

Explorers

The Age of Exploration is a phrase that historians commonly use to refer to the time period between 1450 and 1700, during which a large number of explorers traveled the globe searching for new lands. This period forms a bridge between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment periods and is the reason why people sought to push the boundaries of what they knew of the world. Advances in shipbuilding, cartography (or mapmaking), and navigation made it possible for adventurous men to explore the world.

Most of the explorers we have record of come from Europe, although there were many explorers who did not originate from that continent. Bartolomeu Dias was one of the first explorers to venture out of the Mediterranean Sea. In 1481, Dias accompanied another explorer from Portugal to the Gold Coast in West Africa. Sailing under the patronage of King John II, they were attempting to find trade routes that would establish relations with India and the Islamic countries. A few years after this, Dias was made the leader of an expedition that was to sail around the south of Africa. Dias became the first European to sail around the southernmost tip of Africa. He named this the Cape of Storms, but King John II renamed it the Cape of Good Hope.

Christopher Columbus was an Italian explorer who spent a great deal of time making plans to navigate the globe. He studied the ancients, and he believed he could reach India by sailing west across the Atlantic Ocean. He tried to convince King John II of Portugal to support his efforts. Once Dias returned with the news that the Cape of Good Hope could be rounded, the king lost interest in supporting Columbus' project. Columbus then asked the king and queen of Spain to provide him the means for his trip. The queen did not want to, but King Ferdinand eventually gave in. In August of 1492, Columbus sailed from Europe. In October of the same year, he reached land and discovered the islands of the Bahamas. After several other voyages, Columbus mapped a large portion of what is now known as Latin America. Contrary to popular belief, it is unlikely that Columbus reached North America.

Another explorer named Ferdinand Magellan is very famous for his undertaking of a voyage to sail around the world. His first seafaring voyage was a trip to India for the Portugal when he was twenty-five years old. The Spanish could not travel to India the way that the Portuguese did because of trade regulations, so they decided to seek out a westward route. An explorer named Balboa had crossed the Atlantic Ocean and crossed the Isthmus of Panama to sail into the Pacific Ocean. Magellan left Spain in September of 1519 with five ships in his command. They sailed across the Atlantic Ocean. On December 13th, they landed in what is now known as Rio de Janeiro. In late October of the next year, the ships reached a waterway that runs through Chile and is now called the Strait of Magellan. Two ships were sent to do further explorations of the area, and the other three continued onward.

Name _____

Date _____

Explorers (Cont'd)

In April of 1521, Magellan died from being shot by an arrow from the natives of an island in the Philippines. On September 6, 1522, the commander of the last remaining ship arrived in Spain and completed the first circumnavigation of the globe by water.

Henry Hudson was an English explorer who made many sailing expeditions for various trading companies, seeking to expand their products and markets. Historians believe that Hudson was sailing on ships from the age of sixteen and learned the basics of seafaring. At the age of thirty, he was hired to find a northeast passage to China. He made several ventures into the Arctic Ocean and each time found the way was blocked by ice. He eventually tried to locate a southwest passage through North America. He landed in Delaware Bay and the New York Harbor. The Hudson River in that area is named after him. He made another voyage wherein he explored Iceland, Greenland, and Labrador.

Due to the courage of these explorers, trade routes were established all over the globe and discoveries of all kinds were made. Each trip these explorers made added more and more features to the globe and increased the knowledge humans had of foreign lands. The efforts of explorers rapidly brought Europe into an era filled with new ideas and new studies.

Name _____

Date _____

Explorers Questions

Matching:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. Christopher Columbus | a. is very famous for his undertaking of a voyage to sail around the world |
| _____ 2. Ferdinand Magellan | b. became the first European to sail around the southernmost tip of Africa. |
| _____ 5. Bartolomeu Dias | c. funded Christopher Columbus |
| _____ 6. Henry Hudson | d. was an Italian explorer who spent a great deal of time making plans to navigate the globe |
| _____ 7. King Ferdinand | e. He made several ventures into the Arctic Ocean |

Multiple Choice:

- King John renamed the Cape of Storm and called it:
 - The Cape of Good Cheer
 - The Cape of Good Hope
 - The Cape of San Francisco
 - The Strait of Magellan
- Advances in all of these fields EXCEPT this one made it possible for adventurers to explore the world:
 - shipbuilding
 - navigation
 - cartography
 - tailoring
- Most explorations were an attempt to reach this country:
 - Chile
 - Russia
 - India
 - Japan

Name _____

Date _____

Explorers Answers

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- | | |
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