

Great Voyages of Discovery

If YOU were there...

Your uncle is a Portuguese ship captain who has just come back from a long sea voyage. He shows you a map of the new lands he has seen. He tells wonderful stories about strange plants and animals. You are studying to become a carpenter, but you wonder if you might like to be an explorer like your uncle instead.

How would you decide which career to choose?

BUILDING BACKGROUND A spirit of adventure swept across Europe in the 1400s. Improved maps showed new lands. Travelers' tales encouraged people to dream of finding riches and adventure.

Desire and Opportunity to Explore

Why did people seek to explore the world in the 1400s? First, they wanted Asian spices. Italy and Egypt controlled the trade routes to Asia, charging very high prices for spices. As a result, many countries wanted to find a direct sea route that led to Asia.

This photo shows replicas of the three ships that Christopher Columbus used to sail to the Americas in 1492.



What You Will Learn...

Main Ideas

1. Europeans had a desire and opportunity to explore in the 1400s and 1500s.
2. Portuguese and Spanish explorers discovered new trade routes, lands, and people.
3. The English and French claimed land in North America.

The Big Idea

European explorers brought knowledge, wealth, and influence to their countries.

Key Terms and People

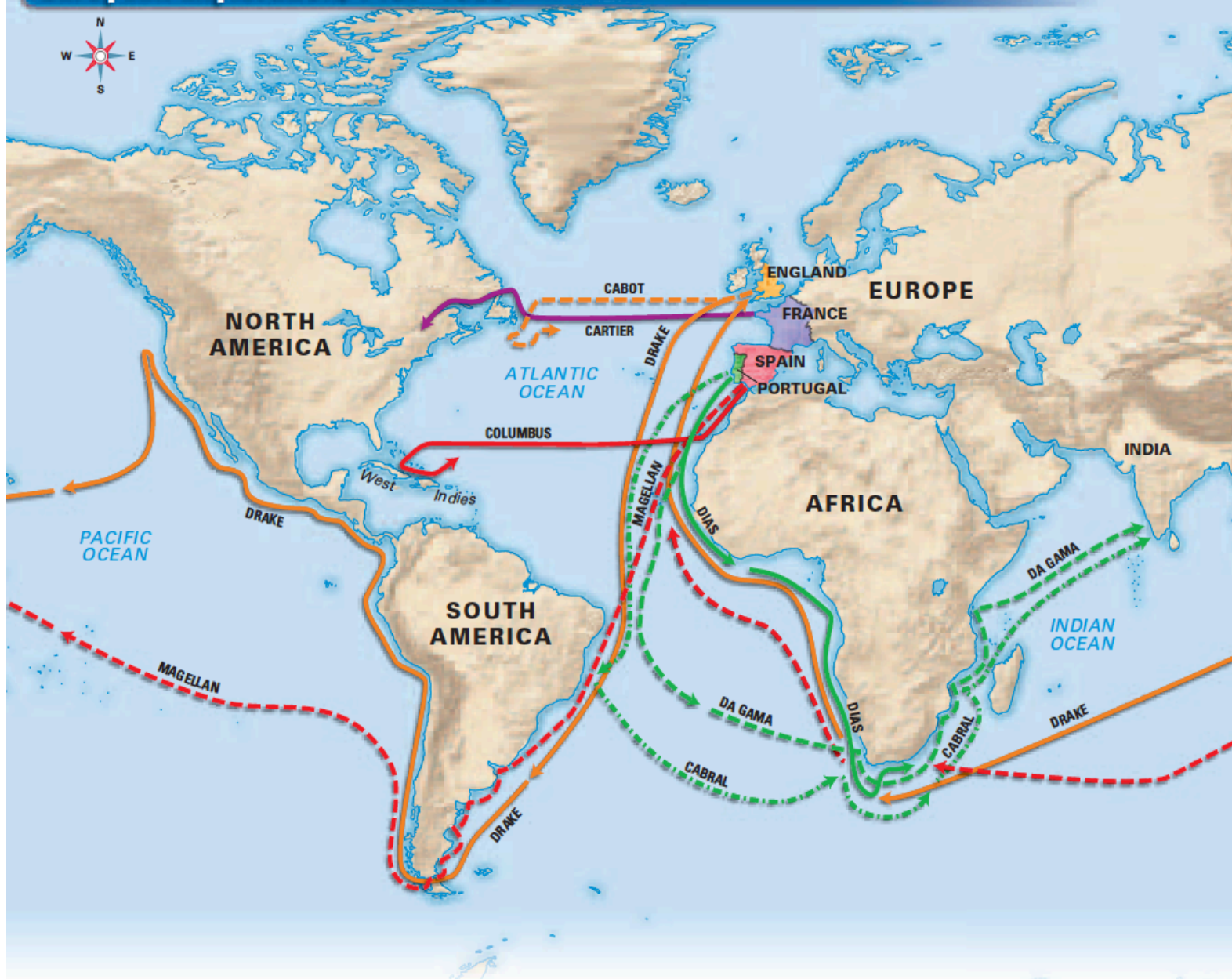
- Henry the Navigator, *p. 595*
Vasco da Gama, *p. 595*
Christopher Columbus, *p. 595*
Ferdinand Magellan, *p. 595*
circumnavigate, *p. 595*
Sir Francis Drake, *p. 596*
Spanish Armada, *p. 596*

TAKING NOTES

As you read, make a list of the major explorers of the Age of Exploration and their discoveries. You can use a chart like the one below, adding rows as needed.

Explorer	Discovery

European Exploration, 1487–1580



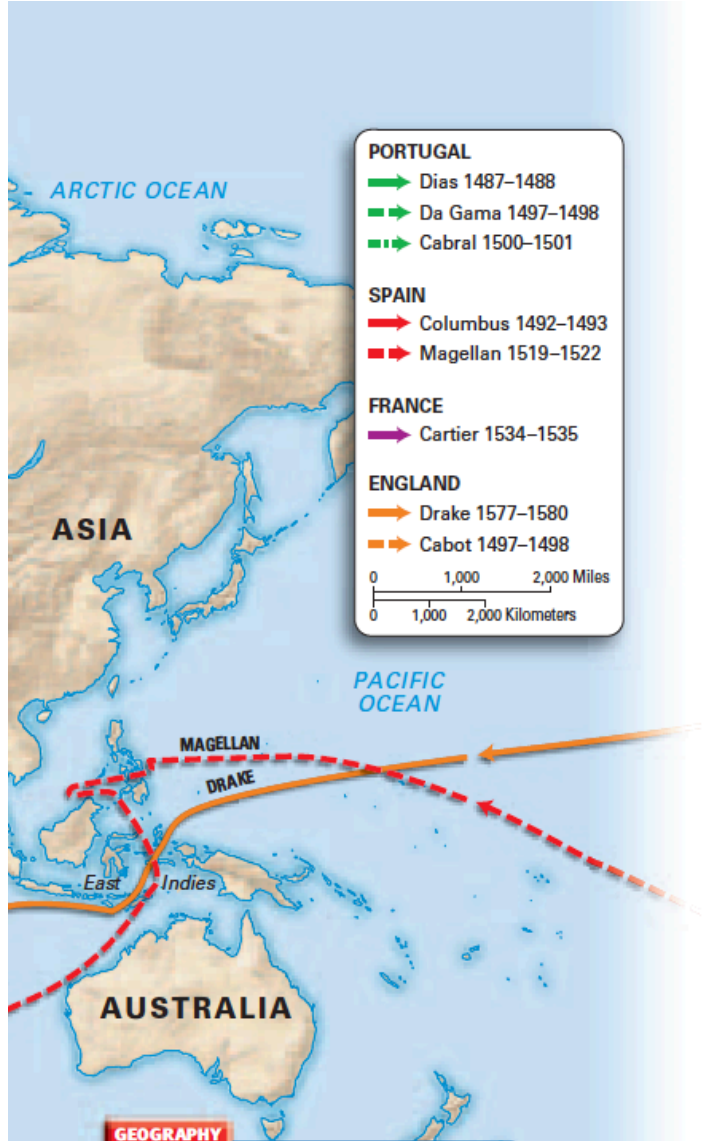
This way they could get spices without having to buy from Italian or Egyptian traders.

Religion gave explorers another reason to set sail. European Christians wanted to convert more people to their religion to counteract the spread of Islam in Europe, Africa, and Asia.

Advances in technology made exploration possible. Sailors used the astrolabe and the compass to find routes to faraway places. More accurate maps allowed sailors to sail from port to port without having to stay right along the coast the entire way.

Other advances came in shipbuilding. The Portuguese began building ships called caravels (KER-uh-velz). Caravels used triangular sails that, unlike traditional square sails, allowed ships to sail against the wind. By replacing oars on the ship's sides with rudders at the back of the ship, the Portuguese also greatly improved steering. The new caravels helped Portugal take the lead in the European Age of Exploration.

READING CHECK Finding Main Ideas What advances in technology aided exploration?



GEOGRAPHY SKILLS INTERPRETING MAPS

- 1. Location** What continent did all of these explorers come from?
- 2. Movement** Which explorers' expeditions went all the way around the world?

Portuguese and Spanish Explorations

Prince **Henry the Navigator** was responsible for much of Portugal's success on the seas. He built an observatory and a navigation school to teach sailors how to find their way on long ocean voyages. Some Portuguese sailors sailed south along the coast of Africa. In 1498 **Vasco da Gama** sailed around Africa and landed on the west coast of India. A sea route to Asia had been found.

Reaching the Americas

An Italian sailor, **Christopher Columbus**, thought he had already figured out a shorter way to Asia—sailing west across the Atlantic. He told the Spanish monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella his plan and promised them riches, new territory, and Catholic converts if they funded his journey. Isabella agreed.

In August 1492 Columbus set sail with 88 men and three small ships. On October 12, he and his crew landed on an island in the Bahamas. Columbus believed he had reached Asia. He didn't realize the continent of North America lay in front of him.

A Portuguese explorer later discovered South America by accident while trying to sail around Africa. Then, in 1519, **Ferdinand Magellan** (muh-JEHL-uhn) led a voyage around South America's southern tip. He continued sailing into the Pacific even though his ships were low on food and water. Although Magellan was killed before he could complete the voyage, his crew became the first to **circumnavigate**, or go all the way around, the globe.

Conquest of the "New World"

Spanish explorers called the Americas the "New World." When they arrived in these lands in the early 1500s, the Aztec Empire in Mexico and the Inca Empire in Peru were at the height of their powers. The Spanish saw these empires as good sources of gold and silver. They also wanted to convert the native peoples to Christianity.

Having better weapons, the Spanish quickly conquered the Aztecs and Incas. The Spanish also brought new diseases that over time killed possibly three-quarters of the native peoples. Soon, Spain ruled large parts of North and South America.

READING CHECK Identifying Points of View

Why do you think European explorers called the Americas the "New World"?

The English and French in America

England and France also wanted to find a new route to Asia. After Spain and Portugal gained control of the southern routes, the English and French sent explorers to look for a waterway through North America. Though these explorers did not find such a passage, they claimed land in North America for England and France.

Competing for Land and Wealth

Besides looking for a route to Asia, England hoped to find riches in the New World. But Spain controlled the gold and silver of the former Aztec and Inca empires. When English sailors, such as **Sir Francis Drake**, began stealing treasure from Spanish transport ships, Spain became furious.

In 1588 Spain sent 130 ships to attack England. This fleet, called the **Spanish Armada**, was part of Spain's large navy. But the English had faster ships and better guns. They defeated the Armada and saved England from invasion. Spain now had a rival for rule of the seas.

A New European Worldview

The voyages of discovery changed the way Europeans thought about their world. The explorations brought new knowledge about geography and proved some old beliefs wrong. Europeans learned that the Americas were a separate landmass from Asia. Geographers made more accurate maps that reflected this new knowledge.

As Europeans studied the new maps and laid claim to new lands, they saw the potential for great wealth. They began to establish colonies and set up new trade networks. These actions would have wide-ranging consequences.

READING CHECK Generalizing Why did France and England send explorers to America?

SUMMARY AND PREVIEW European explorers sailed on voyages of discovery in the 1400s and 1500s. They found wealth, converts for Christianity, and new continents. In the next section, you will read how these discoveries affected peoples around the world.

Section 2 Assessment

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Online Quiz

KEYWORD: SN6 HP20

Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

- Describe** What were caravels? How were they better than what they replaced?
 - Explain** What motivated Europeans to explore the world in the 1400s and 1500s?
- Identify** Who led the first voyage to **circumnavigate** the globe?
 - Analyze** How did the Spanish conquer the Aztec and Inca empires?
- Recall** Where did the English and French look for a route to Asia?
 - Draw Conclusions** How did power shift in Europe after the defeat of the **Spanish Armada**?
 - Evaluate** When claiming land in the New World for themselves, Europeans ignored the ownership rights of native peoples. What is your opinion of this?

Critical Thinking

- Drawing Conclusions** Add another column to the chart you created. In this last column, write a statement drawing a conclusion about the significance of each discovery.

Explorer	Discovery	Significance

FOCUS ON SPEAKING

- Collecting Information** Review your notes and this section. Select what you consider to be the three most important events of the European Age of Exploration. Describe these in the second column of your chart.