

Age of Exploration

Name: _____

<p>What is it? The Age of Exploration refers to the period from about 1400 until about 1600. During this time, a handful of European states (primarily Spain, Portugal, England, France, and the Netherlands) focused a lot of their attention on exploring lands previously unknown to Europeans and finding ways to exploit such lands.</p>	<p>What is the Age of Exploration?</p>
<p>Background: After the Fall of Rome in the 400s, Europe declined immensely as a trading power—especially sea trade. However, starting around 1200, European sea trade began to grow considerably. This is partly due to political factors. The naval strength of the Caliphate was declining and new states in Northern Europe encouraged sea trade on the Atlantic, which had previously been quite empty of trade routes. However, it is also due to the arrival of new naval technologies from China—diffusion facilitated by the Mongols. The compass, multi-mast ships, lateen sails, and sternpost rudders all made their way from China and dramatically improved European sailing.</p>	<p>Explain the two reasons European trade grew after 1200:</p>
<p>Henry the Navigator (1415-1460): Growing European naval strength was first put to the task of exploration by Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal. He wanted to take control of the trade that crossed the Sahara desert. This trade came through Muslim lands and brought large amounts of gold. Henry decided the easiest way to do this was to go around the Sahara by sea. Starting around 1415, he began to commission naval expeditions to go down the coast of Africa. To help with this work, his fortress became a world-center of maps and naval research. A new ship called the Caravel was designed there, which could travel long distances at great speed (compared to other ships of the time). His explorers did find gold but more importantly, they started to trade slaves. By his death, Portugal had become a booming hub for the slave trade.</p>	<p>What was Henry’s motivation for exploring the African coast?</p> <p>What was designed at his fortress?</p> <p>What economy grew because of his explorations?</p>
<p>De Gama (1497): Vasco de Gama, a Portuguese explorer discovered that you could sail around Africa. This gave Portugal a direct link to the Indian Ocean, along with all of the spices, tea, and silk that came from it. This allowed Europeans to take control of trade from that region, cutting off the last great economic strength of the declining Caliphate.</p>	<p>What did de Gama discover?</p> <p>What effect did that have?</p>
<p>Columbus (1492) In 1492, Christopher Columbus arrived in Cuba and Hispaniola (which he thought were China and Indonesia). After a few years, it became clear that they were something else. Columbus was looking for gold, which he never found. Desperate to make money from his voyages, he turned to slavery. The Taino were forced into mines and onto plantations, where they made enormous profits for the Spanish. These profits were so great that other Spaniards also began to create slave plantations. When the Taino were driven to extinction, Spain turned to African slaves to fill the void. Over the next few decades, most of the Caribbean is conquered and turned to slave plantations.</p>	<p>What did Columbus do to make money?</p> <p>What was Columbus’s impact on the Caribbean?</p>

<p>Conquest of Mexico (1520-1530): Still on the hunt for Gold, Spain turned its attention to the American Mainland. In 1520, Hernán Cortés sailed an army of mercenary soldiers into what is now central Mexico and there challenged the Aztec Empire that ruled there. The Aztecs were a powerful empire but not well loved by the people they had conquered (great at conquest, bad at assimilation and pacification). Many of these conquered people joined forces with Cortés. The Aztec Empire lost a couple battles but it was truly the ensuing wave of disease that ended the empire. After 1521, the Empire collapsed. After that, the Spanish turned to the other native people and had all of Central America under their control by 1530. These areas were, of course, also subject to slave plantations.</p>	<p>Explain three reasons why Spain was able to conquer the Aztecs:</p>
<p>Conquest of the Inca (1532-1572): The conquest of the Aztecs made Cortés fabulously wealthy. Other soldiers began to make more and more expeditions of conquest. One of them, named Francisco Pizarro, took a small army into the Inca Empire. The Inca were currently going through a civil war and some native peoples joined Pizarro. The combined Spanish and rebel Inca forces defeated the Inca army at the Battle of Cajamarca and took the Emperor hostage. The Inca were briefly subdued but soon after rebelled and Spain needed decades before the empire was completely conquered.</p>	<p>What drove Pizarro’s conquests?</p> <p>Why did the emperor’s death not end the conquest of Inca?</p>
<p>The Columbian Exchange: the interaction between Europe and the Americas started a wave of diffusion known as the Columbian Exchange. During this time, a huge number of things were diffused between the two continents. The Americas of course got all sorts of new technology and religions and cultures also followed. But most notably, the Columbian exchange diffused organisms—new food crops like tomatoes, garlic, avocados, chili peppers, wheat, corn—new animals like horses and cows and turkeys—and diseases like smallpox, influenza, the plague, and typhus.</p>	<p>What is the Columbian Exchange?</p> <p>What sorts of things were traded?</p>
<p>The Great Dying: far more than any conquest, the Americas were devastated by diseases. In many places, as many as 95% of the population died between 1500-1600. The cause of this massive death toll was European Diseases. Smallpox, Typhus, the Plague, Influenza, and others—all the great killers of Eurasian history—converged on the Americas more or less all at once. This resulted in total collapse of society in many parts of the Americas and numerous towns and villages were left deserted by the diseases.</p> <p>However, there is also an incorrect assumption made because of this. Many people characterize the Americas as being “Empty” because of the diseases. This is not true. Populations did rebound after the diseases and many parts of the Americas had large populations after the diseases had left.</p>	<p>What is the Great Dying?</p> <p>What diseases were exchanged?</p> <p>What was the death toll?</p> <p>Why is it incorrect to say America was “emptied?”</p>