

The Earliest Americans

Description

Students will engage in multiple discussions with prompting questioning, and analyses of primary source documents relating to the earliest inhabitants of modern America. Lessons will focus on the role of the Ice Age and the impact global warming had on America's earliest immigrants. Additional lessons will identify European explorers and the countries that sought to colonize the Americas.

Presentation

[Earliest Americans Presentation](#)

Essential Questions

1. What role did the rise of agriculture play in early settlers creating lasting civilizations in the Americas?
2. What difficulties did early Americans face when establishing settlements?
3. What lasting influences did early Americans have on our modern political and social landscape?

Guiding Questions

1. Who were the first "Americans?"
2. How did the Ice Age influence immigration patterns to the Americas?
3. What is the Beringia Land Bridge and how is that theory changing?
4. How did Ice Age warming impact the growth of American civilizations?
5. How can Columbus's discovery of "America" be described as both bad and good?
6. What were the driving factors for Europeans to establish settlements in the New World?
7. Who were the Spanish Conquistadors and what impact did they have in America?
8. What impact did Europeans have on Native Americans?
9. What were the fundamental beliefs of Puritans?
10. What are the lasting effects of Puritan values that continue to influence our government and society?

Primary Sources

Mayflower Compact; William Bradford's handwritten history, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, ca. 1630
John Winthrop's Sermon "**City upon a Hill**," 1630
Anne Bradstreet "**Upon the Burning of Our House**," 1666
Letter from Christopher Columbus to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, 1493

Digital Resources

The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History; [Cultures of the Americas, 1200 BC - AD 1600](#)
(You will need to create a student account and add my email: rrrhodes@iwest.k12.il.us)

Dates to Remember

1492	1521	1620
1513	1607	1622

Terms & Names

Anne Bradstreet	Hernando Cortes	Plimouth (Plymouth)
Bering Strait	Hispaniola	Pocahontas
Beringia Land Bridge	Hunter Gatherer	Popular Sovereignty
Brown Gold	Ice Age	Powhatan
charter	Jamestown	Puritan
Christopher Columbus	John Smith	Roanoke
Columbian Exchange	John Winthrop	Separation of Church and State
Compulsory Education	Juan Ponce de Leon	Separatist
Conquistador	Mayflower Compact	stock company
Croatoan	Montezuma	Tenochtitlan
Division of Labor	Nomadic	William Bradford
First Amendment	Pilgrim	

Native American Cultures

Mound Builders
Mississippian Culture
Central & South American (Mesoamerican)
Southwest Culture
West Coast
Great Basin & the Plateau
Far North
Great Plains
Eastern Coast & Woodlands
Southeast

For details about specific groups and tribes: (Click the link or copy and paste the entire address.)

[Cultures of the Americas, 1200 BC - AD 1600](https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/american-indians/resources/cultures-americas-1200-bc%E2%80%93ad-1600)

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