

Must-Know Dates for AP World History

NOTE: A date qualifies as “must-know” because it is specifically mentioned in the official [Course and Exam Description](#) published by the College Board.

FURTHER NOTE: The AP World History CED does not mention any specific dates in the entire curriculum. At best it mentions centuries (e.g., 13th century, 18th century, 19th century, 20th century) or parts of centuries (e.g., late 19th century). Therefore, the only dates listed below are the major period dates and their significance.

Period 1: 1200-1450

- **1200:** symbolic date used to contextualize world history before 1450
- **1450:** symbolic date for the beginning of European exploration and imperialism
 - The major themes in this time period are as follows:
 - i. Comparing the major civilizations of the world in the 13th century
 - ii. Exploring how those civilizations were connected, especially through trade and conquest

Period 2: 1450-1750

- **1450:** symbolic date for the beginning of European exploration and imperialism
- **1750:** the beginning of Industrialization
 - The major themes in this time period are as follows:
 - i. The expansion of land-based empires and the means by which their leaders consolidated their power and administered their empires.
 - ii. The rise and expansion of sea-based empires, starting with the Portuguese, and the means by which their leaders consolidated their power and administered their empires.

Period 3: 1750-1900

- **1750:** the beginning of the Industrial Revolution
- **1900:** symbolic date indicating the spread of industrialization throughout the world
 - The major themes in this time period are as follows:
 - i. Industrialization’s beginnings in Europe and its spread (and consequences) throughout the world
 - ii. Revolutions rooted in Enlightenment thought and human rights
 - iii. The second wave of European imperialism and its consequences

Period 4: 1900-present

- **1900:** symbolic date for the arrival of modernity
- **Present:** everything after 1900... duh.
 - The major themes in this time period are as follows:
 - i. Global conflicts including World War I and World War II and the resulting wave of decolonization that followed



- ii. The Cold War and its effect on the USSR and the U.S. along with many recently decolonized nations
- iii. Globalization and its effect on social, cultural, and political realities in the world