

Video Questions

Video: New York, The Country and the City

Today's video is an introduction to a multi-part series on the history and development of the city of New York. While we won't be viewing all parts of this series, this introduction is important because it provides crucial background for the early emergence of New York as we know it today. The case of New York, that we will return to periodically through the semester, is important because New York is simultaneously both like other American cities (downtown, sprawl, industry, offices, rail, highways) and unlike any other city in America (size, importance, variety of activities). Knowledge of the development of New York is important in gaining an understanding of the geography of the American city.

1. According to the video, what visions or values have driven the development of New York, starting in with its Dutch founding in 1624? Was this driving vision different from what drove the founding of other early American cities?
2. Why is geography important in understanding what New York is like, and how it has developed?
3. What were the attitudes of the Dutch toward the native American population?
4. Who was Peter Stuyvesant? What did he do, and why was his role important in the development of "New Amsterdam"?

5. What characteristics of New York today, that many people might consider to be quite “modern”, actually emerged in its years of Dutch rule?

6. Why did “New Amsterdam” not remain a Dutch colony for long?

7. What impact did membership in the British empire have on New York? How was geography a part of this impact?

8. What role did slavery have in the building of New York to the mid-1700s? What examples does the video cite? What happened in 1741?

9. How did the British-French war of 1756-1763 lead to discontent with British rule among New York’s merchant class?

10. From a geographic perspective, why was New York seen as a pivotal location in the American Revolution? How was this recognized in the strategy and actions of the British and American sides?