

SECTION 1

Exploration and Expansion

Guide to Reading

Main Ideas

- In the fifteenth century, Europeans began to explore the world.
- Portugal, Spain, the Dutch Republic, and England reached new economic heights through worldwide trade.

Key Terms

conquistador, colony, mercantilism, balance of trade

People to Identify

Vasco da Gama, Christopher Columbus, John Cabot, Amerigo Vespucci, Francisco Pizarro, Ferdinand Magellan

Places to Locate

Portugal, Africa, Melaka, Cuba

Preview Questions

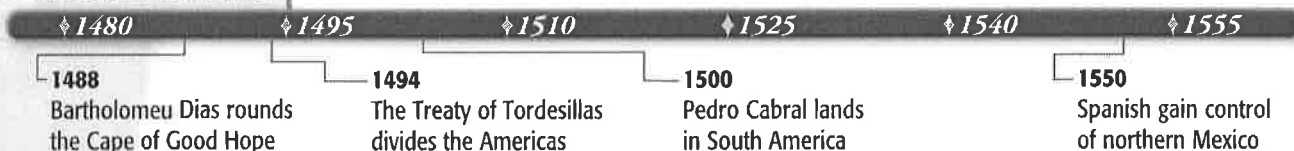
1. Why did Europeans travel to Asia?
2. What impact did European expansion have on the conquerors and the conquered?

Reading Strategy

Summarizing Information Use a chart like the one below to list reasons why Melaka, a port on the Malay Peninsula, was important to the Portuguese.

Importance of Melaka

Preview of Events



Voices from the Past



Christopher Columbus

In a letter to the treasurer of the king and queen of Spain, Christopher Columbus reported on his first journey:

“Believing that you will rejoice at the glorious success that our Lord has granted me in my voyage, I write this to tell you how in thirty-three days I reached the Indies with the first fleet which the most illustrious King and Queen, our Sovereigns, gave me, where I discovered a great many thickly-populated islands. Without meeting resistance, I have taken possession of them all for their Highnesses. . . . When I reached [Cuba], I followed its coast to the westward, and found it so large that I thought it must be the mainland—the province of [China], but I found neither towns nor villages on the sea-coast, save for a few hamlets.”

—*Letters from the First Voyage*, edited 1847

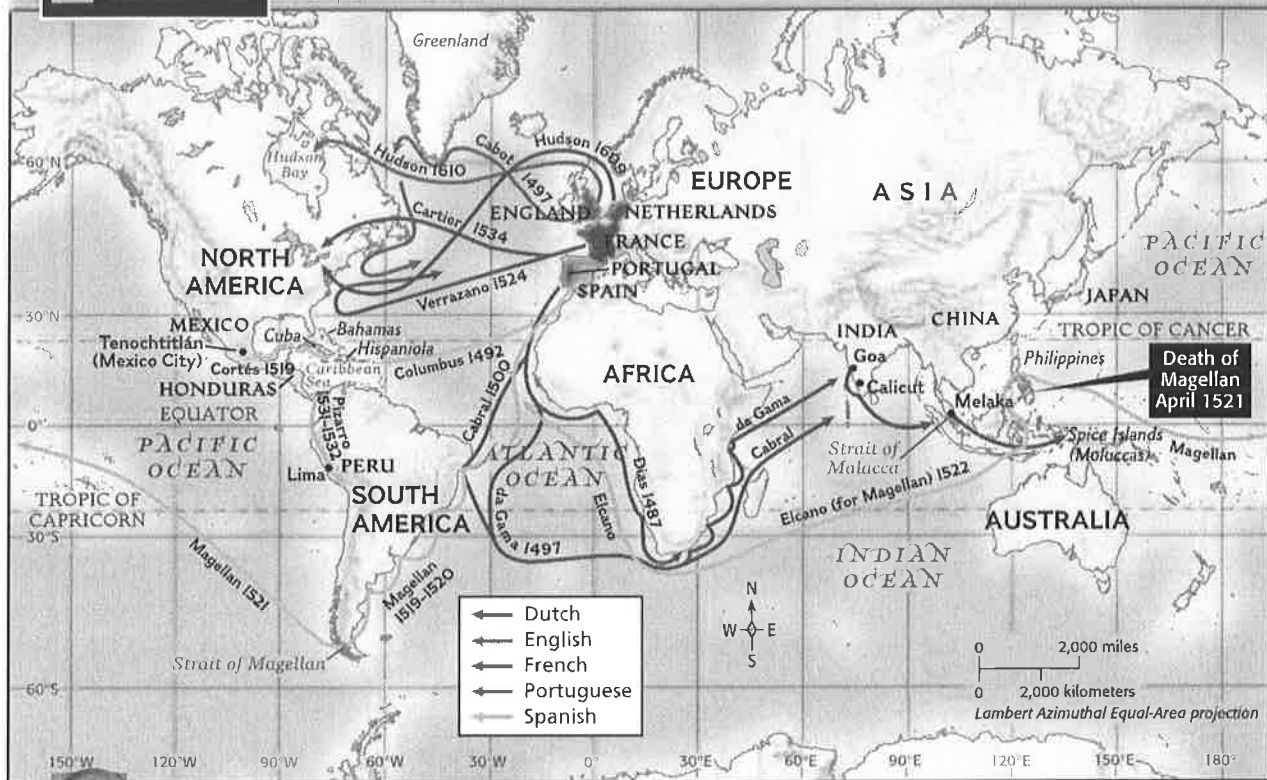
To the end of his life, despite the evidence, Columbus believed he had found a new route to Asia.

Motives and Means

The dynamic energy of Western civilization between 1500 and 1800 was most apparent when Europeans began to expand into the rest of the world. First Portugal and Spain, then later the Dutch Republic, England, and France, all rose to new economic heights through their worldwide trading activity.



European Voyages of Discovery



Geography Skills

For more than a hundred years European explorers sailed the globe searching for wealth and glory.

- 1. Interpreting Maps** Which continents were left untouched by European explorers?
- 2. Applying Geography Skills** Create a table that organizes the information on this map. Include the explorer, date, sponsoring country, and area explored.

For almost a thousand years, Europeans had mostly remained in one area of the world. At the end of the fifteenth century, however, they set out on a remarkable series of overseas journeys. What caused them to undertake such dangerous voyages to the ends of the earth?

Europeans had long been attracted to Asia. In the late thirteenth century, Marco Polo had traveled with his father and uncle to the Chinese court of the great Mongol ruler Kublai Khan. He had written an account of his experiences, known as *The Travels*. The book was read by many, including Columbus, who were fascinated by the exotic East. In the fourteenth century, conquests by the Ottoman Turks reduced the ability of westerners to travel by land to the East. People then spoke of gaining access to Asia by sea.

Economic motives loom large in European expansion. Merchants, adventurers, and state officials had high hopes of expanding trade, especially for the spices of the East. The spices, which were needed to preserve and flavor food, were very expensive after being shipped to Europe by Arab middlemen. Europeans also had hopes of finding precious metals. One Spanish adventurer wrote that he went to the Americas "to give light to those who were in darkness, and to grow rich, as all men desire to do."

This statement suggests another reason for the overseas voyages: religious zeal. Many people shared the belief of Hernán Cortés, the Spanish conqueror of Mexico, that they must ensure that the natives "are introduced into the holy Catholic faith."

There was a third motive as well. Spiritual and secular affairs were connected in the sixteenth century. Adventurers such as Cortés wanted to convert the natives to Christianity, but grandeur, glory, and a spirit of adventure also played a major role in European expansion.

"God, glory, and gold," then, were the chief motives for European expansion, but what made the voyages possible? By the second half of the fifteenth century, European monarchies had increased their



power and their resources. They could now turn their energies beyond their borders. Europeans had also reached a level of technology that enabled them to make a regular series of voyages beyond Europe. A new global age was about to begin.

Reading Check Explaining What does the phrase “God, glory, and gold” mean?

The Portuguese Trading Empire

Portugal took the lead in European exploration. Beginning in 1420, under the sponsorship of Prince Henry the Navigator, Portuguese fleets began probing southward along the western coast of Africa. There, they discovered a new source of gold. The

southern coast of West Africa thus became known to Europeans as the Gold Coast.

Portuguese sea captains heard reports of a route to India around the southern tip of Africa. In 1488, Bartholomeu Dias rounded the tip, called the Cape of Good Hope. Later, Vasco da Gama went around the cape and cut across the Indian Ocean to the coast of India. In May of 1498, he arrived off the port of Calicut, where he took on a cargo of spices. He returned to Portugal and made a profit of several thousand percent. Is it surprising that da Gama’s voyage was the first of many along this route?

Portuguese fleets returned to the area to destroy Muslim shipping and to gain control of the spice trade, which had been controlled by the Muslims. In

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & SOCIETY

Sea Travel in an Age of Exploration

European voyagers acquired much of their knowledge about sailing from the Arabs. For example, sailors used charts that Arab navigators and mathematicians had drawn in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Known as *portolani*, these charts recorded the shapes of coastlines and distances between ports. They were very valuable in European waters. Because the charts were drawn on a flat scale and took no account of the curvature of the earth, however, they were of little help on overseas voyages.

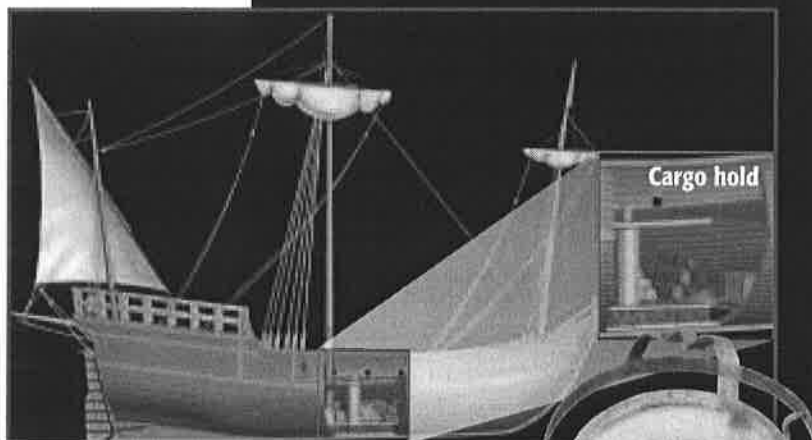
Only as sailors began to move beyond the coasts of Europe did they gain information about the actual shape of the earth. By 1500, cartography—the art and science of mapmaking—had reached the point where Europeans had fairly accurate maps of the areas they had explored.

Europeans also learned new navigational techniques from the Arabs. Previously, sailors had used the position of the North Star to determine their latitude. Below the Equator, though, this technique was useless. The compass and the astrolabe (also perfected by the Arabs) greatly aided exploration. The compass showed in what direction a ship was moving. The astrolabe used the sun or a star to ascertain a ship’s latitude.

Finally, European shipmakers learned how to use lateen (triangular) sails, which were developed by the Arabs. New ships, called caravels, were more maneuverable and could carry heavy cannon and more goods.

Evaluating Which one advance was the most important for early explorers? Why?

Caravel (small fifteenth- and sixteenth-century ship)



Early compass



Map of the world, 1571



1509, a Portuguese fleet of warships defeated a combined fleet of Turkish and Indian ships off the coast of India. A year later, Admiral Afonso de Albuquerque set up a port at Goa, on the western coast of India.

The Portuguese then began to range more widely in search of the source of the spice trade. Soon, Albuquerque sailed into **Melaka** on the Malay Peninsula. Melaka was a thriving port for the spice trade. For Albuquerque, control of Melaka would help to destroy Arab control of the spice trade and provide the Portuguese with a way station on the route to the Moluccas, then known as the Spice Islands.

From Melaka, the Portuguese launched expeditions to China and the Spice Islands. There, they signed a treaty with a local ruler for the purchase and export of cloves to the European market. This treaty established Portuguese control of the spice trade. The Portuguese trading empire was complete. However, it remained a limited empire of trading posts. The

Portuguese had neither the power, the people, nor the desire to colonize the Asian regions.

Why were the Portuguese the first successful European explorers? Basically it was a matter of guns and seamanship. Later, however, the Portuguese would be no match for other European forces—the English, Dutch, and French.

✓ Reading Check Explaining Why did Afonso de Albuquerque want control of Melaka?

Voyages to the Americas

The Portuguese sailed eastward through the Indian Ocean to reach the source of the spice trade. The Spanish sought to reach it by sailing westward across the Atlantic Ocean. With more people and greater resources, the Spanish established an overseas empire that was quite different from the Portuguese trading posts.

Opposing Viewpoints

What Was the Impact of Columbus on the Americas?

Historians have differed widely over the impact of Columbus on world history. Was he a hero who ushered in economic well being throughout the world? Or, was he a prime mover in the destruction of the people and cultures of the Americas?

“The whole history of the Americas stems from the Four Voyages of Columbus. . . . Today a core of independent nations unite in homage to Christopher, the stout-hearted son of Genoa, who carried Christian civilization across the Ocean Sea.”

—Samuel Eliot Morison, 1942
Admiral of the Ocean Sea, A Life of Christopher Columbus

“Just twenty-one years after Columbus’s first landing in the Caribbean, the vastly populous island that the explorer had re-named Hispaniola was effectively desolate; nearly 8,000,000 people. . . had been killed by violence, disease, and despair. [W]hat happened on Hispaniola was the equivalent of more than fifty Hiroshimas.* And Hispaniola was only the beginning.”

—David E. Stannard, 1992
American Holocaust: Columbus and the Conquest of the New World

*The atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, killed at least 130,000 people.

The Voyages of Columbus An important figure in the history of Spanish exploration was an Italian, **Christopher Columbus**. Educated Europeans knew that the world was round, but had little understanding of its circumference or of the size of the continent of Asia. Convinced that the circumference of Earth was not as great as others thought, Columbus believed that he could reach Asia by sailing west instead of east around Africa.

Columbus persuaded Queen Isabella of Spain to finance an exploratory expedition. In October 1492, he reached the Americas, where he explored the coastline of **Cuba** and the island of Hispaniola.

Columbus believed he had reached Asia. Through three more voyages, he sought in vain to find a route through the outer islands to the Asian mainland. In his four voyages, Columbus reached all the major islands of the Caribbean and Honduras in Central America—all of which he called the Indies.



Columbus petitions Queen Isabella for financial support of his explorations.

“When the two races first met on the eastern coast of America, there was unlimited potential for harmony. The newcomers could have adapted to the hosts’ customs and values. . . . But this did not happen . . . [Columbus] viewed the natives of America with arrogance and disdain . . . Columbus wrote of gold, . . . and of spices, . . . and ‘slaves, as many as they shall order to be shipped. . . .’”

—George P. Horse Capture, 1992
 “An American Indian Perspective,” *Seeds of Change*

You Decide

1. Using information from the text and outside sources, write an account of Columbus’s voyages from his point of view. If Columbus were to undertake his voyages today, would he do anything differently? If not, why not?
2. Using the information in the text and your own research, evaluate the validity of these three excerpts. Which excerpt corroborates the information of the other? What might account for the difference in the viewpoints expressed here?

A Line of Demarcation By the 1490s, then, the voyages of the Portuguese and Spanish had already opened up new lands to exploration. Both Spain and Portugal feared that the other might claim some of its newly discovered territories. They resolved their concerns by agreeing on a line of demarcation, an imaginary line that divided their spheres of influence.

According to the Treaty of Tordesillas (TAWR•duh•SEE•yuhs), signed in 1494, the line would extend from north to south through the Atlantic Ocean and the easternmost part of the South American continent. Unexplored territories east of the line would be controlled by Portugal, and those west of the line by Spain. This treaty gave Portugal control over its route around Africa, and it gave Spain rights to almost all of the Americas.

Race to the Americas Other explorers soon realized that Columbus had discovered an entirely new frontier. Government-sponsored explorers from many countries joined the race to the Americas. A Venetian seaman, **John Cabot**, explored the New England coastline of the Americas for England. The Portuguese sea captain Pedro Cabral landed in South America in 1500. **Amerigo Vespucci** (veh•SPOO•chee), a Florentine, went along on several voyages and wrote letters describing the lands he saw. These letters led to the use of the name *America* (after Amerigo) for the new lands.



Europeans called these territories the New World, but the lands were hardly new. They already had flourishing civilizations made up of millions of people when the Europeans arrived. The Americas were, of course, new to the Europeans, who quickly saw opportunities for conquest and exploitation.

✓ Reading Check Examining Why did the Spanish and Portuguese sign the Treaty of Tordesillas?

The Spanish Empire

The Spanish conquerors of the Americas—known as *conquistadors*—were individuals whose guns and determination brought them incredible success. The forces of Hernán Cortés took only three years to overthrow the mighty Aztec Empire in Central Mexico (see Chapter 11). By 1550, the Spanish had gained control of northern Mexico. In South America, an expedition led by **Francisco Pizarro** took control of the Incan Empire high in the Peruvian Andes. Within 30 years, the western part of Latin America, as these lands in Mexico and Central and South America were called, had been brought under Spanish control. (The Portuguese took over Brazil, which fell on their side of the line of demarcation.)

By 1535, the Spanish had created a system of colonial administration in the Americas. Queen Isabella declared Native Americans (then called Indians, after the Spanish word *Indios*, “inhabitants of the Indies”) to be her subjects. She granted the Spanish *encomienda*, or the right to use Native Americans as laborers.

The Spanish were supposed to protect Native Americans, but the settlers were far from Spain and largely ignored their rulers. Native Americans were put to work on sugar plantations and in gold and silver mines. Few Spanish settlers worried about protecting them.

Forced labor, starvation, and especially disease took a fearful toll on Native American lives. With little natural resistance to European diseases, the native peoples were ravaged by smallpox, measles, and typhus, and many of them died. Hispaniola, for example, had a population of 250,000 when Columbus arrived. By 1538, only 500 Native Americans had survived. In Mexico, the population dropped from 25 million in 1519 to 1 million in 1630.

In the early years of the conquest, Catholic missionaries converted and baptized hundreds of

thousands of native peoples. With the arrival of the missionaries came parishes, schools, and hospitals—all the trappings of a European society. Native American social and political structures were torn apart and replaced by European systems of religion, language, culture, and government.

✓ Reading Check Evaluating What was the impact of the Spanish settlement on the Native Americans?

Economic Impact and Competition

TURNING POINT International trade was crucial in creating a new age of commercial capitalism, one of the first steps in the development of the world economy.

Spanish conquests in the Americas affected not only the conquered but also the conquerors. This was especially true in the economic arena. Wherever they went, Europeans sought gold and silver. One Aztec commented that the Spanish conquerors “longed and lusted for gold. Their bodies swelled with greed; they hungered like pigs for that gold.” Rich silver deposits were found and exploited in Mexico and southern Peru (modern Bolivia).

Colonists established plantations and ranches to raise sugar, cotton, vanilla, livestock, and other products introduced to the Americas for export to Europe. Agricultural products native to the Americas, such as potatoes, cocoa, corn, and tobacco, were also shipped to Europe. The extensive exchange of plants and animals between the Old and New Worlds—known as the Columbian Exchange—transformed economic activity in both worlds.

At the same time, Portuguese expansion in the East created its own economic impact. With their Asian trading posts, Portugal soon challenged the Italian states as the chief entry point of the eastern trade in spices, jewels, silk, and perfumes. Other European nations soon sought similar economic benefits.

New Rivals Enter the Scene

By the end of the sixteenth century, several new European rivals had entered the scene for the eastern trade. The Spanish established themselves in the Philippine Islands, where **Ferdinand Magellan** had landed earlier. They turned the Philippines into a major Spanish base for



Incan mask



trade across the Pacific. Spanish ships carried silver from Mexico to the Philippines and returned to Mexico with silk and other luxury goods.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, an English fleet landed on the northwestern coast of India and established trade relations with the people there. Trade with Southeast Asia soon followed.

The first Dutch fleet arrived in India in 1595. Shortly after, the Dutch formed the East India Company and began competing with the English and the Portuguese.

The Dutch also formed the West India Company to compete with the Spanish and Portuguese in the Americas. The Dutch colony of New Netherland stretched from the mouth of the Hudson River as far north as Albany, New York. Present-day names such as *Staten Island*, *Harlem*, and the *Catskill Mountains* remind us that it was the Dutch who initially settled the Hudson River valley.

After 1660, however, rivalry with the English and the French (who had also become active in North America) brought the fall of the Dutch commercial empire in the Americas. The English seized the colony of New Netherland and renamed it New York.

During the 1600s, the French colonized parts of what is now Canada and Louisiana. English settlers, meanwhile, founded Virginia and the Massachusetts Bay Colony. By 1700, the English had established a colonial empire along the eastern seaboard of North America. They also had set up sugar plantations on various islands in the Caribbean Sea.

Trade, Colonies, and Mercantilism Led by Portugal and Spain, European nations in the 1500s and 1600s established many trading posts and colonies in the Americas and the East. A **colony** is a settlement of people living in a new territory, linked with the parent country by trade and direct government control.

With the development of colonies and trading posts, Europeans entered an age of increased international trade. Colonies played a role in the theory of **mercantilism**, a set of principles that dominated economic thought in the seventeenth century. According to mercantilists, the prosperity of a nation depended on a large supply of bullion, or gold and silver. To bring in gold and silver payments, nations tried to have a favorable balance of trade. The **balance of trade** is the difference in value between what a nation imports and what it exports over time. When the balance is favorable, the goods exported are of greater value than those imported.

To encourage exports, governments stimulated export industries and trade. They granted subsidies, or payments, to new industries and improved transportation systems by building roads, bridges, and canals. By placing high tariffs, or taxes, on foreign goods, they tried to keep these goods out of their own countries. Colonies were considered important both as sources of raw materials and markets for finished goods.

✓ Reading Check Identifying What products were sent from the Americas to Europe?

SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

- 1. Define** conquistador, colony, mercantilism, balance of trade.
- 2. Identify** Vasco da Gama, Christopher Columbus, John Cabot, Amerigo Vespucci, Francisco Pizarro, Ferdinand Magellan.
- 3. Locate** Portugal, Africa, Melaka, Cuba.
- 4. Explain** why the Spanish were so hungry for gold.
- 5. List** the institutions of European society that were brought to the Americas by European missionaries.

Critical Thinking

- 6. Describe** Identify and briefly describe the negative consequences of the Spanish *encomienda* system. Were there any positive consequences?
- 7. Identifying Information** Use a web diagram like the one below to list motives for European exploration.



Analyzing Visuals

- 8. Examine** the photograph of the Incan mask shown on page 412 of your text. How could artifacts such as this have increased the European desire to explore and conquer the Americas?

Writing About History

- 9. Descriptive Writing** Research one of the expeditions discussed in this section. Write a journal entry describing your experiences as a sailor on the expedition. Provide details of your daily life on the ship and what you found when you first reached land.