**Chapter 12 Reading Guide**

1. What are the two historical interpretations of Columbus mentioned in the introductory paragraph of this chapter?
   1. Interpretation1:
   2. Interpretation 2:
2. List some of the other major occurrences that were taking place around the world around the same time as Columbus’ voyages to the Americas.

**I. The Shapes of Human Communities**

**A. Paleolithic Persistence: Australia and North America**

1. What regions of the world still saw hunter-gathers predominate even into the 1400s (the 15th century)?
2. What are some ways the Australian foraging societies (hunter-gatherers) interacted with their environment?
3. Take a look at the “Map of Time”, explain why you think historians have marked the end of the Post-Classical Era and the beginning of the Early Modern Era at 1450 CE?

**B. Agricultural Village Societies: The Igbo and the Iroquois**

1. What 3 characteristics, common to civilizations, had agricultural village societies avoided?
2. What did the Igbo people rely on in order to maintain social cohesion in their “stateless (government-less) society?”
3. What will happen to the Igbo people of western Africa near the end of the 15th century?
4. What changes took place among the Iroquois people in the 15th century?
5. What did the Iroquois League accomplish?
6. What were some advantages for Iroquois women?

**C. Pastoral Peoples: Central Asia and West Africa**

1. Who led the last great military conquest of nomadic peoples from Central Asia?
2. How did the Fulbe people of West Africa differ from the pastoralist groups in Inner Asia?

**II. Civilizations of the Fifteenth Century: Comparing China and Europe**

**A. Ming Dynasty China**

1. In what ways did the Ming dynasty try to remove Mongol influence from China and reestablish traditional Chinese values?
2. What were some of Emperor Yongle’s accomplishments?
3. Describe the government organization of the Ming dynasty.
4. What actions helped the economy and population of China to flourish under the Ming dynasty?
5. What was the purpose of the Zheng He expeditions?
6. Did China wish to conquer new territory and create a maritime empire during this period?
7. What are the three reasons given for why Chinese maritime expeditions stopped suddenly after 1433?
   1. Reason 1:
   2. Reason 2:
   3. Reason 3:

**B. European Comparisons: State Building and Cultural Renewal**

1. How was Europe’s political system different than China’s?
2. Why were there more wars in Europe during the 15th century than in China?
3. Define “**renaissance**”
4. How did the Renaissance change the themes and focus of art , literature, and scholarship?
5. Look at Map 12.2, what is similar about this map and a modern map of Europe?
6. Look at the Waldseemuller Map of 1507, why do you think Africa and Eurasia are drawn more accurately than the Americas?

**C. European Comparisons: Maritime Voyaging**

1. What country initiated maritime voyaging for Europe?
2. What two European expedition marked major breakthroughs in European maritime exploration? (Write down who led them and what they did that was memorable)
   1. Expedition 1:
   2. Expedition 2:
3. Explain some differences between European maritime voyages and the Chinese maritime voyages of Zheng He in all of the following categories:
   1. Size of the expeditions:
   2. Motivation of the expeditions:
   3. Legacy:
4. Why did Europe continue maritime exploration when China decided to abandon it? (Three reasons)
   1. Reason 1:
   2. Reason 2:
   3. Reason 3:
5. Did China’s withdrawal from maritime voyages help or hurt European exploration? Explain.

**III. Civilizations of the Fifteenth Century: The Islamic World**

**A. In the Islamic Heartland: The Ottoman and Safavid Empires**

1. Describe the geographic location of the Ottoman Empire. (Hint: use map 12.4)
2. What nomadic people group was responsible for founding the Ottoman Empire?
3. What was the long-term significance of the Safavid Empire?
4. Why was there frequent conflict between the Ottoman and Safavid empires?

**B. On the Frontiers of Islam: The Songhay and Mughal Empires**

1. What is the name of the West African Islamic Empire that existed in the 15th century?
2. Remember syncretism means the blending of religious beliefs/practices. Explain how Songhay displayed syncretism between Islam and its local beliefs and customs. (Hint: focus on the actions of Songhay’s leader- Sonni Ali)
3. How was the Mughal Empire in India similar to Songhay in Africa?
4. How did the Mughal government deal with its religious diverse population and keep them out of conflict with one another?
5. What religion dominated the Indian Ocean trading network in Southeast Asia during the 16th century?
6. Remember “diasporic communities” means a community of people who share a common culture who are spread out from their culture’s traditional heartland. Where is Southeast Asia were Muslims forming disasporic communities made up of Muslim merchants?

**IV. Civilizations of the Fifteenth Century: The Americas P. 580**

**A. The Aztec Empire**

1. The text states the Aztecs started off as mercenaries and then became conquerors to found their own empire. Define “**mercenary**”:
2. What was the expectation of conquered people within the Aztec empire?
3. Describe the trading city of Tenochtitlan.
4. Describe trade within the Aztec empire.
5. What was the rationale behind human sacrifice (i.e.- what was the justification/reason for it?)

**B. The Inca Empire**

1. How does the size of the Inca Empire compare to that of the Aztecs?
2. How did the Aztecs treat conquered people within their empire?
3. Describe the Incan political system (including its bureaucracy)
4. Define “**quipus**”:
5. How did the Incas treat conquered peoples within their empire?
6. Describe the “mita system”
7. Describe the treatment of women in both Aztec and Incan society.
8. In what ways was it clear that there still wasn’t gender equality within the Aztec and Inca civilizations?

**V. Webs of Connection**

1. What are the three things that connected people during the 15th century? (Hint: focus on the subject of the first 3 paragraphs- each paragraph outlines one of them)
   1. Thing 1:
   2. Thing 2:
   3. Thing 3:

**VI. A Preview of Coming Attractions: Looking Ahead to the Modern Era, 1500–2012**

1. How did Modern Era societies differ from those that came before them?
2. What was Europe’s role in this new Early Modern world?

**VII. Reflections: What If? Chance and Contingency in World History**

1. List the 3 events that had the potential to prevent Europe from rising to world dominance if they had happened differently in the 15th century.
   1. Event 1:
   2. Event 2:
   3. Event 3: