Age of Exploration

By the end of the 15th century many things were changing in Europe. The population started to grow more quickly and a new class of merchants emerged. They wanted to buy and sell expensive and valuable products from Asia—like gold, jewels and silk.

In those days, people had no refrigerators to preserve their food. They dried meat and often used salt to make it last longer. To make food taste better they used spices, like pepper or cinnamon.

For centuries Europeans brought these goods on a land route from Asia over thousands of dangerous kilometres. In the 15th century the overland routes were being controlled by the Turkish Empire, which made it even more difficult for European merchants to pass through.

As a result, some European countries, like Spain and Portugal, decided to find out if there was a sea route to India. With the help of new kinds of ships that could sail faster and instruments, like the quadrant, they started the Age of Exploration.

Portuguese exploration

At the end of the 15th century the Portuguese started to explore the west coast of Africa. They set up trading posts and collected gold and silver. They were convinced that by sailing around the coast of Africa they would find a route to India.

In 1487, the Portuguese explorer Bartholomeu Dias sailed around the southern part of the continent and got as far as the east coast of Africa, but a storm made him turn back.

On his return voyage, he saw a piece of land that stretched out into the sea. The Portuguese named it the Cape of Good Hope because they were hopeful of finding a passageway to India.

In 1497 Vasco Da Gama set out from Lisbon, sailed around the Cape of Good Hope and into the Indian Ocean. He reached the west coast of India in May 1498. He took some spices and gold back with him to prove that he had reached India.

Vasco da Gama's route to Africa in 1497/98
Christopher Columbus was probably the most famous explorer of the era. He achieved fame by sailing west in search of a sea route to India. Instead of reaching India he discovered that there was an unknown mass of land in between, land that the Europeans knew nothing of.

Columbus was born in Genoa, Italy in 1451 and during his early years his father took him on various sailing trips and wanted to make a merchant out of him.

Like many navigators of that time, Columbus also wanted to sail to India and the Far East. He thought that if he sailed west he would also reach the Spice Islands of Asia and India. When he went to the king of Portugal to present his plan, but it was rejected. Queen Isabella of Spain admired young and brave men like Columbus and so she gave him three ships—the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Maria—and a crew of 90 men.

Columbus left Spain on August 3, 1492. After two months of sailing westward, he landed on an island of the Bahamas, San Salvador, on October 12, 1492. Because he thought he had reached the islands near India he called the natives Indians.

All together, Columbus made four voyages to the New World between 1492 and 1504. He explored the coasts of Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola, and Puerto Rico. On his last two voyages, Columbus reached the mainland of Central and South America and travelled as far south as the mouth of the Orinoco River.

After he came home from his fourth voyage, Christopher Columbus fell ill and died in 1506.
Age of Exploration

Other Spanish Explorers

During the early 1500s Spanish explorers travelled across most of Central and South America. They founded colonies and brought settlers to the New World. They also made the native Indians work for them. The Spaniards brought new products to the Americas, like wheat, horses, cattle and sheep. In exchange, they grew plants that were not known in Europe, like corn and potatoes and brought them back to the Old Continent.

In 1513 the Spanish explorer Vasco de Balboa landed in Panama, the part of Central America that is very narrow. With his men, he fought his way through 50 miles of jungle and was surprised to see a new sea, the Pacific Ocean.

One of the most important Spanish conquistadors was Hernando Cortes. He conquered the Aztec empire in 1521. In 1532 and 1533 Francisco Pizarro conquered the Incas. These natives ruled an empire that expanded from Columbia to the northern parts of Argentina. The Incas had great riches, vast amounts of gold and silver. When the Spanish got there they took all of it away from the Incas.

French and English explorers

The French and the English concentrated their journeys on the northern part of the continent, because they thought that there also had to be a northwestern route to India.

In 1497 John Cabot, an Italian who sailed for England, landed on the east coast of Canada. In 1534 Jacques Cartier sailed down the St. Lawrence River and reached the Great Lakes. He claimed this territory for the king of France.

During the 1600s the French and English began to set up colonies. The French concentrated on the St. Lawrence valley and the Great Lakes and founded towns like Montreal, or Detroit.

At the end of the century Louis Joliet and Jacques Marquette sailed down the Mississippi River. The land near the Gulf of Mexico was called Louisiana, in honour of the French king. Settlements like St. Louis or New Orleans show French origin.

The first permanent settlement in North America was founded at Jamestown, Virginia in 1607. In 1610 Henry Hudson sailed around north-eastern Canada and discovered a huge body of water which he thought was the Pacific Ocean. Today it is known as Hudson Bay.
Age of Exploration

Amerigo Vespucci

Amerigo Vespucci was an Italian-born explorer who explored the mainland of America at the end of the 15th century. A German mapmaker believed that Vespucci was the first to reach the New World, so he suggested naming the new land America.

Although Vespucci was probably not one of the greatest explorers of the time, he was the first navigator who explored South America.

Magellan sails around the world

In 1519 the Portuguese sailor Ferdinand Magellan set out to find India by sailing around South America. He sailed for Spain because the Portuguese didn’t give him any money for this expedition.

Magellan had 5 ships and a crew of 240. When he reached the southern tip of South America, he got into bad, stormy weather. Two of his ships were badly damaged and couldn’t continue the journey. With three ships he sailed through a strait, that later was named after him, the Strait of Magellan.

When he reached the Pacific Ocean, he sailed for there months without any sight of land. Finally, in April of 1521 he landed on the Philippine Islands. Magellan got into a fight with native islanders and was killed there.

Only one ship could continue the voyage. It crossed the Indian Ocean and sailed around the Cape of Good Hope. With only twenty people on board it reached Spain three years after it had set out.

Words

- **century** = a hundred years
- **expedition** = a trip to a dangerous, mostly unknown place
- **crew** = the people who work on a ship or plane
- **damaged** = broken
- **explorer** = a person who travels around a place and wants to find out something about it
- **mainland** = the main area of land that forms a country, the islands do not belong to it
- **mapmaker** = a person who draws maps
- **navigator** = a person on a ship who tries to find a route somewhere
- **sight** = view
- **strait** = a narrow passage of water between two areas of land
- **suggest** = to tell somebody what they should do
- **tip** = the end of something
- **voyage** = a journey by sea

Magellan’s journey around the world
Age of Exploration

Timeline

1450  Prince Henry the Navigator builds a school for sailors.
1453  The Turkish empire cuts off the land route from Asia to Europe. Search for a sea route begins.
1487  Bartholomeu Dias discovers the southern tip of Africa.
1492  Christopher Columbus lands on an island of the Bahamas.
1497  John Cabot discovers Newfoundland while he searches for a north-western passage to India.
1498  Vasco Da Gama finds a sea route to India by sailing around Africa.
1502  Amerigo Vespucci returns from his explorations of South America. A German mapmaker names the New World after him.
1513  Vasco de Balboa discovers the eastern shore of the Pacific Ocean.
1519-1522 Magellan sails around the world.
1521  Hernando Cortez defeats the Aztec empire.
1533  Francisco Pizarro defeats the Inca empire.
1534  Jacques Cartier sails down the St. Lawrence River and discovers the Great Lakes.
1577  Sir Francis Drake is the first Englishman to sail around the world.
1607  The first settlement is called Jamestown.
1610  Henry Hudson discovers Hudson Bay.
1620  The Mayflower lands with pilgrims in the New World.
1673  Father Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet explore the Mississippi River.

Words:
cut off = block, so that nobody can pass through
discover = to find something for the first time
empire = a group of countries that are controlled by a king
mapmaker = a person who draws maps
pilgrim = a religious person who travels a long way to a holy place
sailor = someone who works on a ship
settlement = a new town that is built in a place where people have not lived before
tip = the end of something
Age of Exploration

Answer the questions in your own words!

1. What were the merchants of the 15th century interested in?
   
2. What did people use to preserve meat?
   
3. Why couldn’t Europeans use the land route to Asia any more?
   
4. What made travelling by sea interesting in this era?
   
5. Who were the first explorers to find a sea route around Africa?
   
6. Why did the Portuguese name the southern tip of Africa the “Cape of Good Hope”?
   
7. Which country did Christopher Columbus come from? Where was he born?
   
8. Why did he sail for Spain?
   
9. On which group of islands did Columbus land in 1492?
   
10. Why did he call the natives Indians?
   
11. How many voyages did Columbus make?
   
12. What are conquistadors?
   
13. Name two famous empires in Central and South America at that time.
   
14. What did the Spanish want from the Indians?
   
15. Who was the first explorer to see the Pacific Ocean?
   
16. Which part of America did the French concentrate their journeys on?
   
17. Where was the first settlement in America?
   
18. Why is America named after Vespucci?
   
19. Why did Magellan have to give up some of his ships?
   
20. What happened to Magellan on the Philippine Islands?
Write an essay about Christopher Columbus. You can use the mind map below to arrange your ideas!
Age of Exploration

Match the dates from the box below!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1487</th>
<th>1492</th>
<th>1497</th>
<th>1498</th>
<th>1506</th>
<th>1512</th>
<th>1513</th>
<th>1519</th>
<th>1533</th>
<th>1620</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

_______ Magellan starts his journey around the world.
_______ Cortes conquers the Aztec empire.
_______ Bartholomeu Dias sails around the southern part of Africa.
_______ Pizarro defeats the Incas.
_______ John Cabot sails along the east coast of Canada.
_______ Mayflower lands with pilgrims in America
_______ Columbus discovers America.
_______ Vasco de Balboa lands in Panama and discovers the Pacific Ocean.
_______ Columbus dies.
_______ Vasco da Gama reaches India.

Complete the text with words from the box!

The ____________ of the 15th century were very ____________ in buying and selling ____________ goods. They ____________ gold, ____________ and silk — products that they got from ____________. People of those days also needed ____________ to make food taste better.

For ____________, European merchants brought these goods on a ____________ from Asia. But by the 15th century, the ____________ became so ____________ that they controlled the most important routes and wanted more ____________ from the Europeans traders.

So some countries, like ____________ and ____________, wanted to find another route to Asia. They thought that they could ____________ India and the ____________ by sea.
Age of Exploration

Match the two halves of the sentences!

A European merchants of the 15th century but he didn’t give him any ships.
B The Portuguese set up trading posts brought corn and potatoes back to Europe.
C Christopher Columbus went to the king of Portugal with his plans because he thought he had reached Asia.
D Queen Isabella was a person and claimed the land for the king of France.
E On his last voyages Columbus bought and sold goods from Asia.
F He called the natives Indians named the New World after Amerigo Vespucci.
G Spanish explorers explored the mainland of South America.
H The conquistadors were Spanish explorers have French names.
I Jacques Cartier sailed down the St. Lawrence River he got into bad weather and lost two ships.
J Most towns along the Mississippi River on the west coast of Africa.
K A German mapmaker who admired young and brave men.
L When Magellan reached the southern tip of America who defeated Indian empires in America.

Unscramble the words and find the names of famous explorers.

BCLOUMSU
NLLGAMEA
CPUICVSE
ROSCTE
CRRETTIA
MAADAG
Across
3. to think very highly about a person
5. to travel around a place and find out something about it
8. powder or seeds that are used to make food taste better (plural)
11. the main area of land that forms a country; not the islands
12. a group of countries ruled by a king or queen
14. a new town that is built in a place where nobody has ever lived before

Down
1. a very valuable stone
2. a sea journey
4. a person who buys and sells goods
6. a trip to a dangerous, mostly unknown place
7. an instrument that sailors use to find out where they are
9. to get control of a country by fighting
10. a narrow waterway between two areas of land
13. a smooth cloth that is very thin
Age of Exploration

Crossword—Answer Key

Across
1. a very valuable stone
2. a sea journey
4. a person who buys and sells goods
6. a trip to a dangerous, mostly unknown place
7. an instrument that sailors use to find out where they are
9. to get control of a country by fighting
10. a narrow waterway between two areas of land
13. a smooth cloth that is very thin
14. a new town that is built in a place where nobody has ever lived before

Down
3. to think very highly about a person
5. to travel around a place and find out something about it
8. powder or seeds that are used to make food taste better (plural)
11. the main area of land that forms a country; not the islands
12. a group of countries ruled by a king or queen

Across
1. J
2. E
3. W
4. M
5. I
6. R
7. E
8. L
9. O
10. Y
11. X
12. A
13. D
14. M

Down
1. C
2. O
3. E
4. A
5. G
6. S
7. P
8. I
9. C
10. E
11. N
12. R
13. T
14. U

Mainland

Main Language

Settlement
Age of Exploration

Crossword - People, Names and Places

Across
3. explorer after whom America was named
7. many explorers wanted to find a sea route to this country
8. small country in Central America
10. English explorer who sailed around the northern part of America
13. country that set up trading posts in Africa
14. group of islands on which Columbus landed
15. explorer who sailed around the southern part of Africa
16. town where Columbus was born
17. empire in South America that was conquered by the Spanish
18. name of the first settlement in North America

Down
1. He discovered the New World in 1492
2. queen of Spain in the 15th century
4. river in South America
5. explorer who found a sea route to India around Africa
6. Spanish conquistador of the 16th century
9. part of America that was named after a French king
11. ship that brought English settlers to America
12. explorer who sailed around the world
Age of Exploration

Crossword - People, Names and Places

1. He discovered the New World in 1492
2. queen of Spain in the 15th century
3. explorer after whom America was named
4. river in South America
5. explorer who found a sea route to India around Africa
6. Spanish conquistador of the 16th century
7. many explorers wanted to find a sea route to this country
8. small country in Central America
9. part of America that was named after a French king
10. English explorer who sailed around the northern part of America
11. ship that brought English settlers to America
12. explorer who sailed around the world
13. country that set up trading posts in Africa
14. group of islands on which Columbus landed
15. explorer who sailed around the southern part of Africa
16. town where Columbus was born
17. empire in South America that was conquered by the Spanish
18. name of the first settlement in North America

Across

1. COLUMBUS
3. VESPUCCI
4. ABEL
5. LLAMA
6. ORINDA
7. INDIA
8. PANAMA
9. OLOL
10. PORTUGAL
11. NICK
12. BAHAMAS
13. MOME
14. GENOA
15. YIGIL
16. LLLA
17. WAIN
18. JAMESTOWN

Down

1. DIAS
2. FLOR
3. NEW

HINTS

1. 2
2. 3
3. 4
4. 5
5. 6
6. 7
7. 8
8. 9
9. 10
10. 11
11. 12
12. 13
13. 14
14. 15
15. 16
16. 17
17. 18

SOLUTIONS

1. Christopher Columbus
2. Isabella
3. Amerigo Vespucci
4. Rodrigo de Bastidas
5. Francisco Pizarro
6. Hernando Cortes
7. India
8. Panama
9. Oloolua
10. Portogalo
11. New Spain
12. Ferdinand Magellan
13. Spanish Empire
14. La Goulette
15. Lisbon
16. Genoa
17. Guiana
18. Jamestown