Exploration and Encounters Overseas

"I believe that... you will achieve the conversion of a great number of peoples to our holy faith, with the acquisition of great lordships and riches and all their inhabitants for Spain. For without a doubt there is a very great amount of gold in these lands."

—Christopher Columbus, Letter to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, 1493

Essential Question: How did European's overseas explorations affect both them and indigenous populations?

During the Renaissance, Europeans became more interested in the world around them. Intellectuals of the time studied classical texts and observed the natural world in order to understand it better. By the late 15th century, educated Europeans knew that the earth was round. Yet they had little understanding of the size of their world, as few Europeans had traveled beyond their own region. This new era of exploration and expansion would have profound effects on Europe and the rest of the world. However, it was more than curiosity that sparked the era of exploration and colonization beginning in the 15th century and continuing well into the 19th century.

Motives for Exploration

In the 15th century, Europe was not a particularly wealthy or intellectually advanced region of the world. Two overarching reasons historians sometimes give to explain why European states took the lead in exploration were "God and gold." Yet behind these reasons also was the desire to gain power and glory for monarchs and emerging centralized states.

Christianity Stimulates Exploration

The desire of Europeans to spread and strengthen the Christian faith affected events both within and beyond the continent. Between the birth of Jesus and 1492, Christians had spread the faith throughout the Mediterranean world and into northern and eastern Europe. After Muslims won control of Spain in the 8th century, Spanish Christians spent the following seven centuries reconquering...
Evidence is specific information based on facts or reasons, not a
generalized or unsupported opinion. The most accurate evidence for an
essay uses specific names of people, places, and events.

Which evidence below each question would be most useful in answering
it? Explain your choice.

1. How did Protestant Reformation change Christian theology?
   a. Martin Luther and John Calvin criticized Catholic teachings,
      leading to new beliefs such as the priesthood of all believers, the
      primacy of scripture, predestination, and salvation by faith alone.
   b. Protestant leaders charged that the Catholic Church was corrupt
      and that its leaders used their positions to gain wealth and power.

2. How did religious reform result in increased state control of
   religious institutions in England?
   a. One Reformation idea was to implement a top-down approach to
      centralize power and bring about religious reform.
   b. The English monarchs initiated reform that gave them more
      control over religious life.

Evidence must be relevant. It should focus on the right culture, time period,
and topic. For example, if a question asks about religious intolerance
in France, facts about the persecution of the Huguenots would be more
relevant than facts about the Versailles palace.

For each claim below, evaluate the relevance of the evidence.

3. Conflicts among religious groups overlapped with political and
   economic competition among states.
   a. The Thirty Years’ War was Europe’s most deadly religious war,
      but it became also a rivalry between France and the Habsburgs
      for political domination of the European continent.
   b. Members of the House of Habsburg ruled the Holy Roman
      Empire for three centuries. During this time, they fought off both
      foreign challengers and domestic opposition.

4. The principle of religious toleration emerged over time.
   a. The Peace of Augsburg (1555) allowed princes in the Holy
      Roman Empire to choose Catholicism or Lutheranism for their
      subjects, but not Calvinism or Anabaptism.
   b. Groups like the Huguenots, the Puritans, and the nobles of
      Poland all challenged the monarchs’ control over religious
      institutions in the regions they lived in.
the region. After defeating the Muslims in 1492, the Spanish monarchs ordered that Jews either convert to Christianity or leave their kingdom.

Then, as Europeans began to explore the world, many wanted to spread Christianity. The split in Europe resulting from the Protestant Reformation increased the desire of some countries to spread their faith. Portugal, Spain, and France, which remained largely Catholic, were interested in both commerce and spreading their beliefs. For those countries, religion was a powerful factor in exploration and colonization. However, people from England and the Netherlands, mostly Protestant, focused more on commerce. In the 17th century, English groups sought refuge in North America from the Anglican Church: Puritans in Massachusetts, Catholics in Maryland, and Quakers in Pennsylvania. As Christians carried their faith throughout the world, some used it as justification for subjugating the indigenous people they encountered.

**Commercial Motives for Exploration**

Though Europeans were geographically confined during the Middle Ages, they were exposed to goods and ideas from Asia and Africa. For example, Venetian merchant Marco Polo published an account of his travels throughout Asia in the late 13th century, giving medieval Europeans their most detailed information about that region.

**Search for New Routes to the East** Europeans were aware of exotic products and luxury goods such as spices, silk, and jewels from Asia and Africa, and knowledge of these products increased as a result of the Crusades. Yet, European access to such products was limited. In the 14th century, the Muslim rulers of the Ottoman Empire gained control of trade routes connecting Asia to Europe both by land and by the Mediterranean Sea. Traders from Venice were the only Europeans who had direct access to the Muslim ports. Therefore, Europeans had to purchase spices, such as ginger and cinnamon and other foreign goods, from Muslim traders at very high prices. For example, in Spain, nutmeg was as expensive as gold.

Europeans hoped to discover an all-water route connecting Europe to Asia, which would not only bypass Ottoman-controlled lands, but also would be less expensive. Transporting heavy goods over water was much cheaper and easier than transporting them over land.

Europe’s monarchs also hoped to find an all-water route to Asia in order to enhance the power of their states and increase their personal wealth. As explained later in this chapter, countries explored different paths to Asia:

- The Portuguese traveled south along the coast of Africa and then east across the Indian Ocean.
- The Spanish tried to reach Asia by sailing west across the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.
- The French searched for an ice-free water route through the Arctic Ocean.
Mercantilism One important economic idea that motivated the search for a route to the East was mercantilism, which measured the wealth of a country by how much gold and silver it accumulated through trade. Mercantilism developed in 16th-century Europe, particularly England and France, and began to lose supporters in the 19th century. It includes these principles:

- The world's wealth is like a pie. It is a limited size, and the only way to get a larger share is for another state to get a smaller share. This belief reflected the world as it existed before the 19th century. Life changed very little from one generation to the next, and economic growth was normally slow. In contrast today, people assume that technological change will make the global economic pie larger and larger.

- A country grows wealthier if it has a favorable balance of trade, which means it exports (sells to other countries) more than it imports (buys from other countries). If it does, then it will receive more in payments of gold and silver than it pays out. Today, economists do not use the balance of trade to measure a country's wealth. A wealthy country might have an unfavorable balance of trade because it can afford to import many goods.

- A colony, or a separate land controlled by a parent country, can enrich the parent country by providing precious metals, crops, and other products. (See Chapter 9 for more information on mercantilism.)

Governments that followed mercantilist policies attempted to regulate trade to encourage exports, discourage imports, and justify seizing colonies. However, starting in the late 1700s, people began to believe that countries could prosper with fewer restrictions on trade. In particular, consumers benefited by the opportunity to buy less expensive products made in other countries. An ideology of free trade began to replace the belief in mercantilism.

**Exploration and Advances in Knowledge**

European interest in finding new trade routes and establishing overseas colonies converged with growth of knowledge about geography and navigation, the science of plotting the course of a ship. In the 13th and 14th centuries, European navigators had developed detailed charts (which were actually early maps) called *portolani* that gave sailors accurate information about the location and distances between European ports. These charts, however, were not sufficient for extended ocean voyages.

Advances in cartography, or the making and study of maps, grew in the 15th century, as early explorers created detailed maps based on their observations as they traveled farther and farther from their shores. The invention of printing in the mid-15th century made more copies of maps available to navigators in different countries.

To sail long distances in unknown waters, Europeans adopted Middle Eastern and Chinese navigational technology:
Europeans developed a new type of ship, the caravel, that was larger than earlier ships. They also began replacing their traditional square sails with triangular-shaped lateen sails, developed by Arab sailors. Lateen sails allowed more flexibility for sailing regardless of wind direction.

Europeans adopted the sternpost rudder from China. It was a steering device attached to the ship’s main beam at the rear that made the ship more maneuverable.

Europeans used navigational aids including the compass, which likely came from China in the 12th century, and the astrolabe, from Muslim navigators, to determine latitude more accurately.

Advances in military technology, such as gunpowder weapons and steel swords, also assisted Europeans in establishing overseas colonies and empires. Caravels were large enough to support mounted cannons and maneuverable enough to engage in naval warfare. Horses gave Europeans an advantage when colonizing the Americas, where there had been no horses before Europeans arrived in the 15th century.

**Overseas European Empires**

As Europeans established new trade networks, they sometimes negotiated agreements that benefited both themselves and local people in Africa, Asia, and the Americas. However, Europeans often used coercion to establish overseas empires by subduing native populations or enforcing trade monopolies.

**Portuguese Trading Network**

The Portuguese were the first to begin systematically exploring to increase overseas trade. Under the leadership of Prince Henry the Navigator (1394–1460), the Portuguese wanted to spread Christianity and to obtain direct access to gold, ivory, and slaves from sub-Saharan Africa. Henry was known as “the Navigator” for his support of sailing on the open seas. However, he never sailed beyond the sight of land. Henry established a school for navigators on the country’s southwest coast in 1419. The work there formed the basis of Portuguese explorations of the 15th and 16th centuries.

**Africa** Beginning in the 1430s, Portuguese sailors explored the western coast of Africa looking for gold. The combination of winds and currents made traveling along this coast dangerous. In 1441, the Portuguese brought the first enslaved Africans to Europe from the Senegal River region. African leaders along the coast realized their kingdoms could benefit economically by selling captives, and sometimes their own people, as slaves to the Portuguese. Finally, in 1471, the Portuguese found a new source of gold in western Africa. Europeans later referred to the area as the Gold Coast. Trade in gold, ivory, and slaves continued to grow, and the Portuguese developed a trading network based in forts along the African coast. The Portuguese negotiated with local landowners to obtain land for their forts.
South Asia The Portuguese heard that there was a possible trade route to Asia around the southern tip of Africa, then called the Cape of Storms. In 1488, the explorer Bartholomeu Dias (c. 1450–1500) was the first European to sail around the Cape, but Dias turned back as his crew refused to go on against attacks from shore and powerful currents. Ten years later, Vasco da Gama (c. 1460–1524) rounded the Cape, which he renamed the Cape of Good Hope, and explored the coast of East Africa. Da Gama then sailed to the southeastern coast of India by crossing the Indian Ocean, then called the Arabian Sea. There, in the port of Calicut, he acquired a cargo of spices that would yield huge profits.

In later years, the Portuguese sought to dominate the spice trade and eliminate Muslim traders from the market. The country used its maritime strength to defeat its rivals and set up a port in Goa on the western coast of India, just north of Calicut.

Pressing Eastward After reaching South Asia, the Portuguese continued eastward. They started to travel more extensively throughout Asia seeking to expand their access to the spice trade. In 1511, they captured the city of Malacca on the Malay Peninsula from the Muslim inhabitants. They used that port as a base to extend their lucrative trading network to China and the Spice Islands, now called the Moluccas, and part of Indonesia. In the Spice Islands, the Portuguese negotiated a treaty that allowed them to export cloves to Europe. However, the Portuguese did not have the desire, population, or political power to establish colonies in Asia.

Dividing the World In the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494), Spain and Portugal agreed to establish separate spheres of colonial influence. They separated their interests along a line that divided the world through eastern South America. East of the treaty line, Portugal received control of trade routes around Africa’s Cape of Good Hope and a portion of South America that became eastern Brazil. The explorer Pedro Álvares Cabral (1467/68–1520) claimed Brazil as a colony for Portugal in 1500. The Portuguese began to establish settlements there in the 1530s and eventually set up large sugar cane plantations. A plantation is a large farm that usually grows a single cash crop such as sugar, tobacco, or cotton.

Plantations need large workforces. At first, the colonists enslaved the native people and forced them to work on the plantations. Later, they imported enslaved people from Africa as well. The sugar that was exported from Brazil and sold in Europe created tremendous wealth for Portugal, which ran its colony in Brazil along mercantilist principles. Eventually, coffee also became a valuable export from Brazil.

Spanish Colonies

Spain was Portugal’s more powerful neighbor on the Iberian Peninsula. Like Portugal, Spain also wanted direct access to the Asian spice trade. Spain had the wealth and resources not only to compete for trade but also to establish a vast empire of colonies. While this empire would generate great wealth for Spain, it would also spread Christianity, either by persuasion or force, throughout the Americas and parts of Asia.
Early Explorations Christopher Columbus (1451–1506) was a devout Christian and an experienced sea captain. From his study of the Bible and sea charts, he concluded that the earth was small enough that the shortest route to Asia from Europe was by sailing west across the Atlantic Ocean. He tried to persuade Portugal to support his plan, but the Portuguese realized that Columbus had miscalculated the size of the earth. They knew that sailing west was the long route to Asia.

Columbus then approached the Spanish monarchs, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain (ruled 1469–1516), who were willing to take a risk on his plan. They backed his first expedition, and he set sail in August 1492. After a two-month voyage, he landed in the Bahamas and also explored parts of Cuba and Hispaniola (present-day Haiti and the Dominican Republic) in the Caribbean Sea. Columbus believed he had reached Asia and claimed the
lands for Spain. Because he thought the lands he had reached were the Indies, he called the area the **West Indies** and referred to the people as **Indians**.

Columbus made three later voyages between 1493 and 1502 trying to find a way to reach the Asian mainland, but he was unsuccessful. He never acknowledged that he had found a landmass that was previously unknown to Europeans. Columbus did explore all the major islands of the Caribbean and what is now **Central America**. Spain gained control of all these lands that were west of the line established by the Treaty of Tordesillas.

The Italian explorer **Amerigo Vespucci**, who traveled along the eastern coast of South America between 1499 and 1504, was the first to refer to this area as the **New World**. A mapmaker used Vespucci’s first name to refer to the lands he explored, and they have been called the Americas ever since.

**Mexico** In the early 16th century, Spanish **conquistadors**, or conquerors, began subduing the indigenous populations in the Americas. Conquistadors led military expeditions sponsored by the government but privately funded. Conquistador **Hernán Cortés** (1485–1547) first reached what is now Veracruz on the Gulf of Mexico in 1519, when the **Aztec Empire** ruled most of the region. The Aztecs had an advanced civilization, yet Cortés conquered them and destroyed their capital, **Tenochtitlán**, within two years. Though he had a small force of soldiers, Cortés had horses and guns. He also got help from native groups who were enemies of the Aztecs. Perhaps the most important factor helping Cortés was disease, which killed millions of native people. (See page 61 for more on the effects of disease on indigenous populations.)

By 1550, the Spanish controlled northern Mexico and part of Central America. They built **Mexico City** on the ruins of Tenochtitlán, and it became the capital of **New Spain**, which included Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. To ensure a labor supply, the Spanish under Queen Isabella had established a system called the **encomienda**. Large landowners, **encomienderos**, forced indigenous people to work on plantations for food and shelter. The Spanish also forced indigenous groups to send men for the dangerous work in gold and silver mines. With this supply of labor, tremendous wealth flowed to Spain. The imposition of Catholicism on the native population only served to strengthen the power of the Spanish over them.

Jesuit missionaries tried to save the indigenous people from some of the horrors of the conquistadors, while Spanish Dominican missionary **Bartolomé de las Casas** insisted that the encomienda system and forced labor were unjust. The arguments of las Casas persuaded Charles V to call the Council of Valladolid in Spain, where a group of Catholic Church leaders agreed that the Spanish policies were cruel and had to change. However, their decision brought no change to Spain’s harsh policies in its American colonies.

**South America** Spanish explorer **Vasco Núñez de Balboa** crossed the **Isthmus of Panama** in 1513. He and his expedition were the first Europeans to reach the eastern shore of the **Pacific Ocean**.
Our Lady of Guadalupe is a depiction of Mary, the mother of Jesus. To many people, she also represents aspects of indigenous faiths practiced in Mexico before the arrival of Christianity.

Spain then became interested in the western coast of South America. Conquistador Francisco Pizarro (c. 1475–1541) arrived in the region in 1530 and found the Inca Empire in the Andes Mountains of Peru in a weakened condition. European disease had already killed a large proportion of the population, including the emperor. The empire then became embroiled in civil war. Pizarro took advantage of the situation. With his force of fewer than 200 men and his superior weapons, he defeated the Inca and took control of their capital.

Within five years, Pizarro established a new Spanish capital in Lima that governed Peru, the part of the empire that covered much of western South America. The Spanish used a similar system to control the indigenous population and extract wealth as they had in New Spain.

The Pacific A Portuguese explorer sailing for the Spanish named Ferdinand Magellan (1480–1521) set out in 1519 to explore the eastern coast of South America and the Pacific Ocean. Magellan and his crew survived the storm-ravaged straits at the southern tip of South America and headed west. Because of the lack of wind to push them westward, they nearly starved to death on the voyage. But in 1521, they reached the islands later named the Philippines after the Spanish king. Magellan died in the islands, but one of his ships continued the voyage across the Indian Ocean and around Africa. It completed the first voyage around the world.
At first, the Spanish saw the Philippines primarily as a stop on the way to the Spice Islands. Not until 1565 did they establish a permanent settlement there, founding their capital of Manila in 1571. As in the Americas, Catholic missionaries set out to convert the native people, many of whom had embraced Islam shortly before the Spanish arrived. Manila became a center of commerce, as traders exchanged Chinese silk for Mexican silver. The trade drew Chinese merchants along with a growing number of Spanish settlers.

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<td>Hernán Cortés</td>
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<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Ferdinand Magellan</td>
<td>Trade (Chinese silk for Mexican silver; other commercial activities)</td>
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The breadth and wealth of the Spanish Empire made Spain a dominant power in Europe in the 16th century. Between 1492 and the mid-1500s, Spain established an empire that stretched from northern Mexico through much of South America and the Caribbean islands, and into the Philippines. By the 17th century, Europeans had begun to build a global trade network. Over time, they pushed out the Muslims and Chinese who had dominated trade in the Indian Ocean and the western Pacific.

Global Exchanges Reshape the World

Before the era of expansion, the Mediterranean Sea was the center of European maritime trade and naval power. States that bordered the Mediterranean, such as the Italian city-states, Spain, and France were the most powerful. Foreign trade around the Mediterranean focused on the region to the east controlled by the Ottoman Empire. For example, the Italian city-state of Venice had been especially powerful as the port where trade from Asia entered Europe.

Shifts in Economic Power

In the 16th century, Portugal challenged Venetian dominance in trade for most luxury goods from the East. In the 17th century, the Dutch wrested control of the spice trade away from Venice. The global exchange of goods thus shifted its center of economic power from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic states.
Shift to the Atlantic Prior to the discovery of new trade routes that originated on the Atlantic Ocean, Europeans thought there was little benefit to having ports on the Atlantic coast. They had believed that there was little of value that could come from the West. But Portuguese and Spanish explorations opened their eyes to a far different possibility. In the 17th century, the Dutch were the first to grasp this possibility and gain ascendency in the new global trading network; yet by the early 18th century, the English surpassed the Dutch.

Leading Atlantic Ports The shifting of economic power to the northern Atlantic states can be seen in the shifting location of leading port cities. The Portuguese began their exploration and trade from the port city of Lisbon in the 15th century. It became clear in the early 16th century that Lisbon’s distance from northern and central Europe made it less than ideal as a place from which to ship goods from Asia throughout the continent.

The Portuguese then set up a trading center in the city of Antwerp on a river near the North Sea in what is now northern Belgium. At that time, this region was part of the Netherlands, then under the control of Spain. Antwerp was the financial and commercial center of northern Europe. The city benefited from the emerging trade from Spanish and Portuguese overseas colonies. Portugal faced stiff competition in the city from other European traders.

By the early 17th century, the northern parts of the Netherlands had become independent of Spain. The Dutch port city of Amsterdam then surpassed Antwerp and became the major trading port in Europe. The Dutch had large fleets of ships that traded both regionally and internationally. Though the Atlantic states became part of an expanding world economy, trade within Europe still accounted for most of European trade volume even at the end of the 17th century. However, the goods that were traded from overseas, such as pepper, spices, sugar, tea, and coffee, tended to be more valuable.

Changing Role for China The development of European-based trading empires led to a decline in the relative power of China by the 19th century. For many centuries, China had been a center of innovation and prosperity. It had dominated trade and political events in eastern Asia. This changed as Europeans applied what they learned from people in other parts of the world and aggressively spread their influence.

The Columbian Exchange

The Columbian Exchange (so named because it began with the voyages of Columbus) refers to the exchange of plants, animals, and germs between the Old World—Europe, Africa, and Asia—and the New World. American historian Alfred Crosby first explained the concept in the 1970s. A vast ocean separated the Old World from the New World, so different plants, animals, and germs evolved in each region. The exchange thus had enormous consequences, both positive and negative.

As Europeans established colonies around the world, they began to trade goods between Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Africa. These goods included
spices, luxury goods, precious metals, crops, and livestock. Tomatoes, potatoes, corn, and squash were introduced to Europe from the Americas, while Europeans brought cattle, horses, pigs, and sheep to the Americas and introduced the cultivation of wheat. The exchange of foods throughout the world led to better nutrition and increased population. Tea from Asia, coffee from Africa, and chocolate from Mexico, along with sugar and tobacco from the Americas changed European life.

Cultural practices were also exchanged. Spanish colonization in the Americas and the Philippines brought a new language and religion, including the institutions of the Catholic Church, along with its churches, schools, and hospitals.

Furthermore, the relative ease with which Europeans conquered indigenous populations reinforced the Europe-centered belief that they had a superior civilization. European expansion marked a shift toward European dominance beyond the continent.

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<td>Chocolate,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Corn, Tobacco</td>
<td>Guinea pigs</td>
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**Economic Opportunities** Europeans profited in many ways from the Columbian Exchange. For example, by establishing plantations to grow sugar cane, coffee, tobacco, and cotton in different parts of the Americas, Europeans cultivated lucrative cash crops that could be sold directly to a growing European market. Because the Europeans relied largely on forced labor of indigenous peoples and enslaved Africans, their costs to grow the crops were minimized. In addition, the slave trade itself was a source of profit.

Livestock, including cattle, sheep, pigs, and horses, provided another economic opportunity for Europeans. Settlers brought animals from the Old World to the New World, where they had ample space to graze and few natural predators. Herds were raised for their meat, hides, and wool, which could all be sold at a profit.

**Ecological Disasters** Old World plants, animals, and diseases came to the New World along with European settlers. The results were often devastating. Plants and animals in the New World were destroyed, as the introduction of Old World plants, including weeds, often edged out native species. Extensive
grazing by European livestock eroded the soil in many areas and made it
difficult for native species to grow. Some areas began to look like deserts as
the soil eroded. Europeans also cleared forests, often by large-scale burning
to create open land for settlements, grazing, and crops, further damaging the
environment.

**Diseases** By far, the worst disaster was the introduction of European
diseases, such as smallpox and measles. Peoples of the Americas had never
been exposed to these diseases. As a result, their bodies had not built up
immunity, or resistance, to them as Europeans had over several centuries. As
soon as Europeans arrived, epidemics began devasting the native population.
Historians estimate that because of epidemics caused by European diseases,
the native population declined between 50 percent and 90 percent within a
century of contact.

Death from disease was a major reason Europeans dominated Native
Americans as quickly as they did. The deadly effect of European diseases
occurred first in the West Indies, where Columbus landed. It continues to
Mexico and South America when Spanish conquistadors conquered the Aztecs
and the Inca. By the time the English began colonizing North America in the
17th century, diseases had already spread to the region and killed many Native
Americans.

**African Slave Trade Expands**
The growth of the African slave trade was another result of the expanding
Atlantic trading system and the colonization of the Americas. When the
Portuguese brought their first cargo of enslaved Africans to Europe in 1441,
they sold the enslaved people within Europe. The slave trade grew gradually as
the Portuguese continued to explore and trade along the west coast of Africa.

In the 16th and 17th centuries, as Europeans began establishing a plantation
economy in the Americas, plantation owners first turned to indigenous peoples
as slave laborers and forced them to work under cruel conditions. Deaths from
European diseases and harsh treatment created a demographic, or population,
catastrophe among indigenous peoples. Europeans thus sought another form
of labor, turning to enslaved Africans and bringing a marked change to the
Atlantic slave trade.

Europeans realized that supplying labor to plantations in South America
and the West Indies and later in North America could be a lucrative venture.
The Portuguese and the Spanish brought slaves to the Americas, especially
to Brazil and the islands of the West Indies in the early 16th century. The
first English slave-trading expedition of 1562 sold slaves to the Spanish West
Indies. English slave-trading voyages increased after the establishment of the
English colonies in North America. The first enslaved Africans were brought
to Virginia in 1619. The slave trade continued to expand throughout the 17th
and 18th centuries. (See Chapter 9 for more information on the transatlantic
slave labor system from 1648 to 1815.)
Competition Among Atlantic States

Spain administered a vast empire in the Americas and explored parts of what later became the United States, including Florida and several southeastern and southwestern states. Though the Spanish wanted to claim all of North America for their empire, they were challenged in the early 17th century by the Atlantic states of France, England, and the Netherlands.

Shortly after the voyages by Columbus, explorers of other states doubted his conclusion that he had reached Asia. Because the sea routes to Asia controlled by the Portuguese and the Spanish were long and difficult, these explorers sought alternative routes, sailing north and then either west or east looking for a passage to Asia. In their explorations, they found and claimed other parts of the New World.

The Netherlands The Dutch became the leading maritime power around 1600 and dominated 17th-century European trade. They were the first to benefit from the weakening of Spain and Portugal and were later challenged by France and England. Like the Portuguese, the Dutch focus for expansion overseas was on developing a trade network rather than a colonial empire. They established two trading companies:

- The Dutch East India Company, founded in 1602, focused on Asian trade and established a strong presence in the Spice Islands.

- The Dutch West India Company, created in 1621, focused on the Americas and established the colony of New Amsterdam in 1624. The colony stretched from the mouth of the Hudson River north to present-day Albany, New York. The only Dutch North American colony, New Amsterdam, was taken over by the English in 1664 and became New York.

England One of the early explorers for England was the Venetian John Cabot. Sailing across the North Atlantic in 1497, Cabot reached the eastern coast of Canada. His explorations gave England a basis for claiming land in North America.

After Cabot’s voyages, the English became consumed with domestic issues and colonizing Ireland. They did little exploring of the Americas for the next century. By the time they did, the French and the Spanish controlled the most profitable regions: the fur-bearing territories in the north and the sugar islands, gold mines, and silver mines in the south. Finally, in 1607, the English established their first permanent settlement in North America, Jamestown, Virginia. By 1670, England had established colonies in eastern Canada and several smaller islands in the West Indies, including Barbados and Bermuda. They had also founded eleven of the thirteen colonies along the Atlantic coast of North America that would later be part of the United States.

The English were also interested in expanding their trade to compete with the Portuguese and the Dutch in Asia, so they established the British East India Company in 1601.
France The French sent out early expeditions to explore the Americas looking for a passage to Asia:

- In 1524, the Italian navigator Giovanni de Verrazano, who sailed on behalf of France, explored the Atlantic coast from North Carolina to Newfoundland.

- From 1534 to 1536, Jacques Cartier became the first European to explore the St. Lawrence River in Canada.

Neither explorer found a passage to Asia, but Cartier’s explorations established French claims to the territory. It took decades before the French established a permanent North America settlement. In 1608, Samuel de Champlain founded Quebec as a prosperous fur-trading post in eastern Canada. He continued to explore the surrounding region and strengthened French claims to Canada, then called New France.

France also established colonies in the West Indies beginning in the 1620s. While the islands such as Martinique and Guadeloupe that the French colonized were small, the sugar these islands produced made them very valuable.

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<th>Atlantic States in the Americas and Asia, 15th to 17th Centuries</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Atlantic Nation</strong></td>
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Rivalries among European Powers

As European states competed for trade around the world, rivalries and conflicts developed among them in the 17th and 18th centuries. Because countries adopted the mercantilist idea that the amount of worldwide wealth was limited, they believed that their wealth could only grow at the expense of their neighbors.

Growing Trade Rivalries For example, the Portuguese had first sought to dominate the trade in spices and silk from Asia in the early 16th century. When the Spanish colonized the Philippines after 1570, they began to compete with the Portuguese for this lucrative trade. At the beginning of the 17th century, the Dutch successfully challenged the Portuguese for dominance of the spice trade when they established a strong presence in the Spice Islands. While Portuguese military efforts had been successful against Muslim traders in the region, they were less successful against the Dutch. In addition, even though the British East India Company had been established before the Dutch came to the region, the Dutch were strong enough economically to force the British to cede the trade in the islands and to shift their focus to India, which was ruled by the Mughal Empire.

During the 18th century, Britain became the dominant European power in Asian trade. France also established trading companies in Asia in the 17th century, but it had little success with them.

Conflict over American Colonies Based on the Treaty of Tordesillas of 1494, Spain and Portugal attempted to avoid conflicts by dividing their colonizing efforts. Each wanted to monopolize trade and colonize based on explorations in their assigned regions. However, other European states such as England, France, and the Netherlands did not consider themselves bound by the treaty. They soon began their own explorations that led to the establishment of trading companies and colonies in the early 17th century.

Rivalries over land in the Americas led to conflicts later in the 17th and 18th centuries. Great Britain and France fought a series of wars in the 18th century that included battles over North American colonies. As a result of these wars, France lost control of most of its territories in Canada and the United States to the British. (See Chapter 7 for more information on military conflicts among European powers in the period 1648 to 1815; see Chapter 9 for more information on commercial rivalries in that same period.) In the 19th century, the legacy of these colonial conflicts continued, as the United States and Mexico fought over territory that ended up being the southwestern United States.
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: WHAT WAS THE IMPACT OF EUROPEAN EXPLORATION?

European exploration caused dramatic changes in the Americas and Africa. The native population of the Americas plummeted and millions of Africans were enslaved and forcibly relocated. These developments, as well as the increasing wealth and power of Europe, were captured by William Blake's 1796 illustration "Europe supported by Africa and America." Portrayed as women, Africa and America prop up a female Europe who quietly threatens them with a whip. Blake suggests that the suffering of Americans and Asians contributed to European prosperity.

Advantages for Western Europe To dispel the belief that western Europeans dominated the world due to their superior culture, Jared Diamond explained in his book *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (1997) that Europeans benefited from geography. They had better access to the animals, innovations, diseases, and ideas of the more advanced societies in eastern Asia. European access to horses and cows improved the efficiency with which they could use the land and travel and trade across it. Guns and steel in European hands became more advanced, and this combined with years of plague developed well-armed and resistant peoples ready to dominate a part of the world that lacked these advantages. However, advantages alone were not enough to establish the reality reflected in Blake's illustration. Helen Nader, an expert in medieval history, argued in the article "The End of the Old World" (1992) that Europeans couldn't just impose their ideas on others. They had to adapt to the weather, people, and the environment. This meant developing new ways of trading. From the beginning, success and profit in the Americas was about innovation. For the Spanish monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella to profit from the Americas, they had to infuse it with a strong competitive spirit.

Early explorers obscured this goal by following tradition and maximizing their own wealth. But by 1504, the Spanish crown saw the need for high-volume trade, which required numerous investors, not that of single explorers. As a result, Spanish America was full of family farms, run by households with a degree of local control, and acceptance of free trade. This brought the Spanish their wealth, at least in the short term. Their acceptance of competition, trade, and sometimes self-rule would soon be seen as a characteristic of the modern world.

Impact on the World Andre Gunder Frank challenged explanations of history that he found too centered on Europe. In *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (1998) he argued that exploration changed the world because European capitalism provided the needed wealth for Europe to rise (in the form of crops, silver, and gold) simultaneous to the decline of the East. Ultimately, European exploration established a new world system that placed Europe at the center. This system became so ingrained in the western worldview that it has taken historians the past 60 years to break with the Eurocentric tradition and explain the realities and complexities of Europe's rise and the resulting impact.
## KEY TERMS AND NAMES

### Movement
- Marco Polo
- Prince Henry the Navigator
- Bartholomeu Dias
- Vasco da Gama
- Pedro Álvares Cabral
- Christopher Columbus
- King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella
- Amerigo Vespucci
- New World
- conquistadors
- Hernán Cortés
- Aztec Empire
- Vasco Nuñez de Balboa
- Francisco Pizarro
- Ferdinand Magellan
- John Cabot
- Giovanni de Verrazano
- Jacques Cartier
- Samuel de Champlain

### Caribbean Sea

### West Indies

### Indians

### Central America

### Tenochtitlán

### Mexico City

### New Spain

### Isthmus of Panama

### Pacific Ocean

### Inca Empire

### Andes Mountains

### Lima

### Peru

### Philippines

### Manila

### Lisbon

### Antwerp

### Amsterdam

### Jamestown

### British East India Company

### St. Lawrence River

### Quebec

### New France

### Dutch East India Company

### Dutch West India Company

### New Amsterdam

### Hudson River

### New York

### Economics
- mercantilism
- favorable balance of trade
- exports
- imports
- colony
- parent country
- plantation
- encomienda

### Technology
- navigation
- cartography
- compass
- astrolabe

### Governance
- Treaty of Tordesillas

### Global Exchange
- Columbian Exchange
- Old World
- Alfred Crosby
- smallpox
- measles
- immunity
- demographic

### Geography
- Ottoman Empire
- Gold Coast
- Cape of Good Hope
- Indian Ocean
- Spice Islands
- Brazil
- Caribbean Sea
- West Indies
- Indians
- Central America
- Tenochtitlán
- Mexico City
- New Spain
- Isthmus of Panama
- Pacific Ocean
- Inca Empire
- Andes Mountains
- Lima
- Peru
- Philippines
- Manila
- Lisbon
- Antwerp
- Amsterdam
- Jamestown
- British East India Company
- St. Lawrence River
- Quebec
- New France
- Dutch East India Company
- Dutch West India Company
- New Amsterdam
- Hudson River
- New York
MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

Questions 1–3 refer to the following passage.

“Upon which assurance of your royal love I have given my general command to all the kingdoms and ports of my dominions to receive all the merchants of the English nation as the subjects of my friend; that in what place soever they choose to live, they may have free liberty without any restraint; and at what port soever they shall arrive, that neither Portugal nor any other shall dare to molest their quiet; and in what city soever they shall have residence, I have commanded all my governors and captains to give them freedom answerable to their own desires; to sell, buy, and to transport into their country at their pleasure.

For confirmation of our love and friendship, I desire your Majesty to command your merchants to bring in their ships of all sorts of rarities and rich goods fit for my palace; and that you be pleased to send me your royal letters by every opportunity, that I may rejoice in your health and prosperous affairs; that our friendship may be interchanged and eternal.”

Jahangir, ruler of the Mughal Empire, letter to King James I of England, 1617

1. Which phrase best describes the form of British colonial activity that is referred to in the excerpt above?
   a) A case of a crown monopoly
   b) An example of missionary colonization
   c) An investment by a private stock company
   d) A case of government-approved privateering

2. Which country’s colonial activities in East Asia most resembled the British practices described in the passage?
   a) Netherlands
   b) France
   c) Spain
   d) Portugal

3. The most significant reason among the following for the decline of Portuguese influence in India was
   a) French interest in expanding their trade in Asia
   b) the establishment of the British East India Company
   c) the location of a Portuguese trading center in Antwerp
   d) the inclusion of Bombay in the dowry of a Portuguese princess to England’s king

EXPLORATION AND ENCOUNTERS OVERSEAS 67
Questions 4 and 5 refer to the following passage.

“The common ways mainly employed by the Spaniards who call themselves Christian and who have gone there to extirpate [eliminate] those pitiful nations and wipe them off the earth is by unjustly waging cruel and bloody wars. . . . When they have slain all the native rulers and young men (since the Spaniards usually spare only the women and children, who are subjected to the hardest and bitterest servitude ever suffered by man or beast), they enslave any survivors. . . .

Their reason for killing and destroying such an infinite number of souls is that the Christians have an ultimate aim, which is to acquire gold, and to swell themselves with riches in a very brief time and thus rise to a high estate disproportionate to their merits. It should be kept in mind that their insatiable greed and ambition, the greatest ever seen in the world, is the cause of their villainies. And also, those lands are so rich and felicitous [suitable], the native peoples so meek and patient, so easy to subject, that our Spaniards have no more consideration for them than beasts. And I say this from my own knowledge of the acts I witnessed. But I should not say “than beasts” for, thanks be to God, they have treated beasts with some respect; I should say instead like excrement [waste matter] on the public squares. And thus they have deprived the Indians of their lives and souls, for the millions I mentioned have died without the Faith and without the benefit of the sacraments.

Bartolomé de Las Casas, the Spanish conquest of the native peoples of the Americas, 1542

4. The excerpt best supports which conclusion about the Spanish conquest of the native peoples of the Americas?
   a) Nearly all leaders of the Catholic Church opposed the practices of the conquistadors.
   b) The conquistadors converted the native peoples through their practice of Christianity.
   c) Some Spaniards believed that the Spanish used barbaric practices to control the native populations.
   d) The Spanish faced great difficulty conquering the native peoples.

5. Which is the most important factor leading to the reduction of native populations that could be added to Las Casas’ first-hand account?
   a) The conflicts among native populations over how to respond to the Spanish
   b) The introduction by the Spanish of nonnative diseases to the Americas
   c) The decision by native individuals to move to lands not controlled by the Spanish
   d) The employment by the Spanish of native peoples in wars against British colonists
Questions 6–8 refer to the following chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colonial Region</th>
<th>Modern Countries in this Region</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Imported Slaves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese Colonies</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British West Indian Colonies</td>
<td>Jamaica, Barbados</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Colonies</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Colonies</td>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Mainland Colonies</td>
<td>United States</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>Surinam</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


6. Which is the most likely explanation for the high percentage of enslaved people brought into Brazil and the West Indies?

   a) Sugar plantations in those regions could profitably employ the greatest numbers of laborers.
   b) Brazil and the West Indies were the ports closest to Africa.
   c) People in other colonies were too poor to afford to purchase enslaved workers.
   d) All other colonies already had a large supply of labor.

7. Which of the following best explains why the labor of enslaved Africans was established in the European colonies?

   a) Most Native Americans had succumbed to disease or overwork.
   b) Native Americans had rebelled and refused to perform labor without compensation.
   c) Europeans had found that the slave trade itself was a source of profit.
   d) Europeans gave Native Americans the choice of whether to work.

8. The importation of slaves into the New World was part of a process known as

   a) mercantilism
   b) the Treaty of Tordesillas
   c) triangular trade
   d) the Columbian Exchange
SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. Use the passage below to answer all parts of the question that follow.

Too often, we historians tend to tell our story with the knowledge of the end result to come... But it is strangely liberating to look at the old maps, and see the vast stretches not-yet-filled-in, and populated instead with mermaids and unicorns and other figments of Europe's overheated imagination. Champlain's earliest and supposedly scientific renderings of the new world include a large winged dragon, ready to take flight. Well into the 18th century, maps of the Atlantic continued to include completely fictitious islands that had been legends for centuries, but never existed—the Sunken Land of Buss, St. Brendan's Isle, Hy-Brazil, the Island of the Seven Cities, and a dozen others.

Ted Widmer, Navigating the Age of Exploration, 2007

a) Provide ONE piece of historical evidence (not specifically mentioned in the passage) that would support Widmer's interpretation about the Age of Exploration.

b) Provide ONE piece of historical evidence that would undermine Widmer's interpretation about the Age of Exploration.

c) Explain how the Age of Exploration reflected the changing ideas about individuals and society in 15th- and 16th-century Europe.

2. Answer all parts of the question that follows.

a) Explain ONE economic development that shifted the exchange of goods from the Mediterranean Sea to the states on the Atlantic Ocean from 1450 to 1650.

b) Explain ONE political development that shifted the exchange of goods from the Mediterranean Sea to the states on the Atlantic Ocean from 1450 to 1650.

c) Explain ONE geographic reason that shifted the exchange of goods from the Mediterranean Sea to the states on the Atlantic Ocean from 1450 to 1650.

LONG ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Evaluate the extent to which competition between Spain and Portugal affected overseas exploration in the 15th and 16th centuries.

2. Evaluate the extent to which the interactions with Europeans affected native peoples during the Age of Exploration.
REFLECT ON THE CHAPTER ESSENTIAL QUESTION

1. In one to three paragraphs, explain how Europe’s overseas explorations affected both Europeans and indigenous populations.

WRITE AS A HISTORIAN: DISTINGUISH TYPES OF SOURCES

Historians use many types of sources to help explain the past. They range from very personal diaries to works of later scholars analyzing events. One way to think about this range of sources is to distinguish between primary and secondary sources. These are described in the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Primary Source</th>
<th>Secondary Source</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td>A first-hand account of an event or of what a person thought</td>
<td>A later description of an event or of what a person thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Examples</strong></td>
<td>- A journal kept by a Spanish priest in Mexico&lt;br&gt;- A speech by an Aztec leader&lt;br&gt;- The legal charter of the British East India Company&lt;br&gt;- The clothes, pottery, tools and other possessions owned by people living in the West Indies&lt;br&gt;- The records of a bank in Amsterdam showing deposits and loans&lt;br&gt;- Paintings showing European merchants</td>
<td>- A book written by a historian in the 20th century analyzing mercantilism in the 17th century&lt;br&gt;- A painting created in the 19th century showing the first meeting between Pizarro and an Incan&lt;br&gt;- A table created in the 21st century summarizing the population decrease among indigenous people after their first contact with Europeans</td>
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<td><strong>Strengths</strong></td>
<td>- They reflect how people perceived an event at the time it was happening&lt;br&gt;- They provide details about how people acted</td>
<td>- They reflect how people view an event after they have seen some of its results&lt;br&gt;- They provide context based on other events happening at the same time in other places</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Weaknesses</strong></td>
<td>- They reflect the point of view of the observer</td>
<td>- They reflect the point of view of the historian or other person who created the source</td>
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</table>
Identify each item as either a primary or a secondary source.

1. *The Economy of British America*, by historian Cathy D. Matson, which analyzes economic developments in the colonies belonging to Great Britain in the Americas

2. *Representations of Slavery*, by historian Douglas Hamilton, which analyzes how museums, movies, and websites have portrayed slavery as it developed in European colonies

3. *Columbus*, by historian Felipe Fernández-Armesto, a biography of Christopher Columbus published in 1991

4. The journal kept by Christopher Columbus of his voyages to the Americas

5. *De varietate fortunae*, an account of the voyages of Nicolò de Conti, who travelled in the Indian and Pacific Oceans in the 15th century

6. Drawings and other artwork in the *Sino-Spanish Codex*, created in 1590, showing people in Japan, China, and the Philippines as portrayed by Spanish explorers, missionaries, and traders

7. A chapter about the astrolabe in *Champlain: The Birth of French America*, by Raymonde Litalien and Denis Vangeois, published in 2004

8. The astrolabe shown below, which was made in Spain during the Middle Ages

![Astrolabe](image)