

# TEXT AND TALK ON VOYAGES AND EXPLORATIONS

## PART 1 – TUNING IN

### The age of explorations 149

The Renaissance was a time of inventions and scientific discoveries and also a period of geographic exploration as individuals began to explore the seas and lands beyond Europe.

During the first half of the fifteenth century, Prince Henry the Navigator urged the Portuguese to explore the coasts of Africa. In 1492 Christopher Columbus sailed west into the Atlantic Ocean and discovered islands that he thought were close to Asia. Some time later, Vasco da Gama arrived in India after sailing around southern Africa. In 1522, one of the ships in Magellan's fleet returned to Europe, thereby proving that it was possible to circumnavigate the Earth.

Christopher Columbus, to the above-mentioned countries of India, to see the said princes, people, and territories, and to learn their disposition and the proper method of converting them to our holy faith'.

- \* Sometime after 1521, Bernal Díaz del Castillo, the chronicler of the Spanish conquest of Mexico, wrote that he started his voyage because he wanted 'to serve God and His Majesty, to give light to those who were in darkness, and to grow rich, as all men desire to do'.
- \* Early in the seventeenth century, the Englishman Walter Raleigh, about to set out to search for the mythical El Dorado, said his purpose was 'To seeke new worlds, for golde, for prayse, for glory'.

### Motives for exploration 150

At the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Europeans set out on a series of overseas journeys. What caused them to undertake such dangerous voyages?

- \* A key motive for beginning exploration was the hope of finding trade and personal enrichment.
- \* When Portuguese explorer Vasco Da Gama arrived in 'Calicut', a leading commercial city on the coast of India in 1498, he was asked by an Indian official what he came for. He is reported to have replied, 'Christians and spices'. He returned home after having lost two ships and two-thirds of his men, but his trip was seen as a great success. This was because his cargo of spices was sold for sixty times the original price.
- \* Religion was one of the reasons that persuaded the Catholic Isabella and Ferdinand of Spain to finance Christopher Columbus' journey. It is written in his journal entry of his first voyage west: 'Your Highnesses, as Catholic Christians, and princes who love and promote the holy Christian faith, and are enemies of the doctrine of Mahomet, and of all idolatry and heresy, determined to send me,



1 \_\_\_\_\_  
builds a school for sailors.

1450

The Ottoman empire cuts off the land route from Asia to Europe. Search for a sea route begins.

1453

3 \_\_\_\_\_  
lands on an island of the Bahamas.

1487

2 \_\_\_\_\_  
rounds the southern tip of Africa, which is known as the Cape of Good Hope.

1492

5 \_\_\_\_\_  
finds a sea route to India by sailing around Africa.

1497

4 \_\_\_\_\_  
discovers Newfoundland while he searches for a north-western passage to India.

1498

7 \_\_\_\_\_  
discovers the eastern shore of the Pacific Ocean.

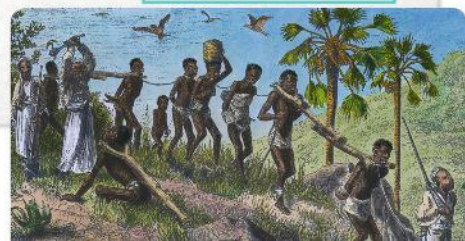
1502

6 \_\_\_\_\_  
returns from his explorations of South America. A German mapmaker names the New World after him.

1513

1518

The first African slaves are carried to the Americas.





- 1 149 Read and listen to the text. In pairs or small groups, discuss why a nation's government might support voyages of exploration. Here's a list of possible reasons. Put them in order of importance. Then share your list with a partner and come to a common list of reasons.

- national prestige
- new territory
- military advantages
- additional resources
- new markets for products
- scientific research
- other reasons (*specify*)

- 2 150 Read and listen to the text. Choose the right answer, A, B or C.

- Consistent among many of those who ventured on the sea from the early fifteenth to the early seventeenth century was the desire for  
A wealth and glory.  
B wealth.  
C glory.
- Religion is not mentioned in  
A Columbus's statement.  
B Raleigh's statement.  
C Bernal Diaz del Castillo's statement.
- The driving force behind two centuries of overseas exploration was the desire to  
A discover new countries and get in touch with new peoples.  
B find new markets for the most recent technological inventions.  
C reach the sources of spices and other precious Asian commodities.



8 \_\_\_\_\_  
sails around the world.

English establish the first permanent settlement in America at Jamestown.

The Mayflower lands with pilgrims in the New World.

English planters introduce sugarcane in the West Indies.

1519-22

1534

1577

1607

1610

1620

1626

1640

1673

9 \_\_\_\_\_  
explores present-day Canada for France.

10 \_\_\_\_\_  
is the first Englishman to sail around the world. He returns to England three years later, completing his circumnavigation.

11 \_\_\_\_\_  
discovers Hudson Bay.

New Amsterdam (present-day New York) is founded by Dutch.

Father Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet explore the Mississippi River.

- 3 Complete the texts with the words in the box.

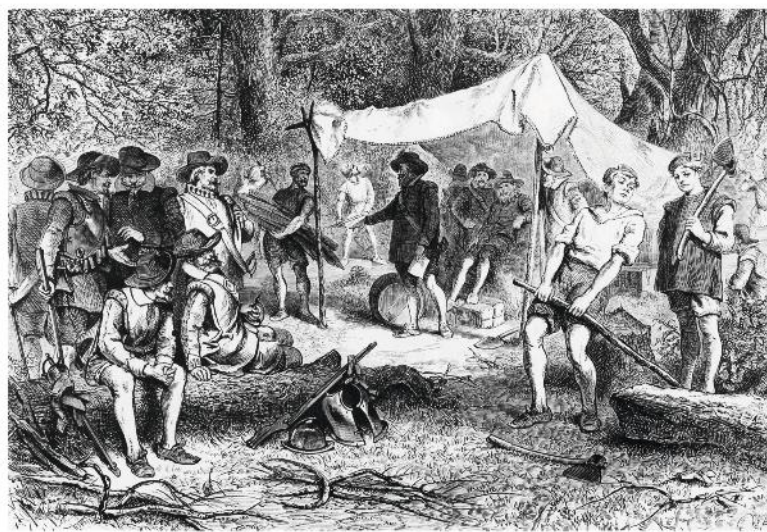
Asia • gold • Ottoman Empire • sea route  
spices • merchants • Spain

For centuries Europeans had brought <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ and other goods on a land route from <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. But in the fifteenth century most overland routes were controlled by the <sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, which made it even more difficult for European <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ to pass through. As a result, pepper cost more than <sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. It was for this reason that some European countries, like <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ and Portugal, decided to find out if there was a <sup>7</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ to Asia.

- 4 **Critical thinking** In pair, discuss the following question: why were spices so important at the time of the first voyages of exploration?

## PART 2 – FINDING OUT

- 5 **Digital literacy** Do a web search about European explorers and their achievements. Organize your information by completing the timeline below.



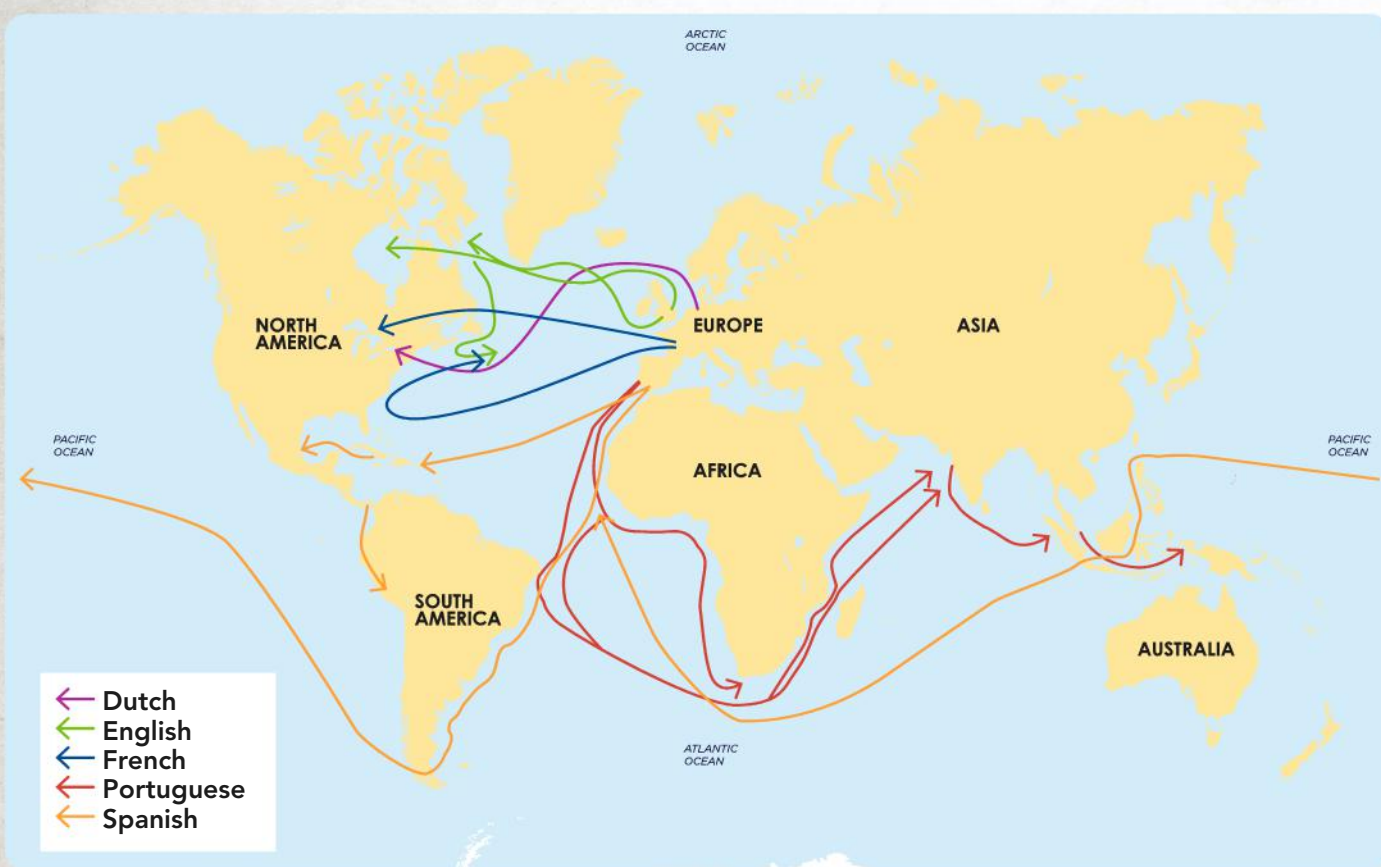
# Mercantilism 151

European nations in the 1500s and 1600s established many trading posts and **colonies** in the Americas and the East. That was the beginning of an age of increased international trade.

Colonies played a role in the theory of **mercantilism**, the main economic policy in Europe between 1500 and 1800. According to that policy a country's power came from its wealth. Thus, a country would do everything possible to acquire more gold, preferably at the expense of its rivals. A mercantilist country primarily sought gold in two ways: establishing and exploiting colonies, and establishing a favourable **balance of trade** with a rival country. European colonies were allowed to trade only with their home country. The colonies sent **raw materials**

such as wood, fur and cotton to Europe. The home country would take the raw materials and turn them into manufactured goods, which they would then sell back to the colonies. Colonies were important both as sources of raw materials and markets for finished goods.

Mercantilism created new trading patterns around the world. An important trading pattern involved the exchange of raw materials, manufactured products, and slaves between Europe, Africa, and the Americas. This type of trade was called **triangular trade**. The Atlantic **slave trade** was a major part of this trade network. Between the 1500s and 1600s, millions of **slaves** were shipped to the colonies in the New World.



## 6 Look at the map and answer the questions.

- 1 Which continents are found in the New World? And in the Old World?
- 2 Which continents were left untouched by European explorers?

## 7 151 Vocabulary Read and listen to the text. Find the words that correspond to the following definitions.

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ : someone who is owned by another person and works for them for no money.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_ : an economic system that was based on the premise that national wealth and power were best served by increasing exports and collecting precious metals in return.

- 3 \_\_\_\_\_ : countries or areas that are under the political control of a more powerful country, usually one that is far away.
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_ : the buying and selling of slaves, especially Africans who were taken to America.
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ : the basic materials that can be used to make or create something.
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_ : a system between nations in the 1600s and 1700s in which slaves, crops, and manufactured goods were traded between Africa, the Americas, and Europe.
- 7 \_\_\_\_\_ : the difference in value between a country's imports and exports.



## THE COLUMBIAN EXCHANGE

In 1972, Alfred W. Crosby wrote a book called *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*. In it, the historian coined the term 'the Columbian exchange'. Crosby used the term to refer to the flow of goods between the Americas, Europe, and Africa that followed Columbus's 'discovery' of the New World. People, foods, animals, plants, and diseases passed from continent to continent and nothing would ever be the same. The Columbian exchange changed history and changed two worlds that were once very separate worlds.



### UNCOVERING THE NEW WORLD

...Colon [Columbus] and his crew did not voyage alone. They were accompanied by a menagerie of insects, plants, mammals, and microorganisms. Beginning with La Isabela [Colon's first settlement], European expeditions brought cattle, sheep, and horses, along with crops like sugar cane (originally from New Guinea), wheat (from the Middle East), bananas (from Africa), and coffee (also from Africa). Equally important, creatures the colonists knew nothing about hitchhiked along for the ride. Earthworms, mosquitoes, and cockroaches; honeybees, dandelions, and African grasses; rats of every description. [...] Before Colon none of the epidemic diseases common in Europe and Asia existed in the Americas. The viruses that cause smallpox, influenza, hepatitis, measles, encephalitis, and viral pneumonia; the bacteria that cause tuberculosis, diphtheria, cholera, typhus, scarlet fever, and bacterial meningitis — by a quirk of evolutionary history, all were unknown in the Western Hemisphere.

8 **152** Read and listen to the texts. What event started the Columbian exchange?

9 **152** Read and listen to the texts. Complete the table.

From Europe to the New World

Crops	Animals	Diseases

10 **Digital literacy** Do a web search:

- to add information to the table in exercise 8;
- to find information about the items which were traded to the New World from Europe. Organize the information in the table below.

From the New World to Europe

Crops	Animals	Diseases

11 **Critical thinking** Answer the questions.

- 1 What were some of the positive and negative consequences of the Columbian Exchange?
- 2 How would your life be different if the Columbian Exchange had never occurred?

### PART 3 – SORTING OUT

12 **Focus on you** Work in a small group to learn more about one of the early European explorers. Research the explorer's reasons for travelling, the route they took, discoveries made while on their voyage, and the effects their expedition had on Europe and other countries. Present the results of your research orally. Include visuals and maps with your presentation. You can organize your research and ideas using the following points:

- explorer (name, sponsoring country, time)
- reasons for travelling
- travel route
- discoveries made
- effects of the expedition
- other interesting facts