the freedom of all thirteen colonies from England.

## NOTES

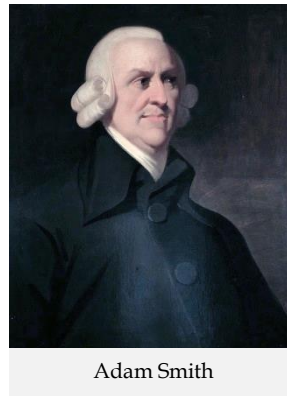
## &gt; REVIEW QUESTIONS

5. Why did the colonists fight the British?
6. Name at least three of the 13 original states.

## THE WEALTH OF NATIONS

Back in Europe, a book was published in 1776 that would become almost as important to the new American nation as the Declaration of Independence. The full title of the book was “An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations.” Today, most people simply call it “*The Wealth of Nations.*”

The author was a Scottish philosopher named Adam Smith. In his book, Smith described *capitalism* as the best and most natural economic system. He argued that the market will balance itself through the “invisible hand” of supply and demand forces. For this reason, his model is sometimes referred to as a *market economy*.



The founding fathers soon adopted the concept of a capitalist economy as a basic principle of the new American nation. Alexander Hamilton, the first Secretary of the Treasury, was particularly enthusiastic about applying the ideas of “*The Wealth of Nations*” to the U.S. economy. Against this, few, if any, of the nation’s founders argued to rely on the non-capitalistic economic models employed throughout most of Europe at the time.

## &gt; REVIEW QUESTIONS

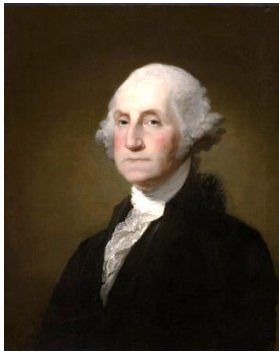
7. What is the economic system in the United States?
8. Who was the first economist to develop the theory of capitalism?

## TOWARD A CONSTITUTION

In 1787, the Declaration of Independence was already over a decade old and the American Revolutionary War had been won several years earlier. The new nation's leaders therefore thought it was time to decide how America would be governed into the future.

To this end, they gathered for a convention in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Many of the founding fathers were present. *The oldest member of the convention was Benjamin Franklin* of Pennsylvania. Other influential participants included James Madison and Alexander Hamilton.

George Washington, the military leader and hero of the American Revolutionary War, was also present. The delegates quickly chose him to preside over the conference. This, along with his subsequent election as the first President of the United States, is why *George Washington is known as "the Father of our Country."*



George Washington

Finally, after four months of work, the Philadelphia Convention created a ground-breaking Constitution. For this reason, we now refer to the gathering as the Constitutional Convention. The Constitution they completed is the same document that still stands as the Constitution of the United States of America.

## NOTES

However, at the time, not everyone thought an entirely new system of government was a good idea. To answer these critics, a series of 85 influential essays were published arguing for the ratification of the proposed Constitution of the United States. *The authors of these articles included such statesmen as Alexander Hamilton and James Madison.* Although the documents were originally released individually, they were later collected into an anthology called "The Federalist: A Collection of Essays, Written in Favour of the New Constitution, as Agreed upon by the Federal Convention, September 17, 1787." Today, the collection is simply known as "The Federalist Papers." They are among the most cherished founding documents of our nation.

#### > REVIEW QUESTIONS

9. What happened at the Constitutional Convention?
10. What is one thing Benjamin Franklin is famous for?
11. Who is the "Father of Our Country"?
12. What are the Federalist Papers?
13. Name one of the authors of the Federalist Papers?

#### GEOGRAPHIC EXPANSION

George Washington was elected as our first President in 1789. He served two terms of four years each, which means he left office in 1797. By that time, three additional states — Vermont, Kentucky, and Tennessee — had joined the original thirteen as new members of the United States of America. The Union was growing.

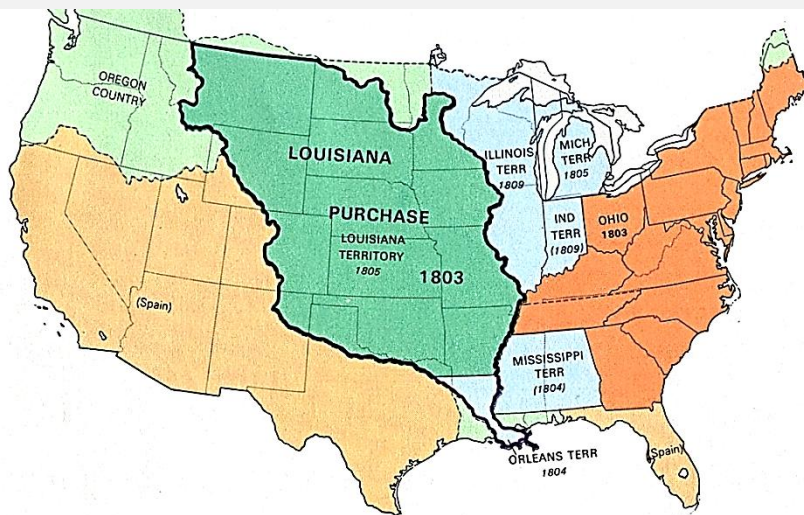


A late eighteenth century American flag with sixteen stars representing the states that were part of the Union at that time.



Perhaps the most dramatic expansion of the United States was the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. France, under Napoleon Bonaparte, had gained control of the territory a few years earlier. However, with a series of major military conflicts in Europe, Napoleon soon decided the North American land was an unnecessary burden, so he sold the entire 828,000 square miles region to the United States for about 11 million dollars. This was a remarkable bargain for our nation.

The Louisiana Purchase of 1803



When the United States purchased Louisiana from France, it got much more than the land making up the modern state of Louisiana. In fact, the Purchase doubled the size of the United States at the time. The territory stretched from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains including all the land that now forms the states of *Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, Oklahoma, Kansas,* and *Nebraska* along with portions of several other modern states.

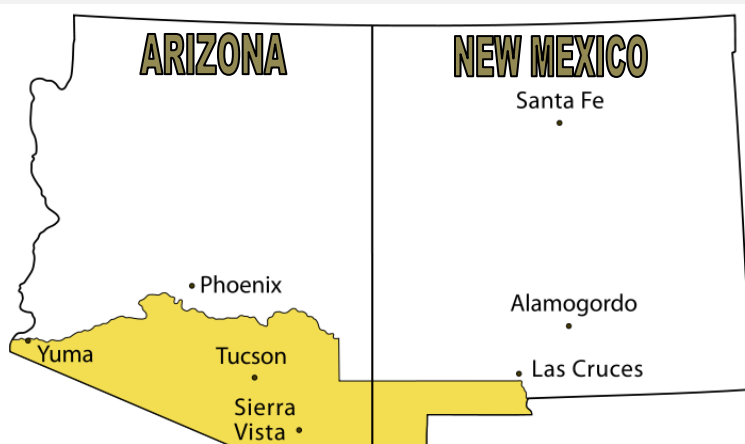


The Louisiana Purchase also included a large portion of the land that now makes up Texas, but that state has a more complicated history. Before it became a state, Texas existed as an independent nation from 1836 until 1846. By 1845, a bill was passed allowing the United States to annex the Republic of Texas as a new state. The people of the Republic of Texas quickly accepted the invitation to statehood.

Mexico, which had controlled the Texas territory prior to its independence, was angry about the annexation. Furthermore, it did not recognize the Rio Grande as the border between its own land and that of the new State of Texas. This led directly to the Mexican-American War (1846-1848).

The war ended when Mexico accepted the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. This treaty affirmed that the U.S. would have full control of Texas and it recognized the Rio Grande as the state's southern border. It also gave the United States ownership of the land that now forms the states of California, Nevada, Utah, and New Mexico along with portions of modern Arizona and Colorado. However, the treaty also required the United States to pay \$15 million in compensation to Mexico for its losses.

While the majority of modern Arizona was acquired as a result of the Mexican-American War, the United States bought the land below the Gila River down to the current Arizona-Mexico border. This happened fifty years after the Mexican-American War in a transaction called *the Gadsden Purchase*. The deal was named after James Gadsden, who was the American ambassador to Mexico at that time. It brought nearly 30,000 square miles, including Yuma, Tucson, and Sierra Vista, under U.S. control.



#### > REVIEW QUESTIONS

14. What territory did the United States buy from France in 1803?
15. Name at least three modern states of the U.S. that are located on land acquired through the Louisiana Purchase.
16. Is it true that Texas was once an independent sovereign nation called the Republic of Texas?
17. What war gave the U.S. full control of Texas, along with the land that now forms the several other western states?
18. What agreement led to southern Arizona, including Tucson and Yuma, to become part of the United States?

#### AMERICAN RIGHTS

As in most modern countries, all people in America have certain basic rights, but citizens have additional rights. For example, *everyone* living in the United States has the right to freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. However, running for federal office is one right that *only* applies to U.S. citizens.

#### > REVIEW QUESTIONS

19. Name two rights of everyone living in the United States.
20. Name one right that only applies to United States citizens?