



Biographical Briefing on Hernan Cortes

Directions: Each group member should read a section of this handout and lead a discussion on the “Stop Here and Discuss” questions. This information should be used to help you create monuments to Hernan Cortes from the European and native inhabitants’ perspective.

Hernan Cortes was born about 1484 in Medellin, in what is now central Spain. His father was a retired military officer, so his family was *hidalgo* (minor nobility), though not wealthy. Hernan was sent to school to become a lawyer, but dropped out after 2 years to become a soldier instead, which deeply disappointed his family. Working in Seville, he heard about many journeys to the “New World” (North, Central, and South America) and was interested in going on an expedition to share in the enormous wealth found there. He traveled to Hispaniola (now Haiti) and worked as a gold miner, lawyer, and treasury clerk. He helped conquer Cuba, and settled there as a wealthy landowner. While there, he tried to get appointed to lead his own expedition, hoping to gain money and rewards. In 1518 he finally got his wish. The governor of Cuba, Diego de Velasquez, asked Cortes to lead an expedition to create colonies (territories controlled by Spain) for Velasquez on the mainland. Cortes finally saw his chance to break free from his boss, set up his own colonies, and keep the wealth for himself.

Stop here
and discuss



- *When and where was Cortes born?*
- *How did Cortes disappoint his family?*
- *Why did Cortes want to lead an expedition?*

Velasquez gave Cortes 11 ships, 100 sailors, 508 soldiers, 6 horses, and 14 small cannons for his journey. Cortes left Cuba in November of 1518, sailed to Cozumel, an island off the Yucatan peninsula, then north around the peninsula to Mexico’s east coast. From visiting villages along the coast, he learned of the powerful Aztecs who ruled the area. Cortes knew he would have to conquer them to rule Mexico. In the coastal town of Veracruz on Mexico’s eastern coast, Cortes burned all his ships so his crew, afraid to go further into unexplored territory, could not turn back. Cortes forced them to march west, to the center of Mexico. They headed to Tenochtitlan, the Aztec capital. After traveling 400 miles over rough terrain in tropical heat, and after fighting many battles with fearless Aztec warriors, Cortes and his men, called *conquistadors* (conquerors), arrived in the capital on November 8, 1519.

Stop here
and discuss



- *What was Cortes given to take on his journey?*
- *How did Cortes prevent his men from returning home?*
- *What hardships did Cortes and his men endure on the journey to Tenochtitlan?*

Moctezuma, the Aztec ruler, came to meet Cortes, dressed in his finest clothing and carried by his subjects. He offered Cortes an elegant place to stay, fancy meals, and beautiful gifts of featherwork, embroidered cloth, and gold. Cortes said, "We Spaniards suffer from a disease that only gold can cure." Cortes and his men lived there for weeks before they kidnapped Moctezuma and held the leader for ransom. In the many battles that followed, thousands of Aztecs were killed. Cortes overthrew the Aztec empire, ignoring Velasquez's order to return to Cuba. By controlling the vast Aztec empire and putting the surviving Aztecs to work for him, Cortes was able to explore and expand the empire to most of Mexico and into what is now Guatemala and Honduras. ~~He gained fame, power, and gold for himself, and contributed to Spain's wealth by exporting raw materials, such as gold, silver, and farm products to Europe.~~ Spain, now the richest country in Europe, sent missionaries to convert the Aztecs and other native people to Christianity. Spain also gave large grants of free farm land, called *encomiendas*, to Spanish gentlemen who settled in Mexico. With Aztec slave labor, these men could become very wealthy.

Stop here
and discuss



- *How did Moctezuma treat Cortes?*
- *How did Cortes treat Moctezuma?*
- *What did Cortes get for himself from this expedition?*

The Aztec empire was an advanced civilization at the time Cortes arrived. The extensive Aztec empire included a complex system of roads and canals, beautiful buildings and gardens, busy marketplaces, and huge stone pyramid temples. They had developed picture writing, agriculture, and astronomy. Their religion was based on a belief that all events were fated to happen and that their gods would soon return (from the afterlife) in human form. When the Spanish appeared on the coast for the first time, the Aztecs were confused, and some believed the Spanish might be gods. But the Spanish, of course, were only humans, and under their rule, the Aztec empire was crumbling. European diseases like measles and smallpox killed hundreds of thousands of Aztecs. Aztec culture was destroyed when the people were forced to become Christians and stop their religious practice of human sacrifices. The Aztecs' spirit was broken when they were forced into slavery on Spanish *encomiendas*. Soon, only the ruins of their empire were left.

Stop here
and discuss



- *What scientific advancements had the Aztecs made?*
- *Who did some Aztecs believe the Spanish to be?*
- *What killed the Aztecs?*

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Hernando Cortés

As conqueror of the Aztec Empire in Mexico, explorer of Guatemala and Honduras, and leader of the first expeditions to California, Spanish conquistador Hernando Cortés contributed significantly to the establishment of European domination in America. His conquests helped shape the history of the southwestern United States and Mexico.



Cortés was born in 1485 to a poor, noble family in Medellín (in the dry area of Extremadura, Spain), the son of Martín Cortés de Monroy, a military captain, and Catalina Pizarro Altamirano. Cortés attended the University of Salamanca, where he studied to become a lawyer. He did not complete his studies, however, deciding instead to go to the New World and make his fortune. He left for Santo Domingo on a fleet of merchant ships in 1504. For six years, Cortés lived as a landowner in Santo Domingo. In 1511, he joined Diego Velázquez' expedition to Cuba. For his participation, Cortés received land in Cuba and lived there until 1518.

In 1518, Velázquez, now governor of Cuba, appointed Cortés to lead a mission to the unexplored lands to the west, the area now known as Mexico. Several Spanish ships had landed in Mexico before Cortés' expedition. The reports of wealth and gold tempted Cortés and his followers, although they also wished to conquer new lands for their king and find new civilizations that they hoped to convert to Christianity. For all of those reasons, Cortés funded a mission to Mexico with his own personal fortune and arrived in Cozumel, off the coast of Mexico, on March 12, 1519.

Upon arrival on the Mexican coast, Cortés cruised the Yucatan Peninsula. From encounters with the Mayan people living in that area of Mexico, he began to hear of an empire based in central Mexico. The emperor, Montezuma II, sent emissaries to observe the Spaniards and after discovering that their main concern was gold, gave them many valuable gold gifts. Cortés decided to conquer that wealthy and populous civilization in the name of the king of Spain for its great wealth and to spread Christianity in a new country.

That civilization, known today as the Aztec Empire, centered in the city of Tenochtitlán on Lake Texcoco. From about the year 1000, the indigenous populations of central Mexico attained an advanced level of knowledge in such areas as astronomy, architecture, painting, agricultural methods, literature, and philosophy. The Aztecs were originally a nomadic, warlike culture from northern Mexico. Starting in the 14th century, they adapted the civilization of central Mexico and gained power through alliances with the kingdoms already established around Lake Texcoco. In the middle of the 15th century, the Aztec emperors began to seek tribute from other areas of Mexico. They also sent out colonists to spread their culture. Living off their tribute and their very productive system of agriculture, the Aztecs built the enormous, well-planned metropolis of Tenochtitlán (present-day Mexico City). Several great Aztec emperors had succeeded in conquering much of central Mexico before a weaker ruler, Montezuma, came to power.

A quick and decisive action by Montezuma would have crushed the Spanish force of 400 men. He delayed, however, supposedly due to a belief that Cortés and the Spaniards, with their horses, beards, and white skin, fulfilled omens predicting the return of the god Quetzalcoatl from exile. An alliance with the Tlaxcalans, rebels

against their Aztec overlords, brought Cortés information and troops that would help him defeat the Aztecs.

On November 18, 1519, the Spaniards entered Tenochtitlán through an eight-mile long causeway that led across Lake Texcoco to the island city. Montezuma greeted them wearing sandals with golden soles and jewel-encrusted uppers. Cortés committed grave errors against the Aztec culture by looking at that godlike ruler directly and attempting to embrace him. They exchanged gifts: Cortés giving glass beads, and the Aztec emperor presenting his conqueror with a necklace with eight solid gold pendants in the shape of large crustaceans.

After such an easy entrance into the well-fortified city, Cortés imprisoned Montezuma in his own palace, and unknown assailants, perhaps his own people, soon killed the ruler. The empire lost more leaders, as many Aztec nobles were murdered by Spaniards led by Pedro de Alvarado, trapped as they danced at a religious celebration in an enclosed plaza. A smallpox epidemic also decimated the Aztecs.

By 1521, the Spaniards had destroyed Tenochtitlán, imprisoning the last emperor, Cuauhtemoc. Cortés and his followers tortured Cuauhtemoc for information on the lost treasure of the Aztec emperors but could not extract the knowledge they sought. Cortés dragged Cuauhtemoc along on a failed attempt to conquer south to Honduras, finally hanging the successor to the Aztec Empire in 1524.

Cortés' violent and self-aggrandizing approach to conquering the Aztec Empire earned him a bad reputation with King Charles V of Spain, who appointed Antonio de Mendoza, not Cortés, the first viceroy of New Spain, as Mexico was now called. Cortés only retained the land and title of the marquis of the Valley of Oaxaca, but he remained an incredibly wealthy man.

Mendoza and Cortés also competed for exploration of the Pacific coast of Mexico. Cortés built ships in Acapulco and sent five expeditions north in search of pearls and gold. Cortés' ships discovered La Paz, at the south end of Baja California, in 1533, although at that time, Baja was thought to be an island. Cortés led another expedition, convincing 400 settlers and 300 slaves to join him. Most of the hopeful colonists died of starvation, attacks from the indigenous people living in the region, and shipwrecks. A fifth expedition led by Francisco de Ulloa navigated the Sea of Cortés in 1539 and explored the peninsula of Baja California, finally moving up the coast of the Pacific against foul winds and currents. That final expedition disappeared, leaving Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo, who was supported by Cortés' rival Mendoza, to discover what it is now the state of California, in 1542.

After those humiliations, Cortés returned to Spain to beg the king for financial aid and recognition. After several years leading expeditions to Africa, he died near Seville, Spain on December 2, 1547.

Further Reading

Innes, Hammond. *The Conquistadors*. London: Collins, 1969; Ober, Frederick, *Hernando Cortés*, 1905; Rosen, Harry, and Irwin Blacker, eds., *The Golden Conquistadores*, 1960; Weber, David J. *The Spanish Frontier in North America*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992.

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Biographical Briefing on John Cabot

Directions: Each group member should read a section of this handout and lead a discussion on the “Stop Here and Discuss” questions. This information should be used to help you create monuments to John Cabot from the European and native inhabitants’ perspectives.

According to legend, John Cabot was born in ~~1450 to English parents living in~~ ~~Genoa~~, a busy Italian port. He moved to the Italian city-state of Venice and became a citizen there in 1476. He was an accomplished sailor and had a dream of crossing the Atlantic Ocean to reach Asia. He knew he would need wealthy backers to pay for the trip. In 1484 he was sent by his employers to be their trade representative in Bristol, England. There, he became a trusted and popular businessman. In 1493, he heard of Columbus’s discovery of a sea route to what he thought were islands off the coast of Asia. Cabot asked a group of British merchants to sponsor his ~~expedition to mainland China on a more northerly route than had previously been taken~~. These merchants and the English king, Henry VII, agreed to sponsor Cabot’s voyage. They wanted to ~~beat Spain in finding a route to China~~.

Stop here
and discuss



- *When and where was Cabot born?*
- *Where did Cabot hope to sail to?*
- *Why did the British merchants and king agree to help Cabot?*

Cabot left early on the morning of May 2, 1497. He had only one small ship, called the *Matthew*, and a crew of just 18 men. Though Cabot’s ship’s log was lost, some information about his voyage was reported in newspapers after his return. According to these accounts, first Cabot sailed down England’s Avon River, out to the Atlantic Ocean. Then he traveled west, around the southern coast of Ireland. When Cabot was past Ireland, he turned north, and then west again when he was in line with the northernmost part of Ireland. On June 24, just below Greenland, Cabot sighted land in the west and ordered the ship to turn southwest. He traveled about another 900 miles and stopped on land along the way. Though he saw no people, he saw signs of trees cut by axes and snares made to catch animals. Cabot planted the flags of England and Venice, and then left. He reported seeing large rocky islands, so it is thought that he must have been on what we now call Newfoundland and Nova Scotia.

Stop here
and discuss



- *How many ships and crew members did Cabot take with him?*
- *What did Cabot find when he landed?*
- *Where do historians think Cabot landed?*

Though Cabot returned without proof that he had landed in China and without any riches, King Henry was excited that Cabot had found land. He sent Cabot on another trip, with more ships and men, in 1498. Cabot sailed much further north and was unable to handle the fierce Arctic weather. Before long, he had turned southwest again and failed again to find mainland China. He returned home to England in disappointment. King Henry and the wealthy merchants who had backed Cabot lost all interest in finding a sea route to China. They were convinced that such a route did not exist, and they did not want to waste any more money on wild ideas. Later, when it was discovered that the continent of North America lay between Europe and China, England was able to claim ownership of the areas of North America that Cabot had reached. They set up colonies (land they settled and ruled) there and eventually used the natural resources to create profitable trade between England and its colonies. For example, the colonists sent wood to England, and England sent back finished lumber. Later, those colonies became the first United States.

Stop here
and discuss



- *What happened on Cabot's second trip?*
- *What did King Henry decide to do after Cabot's second journey?*
- *What did Cabot's trip ultimately do for England?*

At the time of Cabot's voyage, native peoples were already living in North America. Cabot knew this because he found their traps, wooden needles, and cut trees. ~~Nevertheless, he claimed the land for England and Venice by putting down the two flags.~~ King Henry had told Cabot to search for areas "unknown to all Christians." At the time, most Europeans believed that only Christians were civilized. The native inhabitants weren't Christian, but had their own religion based on reverence (deep respect) for nature. So missionaries from Europe were sent to try convert the native peoples to Christianity—by force in some cases. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, English colonists took much of the native inhabitants' land. This forced many of them to move west, while others were enslaved. Many native inhabitants ~~died from diseases~~ that were brought from Europe, like measles and smallpox.

Stop here
and discuss

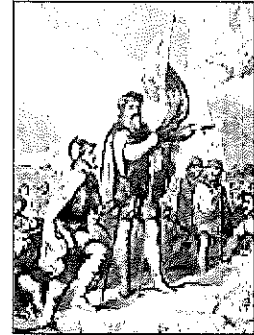


- *What proof of native habitation did Cabot find?*
- *Why did England consider the area that Cabot reached as its land?*
- *How did English settlement impact the native inhabitants' way of life?*

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John Cabot

John Cabot's historic voyage to North America in 1497 became the basis for England's claim to the New World and led to the establishment of the British colonies. Ironically, Cabot never knew that he was the first European since the Vikings to step on the uncharted American continent—he thought he had landed on the coast of Asia.



Cabot was born about 1450 in Genoa, Italy. His real name was Giovanni Caboto, although he later anglicized it to John Cabot. When he was still a boy, his family moved to Venice, Italy, which was one of the great shipping ports of Europe at that time.

As a young man, Cabot worked as a sailor, mapmaker, and navigator. Eventually, he became the captain of his own ship and sailed the Mediterranean Sea between Venice and Egypt, trading Italian goods for spices, silks, and jewels from the Far East. Curious as to where the Oriental merchandise came from, Cabot traveled on at least one occasion to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, where Arabian merchants brought the precious goods after long, overland journeys from Asia and India.

Cabot was convinced that it would be easier and cheaper to import Eastern goods to Europe by sea. Other people had the same idea, too, but most thought that the only way to get to Asia from Europe was to sail around the African continent and continue eastward—a very long and perilous journey. Cabot, like Christopher Columbus, believed that it was possible for a ship to reach Asia by sailing west, instead of east.

By the mid-1480s, Cabot had moved with his wife and children to England. He had tried to persuade the kings of Spain and Portugal to commission a voyage to Asia, but they turned him down. Then, in 1496, he convinced King Henry VII of England to grant him a charter to sail west and claim new lands for the English Crown. His plan was to sail farther north on the Atlantic Ocean than Columbus had in 1492, which Cabot believed was a faster way to Asia.

In 1496, Cabot set sail from Bristol, England but was forced to turn back because of poor weather and dissension among the crew. On May 2, 1497, he set off again, on a single small ship called the *Matthew* (named after his Italian wife Mattea), with a crew of 18. He headed out directly west, around the coast of Ireland, and then stayed on a northwest course. Five weeks into the trip, on June 24, he sighted land and went ashore.

No one knows exactly where on the North American continent Cabot landed, but it was probably somewhere in what is now known as Newfoundland or Nova Scotia. Cabot planted the English and Venetian flags on the "New Founde Lande," and he claimed it in the name of the English king. He was convinced that he had landed somewhere on the eastern coast of Asia.

Cabot and his crew explored inland for a short distance. They did not discover the source of Oriental spices and jewels as they had hoped, but they did find verdant land and fertile fishing grounds. Although he and his crew did not see any people or animals, they saw signs that the land was inhabited, including cut trees and the remnants of campfires. Cabot returned to the ship and sailed eastward, exploring the coastline. He remained convinced

that he had found the Asian continent, or an island off the coast of Asia, and that further exploration westward was necessary. With only one small ship and dwindling supplies, however, he decided to return home. After a quick, 15-day crossing across the Atlantic, the *Matthew* sailed back into Bristol in early August.

Cabot was greeted in England as a returning hero. He had no trouble convincing Henry VII to commission five ships for another, bigger exploration. Cabot's plan was to return to his original landfall and continue sailing southwest until he found the source of "all the spices in the world," as Marco Polo had written about the Orient.

In 1498, Cabot's fleet set sail from Bristol once again. One ship was damaged soon after they left and anchored in Ireland. The fate of the other four ships remains a mystery. Some historians believe that Cabot reached North America and explored the eastern coast of the continent before he died. Most historians, however, think Cabot died at sea, when his fleet was hit by storms.

In any event, it appears certain that Cabot perished without knowing his true value to history. Although his dream of a westward route to Asia went unfulfilled, his journey spurred others, including his son Sebastian, to follow him, and continue the exploration of the North American continent.

Further Reading

Berger, Joseph, *Discoverers of the New World*, 1960; Morison, Samuel E., *The European Discovery of America*, 1971; Pope, Peter, *The Many Landfalls of John Cabot*, 1997.

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Biographical Briefing on Francisco Pizarro

Directions: Each group member should read a section of this handout and lead a discussion on the “Stop Here and Discuss” questions. This information should be used to help you create monuments to Francisco Pizarro from the European and native inhabitants’ perspectives.

Francisco Pizarro was born in 1475, in Trujillo, Spain. His father, a *hidalgo* (minor Spanish nobleman), and his mother were not married. Because children born out of wedlock were considered “illegitimate” at the time, he was not treated as his father’s son. He grew up without much money and with no education. He worked as a swineherder (pig herder), but wanted more excitement and a chance to make more money. In the early 1500s, he sailed on Spanish-sponsored expeditions of exploration in the western hemisphere. He settled in Panama and lived there for many years as a magistrate (local judge). In all the years he lived there, he and his friends heard rumors that the lands to the south were controlled by a wealthy empire of native inhabitants. They had heard of the conquest of the Aztec empire to their north in Mexico by Hernando Cortes’ (a famous explorer), and they dreamed of becoming as powerful and wealthy as Cortes. Together, ~~three men—Pizarro, his friend Diego de Almagro, and a priest, Hernando de Luque—made a~~ contract. They agreed to explore those southern lands, and anything they found would be divided equally among them.

Stop here
and discuss



- *When and where was Pizarro born?*
- *Where did Pizarro settle and live for many years?*
- *What did Pizarro and his friends dream of accomplishing?*

Pizarro led three expeditions to the western coast of South America. On the first two, he ran into problems with weather and sailors who mutinied (rebelled), but he did make contact with the empire of the Incas. Pizarro was impressed by the gold, silver, jewels, and other riches they had. Pizarro received support from King Charles V of Spain to make a full-scale expedition in January, 1531. He left San Blas, Panama, with 180 men, 27 horses, and a few cannons in three ships. He sailed south along the coast, landing at San Mateo Bay, just north of the equator. He and his men took over a year to march overland to Tumbes, a major Incan city Pizarro had visited before. They arrived in Tumbes in April, 1532, and found it in ruins, destroyed in an Incan civil war. Next, they headed to Cajamarca to negotiate with the leader of the rebel forces. ~~Pizarro kidnapped the leader, held him for ransom (“enough gold to fill a room 17 feet by 21 feet as high as he could reach”), then killed him once the ransom was paid.~~ Now Pizarro and his forces headed for Cuzco, the capital of the Inca Empire. There they made the Incan ruler their puppet (he did whatever they told him to in order to stay alive), and Pizarro ruled the Inca for almost 10 years.

Stop here
and discuss



- *How many expeditions did Pizarro lead to find the Incan empire?*
- *What supplies did King Charles V of Spain give Pizarro?*
- *How did Pizarro take control of the Inca?*

Pizarro, like many other explorers, was searching for gold, silver, jewels—anything that could make him wealthy. When he found all these, he became a rich and powerful leader. But Pizarro also made many enemies. These included the Incas, who resented his taking over their empire; his business partners, who argued over ruling and treasures; and his soldiers, who risked their lives and earned little for it. ~~Pizarro was assassinated by soldiers loyal to Almagro in 1541.~~ Though he created much misfortune for himself, he earned immense wealth for Spain. Because of its trade in Incan gold and silver, Spain became the richest country in Europe. Archaeologists (people who study the remains of past civilizations) have even found Inca-Spanish gold in India. Spain also received enormous prestige for conquering such a powerful empire with so few soldiers and weapons. Soon, because of Pizarro's conquest of the Incas, the Spanish language, religion, and culture would spread throughout the continent of South America.

Stop here
and discuss



- *What successes did Pizarro experience after his expedition?*
- *What were the downsides of Pizarro's success?*
- *How did Spain benefit as a result of Pizarro's conquest of the Incas?*

While Pizarro's exploration benefitted Spain, his presence devastated the Inca Empire. The Incas were an extremely advanced civilization. Pizarro wrote that Cuzco, the capital of the Inca Empire, was "so beautiful and has such fine buildings that it would be remarkable even in Spain." They had an extensive road system, with rope bridges connecting high mountain passes. The hillsides were terraced for efficient farming, and farmers were organized into agricultural collectives, growing enough food for the Incas and surplus (extra) for trading. The Incas built canals to bring water throughout the empire, and buildings were constructed of gigantic cut stones. But the Inca's religion was based on a belief that all events were fated (destined) to happen and that their gods would soon return in human form. When Pizarro and his men—the first Europeans the Incas had seen—appeared in their empire, the Incas, already weakened by a divisive civil war, were confused. Some believed the Spanish might be gods. They soon saw the Spanish were as human as they were. The Incas were forced by the Spanish to labor in the gold and silver mines until they died from exhaustion or starvation. Common European diseases, like measles and smallpox, infected and killed them. Their fierce warriors could not conquer the mightier guns and horses of the Spanish soldiers. The Inca Empire crumbled.

Stop here
and discuss



- *In what ways was the Inca Empire an advanced civilization?*
- *Why were the Incas confused by the arrival of the Spanish?*
- *What happened to the Incas after the arrival of the Spanish?*

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Francisco Pizarro

Francisco Pizarro was a Spanish conquistador who discovered and conquered the Inca Empire of Peru. Born in poverty in Spain, he became a fearless and ruthless expedition leader in the New World. With a small army of men, Pizarro was able to quickly subdue the Inca Empire during the Inca-Spanish War, opening the doors to the wealth of the New World and the subsequent destruction of its native cultures.



Pizarro was born around 1475 in Trujillo, Spain. He was the son of Gonzalo Pizarro, a soldier, and Francisca Gonzalez. His parents never married, and Pizarro was raised by his father's parents. His father had several illegitimate children, and Pizarro grew up with his brothers. He did not learn how to read or write, which later embarrassed him when he negotiated with Spanish nobles.

Lured by rumors of free land and kingdoms filled with treasures of gold and silver, Pizarro set off for the New World in the Americas in 1502 when he was 27 years old. Seven years later, he joined his first expedition of conquest. It was a disaster. The expedition's goal was to establish a Spanish colony in the area of Panama. Pizarro remained in charge of a small fort with a group of soldiers while the rest of the expedition left for reinforcements. They soon ran out of food, however, and there were too many men to fit on the two ships. Pizarro's solution was to evacuate the fort only after enough men had starved to death and the remainder could fill the ships. On the way out of Panama, one ship sank, but Pizarro's ship was rescued by Spanish explorer Vasco Núñez de Balboa, who was sailing in the area. Pizarro then serving as Balboa's chief lieutenant and was with him when Balboa discovered the Pacific Ocean in 1513 and claimed it for the Spanish Crown. From 1519 to 1523, Pizarro began to make his fortune as mayor of the new city of Panama.

Dissatisfied and restless, Pizarro wanted more wealth and glory. He was fascinated by rumors of a highly developed Indian kingdom, abounding with gold and silver, somewhere south of Panama. He knew the fantastic rumors had a high probability of being true because Hernando Cortés had conquered the wealthy Aztec Empire in Mexico only a few years before. Pizarro was joined by two partners, Diego de Almagro, a fellow explorer, and Hernando de Luque, a wealthy priest. After enlisting some men and outfitting ships, the expedition departed in November 1524. Attacked by Indians and low on supplies, however, the expedition had to return to Panama. They brought back some gold ornaments, which motivated them to mount a second expedition.

Pizarro became a legend on this second expedition in 1526. Once again stuck in a remote and hostile area with sick and starving men, he refused to board the rescue ship. He was said to have drawn a line in the sand with his sword, saying that poverty awaited for those who stepped over the line to the ship while riches would come to those who stayed with him behind the line. Thirteen men stayed with Pizarro. Eventually, Almagro sent a second ship, which Pizarro commandeered and sailed south.

Landing at Tumbes in Peru, Pizarro was astounded by the wealthy and highly developed Inca Empire. But when he returned to Panama, the governor refused to approve any future expeditions. Almagro and Luque agreed to send Pizarro to Spain to negotiate directly for permission from the Spanish king. Charles V was easily persuaded

by the gold and silver Pizarro presented to him and made Pizarro governor of any lands conquered in Peru. Almagro received a much lesser title, and he never forgot this bitter disappointment.

Pizarro returned to Panama with four of his brothers and a cousin. They set sail for the Inca Empire in Peru in January 1531 with 180 soldiers and two cannons. Pizarro arrived in the Inca Empire at its most vulnerable moment. The emperor, Atahualpa, was involved in a civil war with Huascar, his brother. Pizarro marched his 180 men into the heart of the mountainous kingdom, arriving to an encampment of 40,000 Inca soldiers. Ruthless with greed, he invited the emperor to meet him in November 1532. Escorted by 6,000 unarmed men, Atahualpa entered the small town to meet the apparently unthreatening Pizarro. All the Incas were massacred, except for the emperor. Pizarro's strategy was to rule through Atahualpa, as Cortés had ruled through the Aztec emperor in Mexico. Atahualpa had his own strategy, however. He offered a ransom for himself of a roomful of gold. He then had his brother Huascar assassinated so he could not be an alternate emperor. Pizarro countered by collecting the ransom and executing Atahualpa in 1533.

Pizarro, his brothers, and their men pillaged the Inca Empire of tremendous amounts of gold and silver, including 10 bars of silver that were 20 feet long, one foot wide, and several inches thick. With their society in chaos and fighting new European illness, the Inca population began to starve. Huascar's brother became emperor and regrouped the Inca Army. For the next 40 years, they launched a guerrilla war on the Spanish from the mountains.

By 1537, Almagro was more dissatisfied with the fact that he did not receive more recognition from the Spanish Crown. As revenge, he took the Inca town of Cuzco as his own. This forced Pizarro to attack. Pizarro's brother, Hernando, took the city and had Almagro executed. Four years later, retribution visited Pizarro. Almost 70 years old and enjoying his wealth in his palace in Lima, Peru, Pizarro was dining with his family and friends on June 26, 1541 when assassins hired by Almagro's son broke into the palace and stabbed him. He died making the sign of the cross with his own blood.

Further Reading

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Biographical Briefing on Ferdinand Magellan

Directions: Each group member should read a section of this handout and lead a discussion on the “Stop Here and Discuss” questions. This information should be used to help you create monuments to Ferdinand Magellan from the European and native inhabitants’ perspective.

Ferdinand Magellan was born around 1480 to a minor noble family in northern Portugal. He grew up on his family’s estate, where they raised cattle and grew grain and grapes. When he was 10, his father gave him to the King’s court to become a page (a knight’s assistant). This secured him a better education and kept him near powerful people who could help him with his future military career. Ferdinand became a soldier in 1505 and fought for the Portugal in India, the Moluccas, and Malacca (islands south of Asia). In 1512 Magellan returned to Portugal and was sent to fight in Morocco, where he was wounded in the leg. When he petitioned the king for his disability allowance, the king refused to pay. This made Ferdinand angry. In 1517, when he was about 37, he formally gave up his Portuguese citizenship, moved to Spain, and offered his services to the Spanish king.

Stop here
and discuss



- *When and where was Magellan born?*
- *What was his occupation?*
- *How did he end up as a Spanish citizen?*

Magellan believed that the Pacific Ocean was very narrow, about as wide as the Mediterranean Sea. He convinced the Spanish king to sponsor an expedition to find out. The king gave Magellan ~~five ships, a crew of about 275 men,~~ and supplies to explore the Pacific Ocean. In addition, he promised Magellan the governorship of any island claimed for Spain and 20 percent of any money the voyage earned. On August 10, 1519, Magellan and his crew sailed to the Canary Islands, Cape Verde, then across the Atlantic to Brazil. The crew stayed on the coast of lower Argentina for the winter. At the southernmost tip of South America, Magellan found a narrow waterway, called a *strait*, and sailed through it to the Pacific Ocean on November 28, 1520. Horrible storms and the fear of the unknown scared the crew. Magellan lost three captains and two ships through mutinies (rebellions). With only three ships left, Magellan traveled north as far as the equator, then west to cross the Pacific. It was wider than Magellan had ever imagined.

As they crossed the Pacific, the crew ran out of fresh food and water. They had only sawdust to eat. Many fell ill and died. On March 16, 1521, they stopped at the Philippines. ~~For 6 weeks, Magellan and his crew lived with the native inhabitants, trying to convert them to Christianity.~~ When some villages converted and others did not, the villagers began to fight about religion. Magellan and his crew joined in the battle, and ~~Magellan was killed on April 27, 1521.~~ His remaining ships and crew continued the journey. ~~They traded in Borneo and Timor, filling one ship,~~

with cloves (a spice). They started west across the Indian Ocean, rounding the Cape of Good Hope. On August 8, 1522, after a journey of 3 years and 42,000 miles, the first crew to ever sail around the globe landed at home in Seville, Spain. Only one ship and 35 original crew members remained.

Stop here
and discuss



- How wide did Magellan think the Pacific Ocean would be?
- Describe Magellan's voyage.
- How did Magellan die?

Even though Magellan's expedition had many losses, the ship's hold of cloves raised enough money to more than pay for the entire voyage. In addition to earning money, the expedition changed the way people saw the world. For the first time, people had undeniable proof that the world was round and the Pacific Ocean was large. This changed scientific thought and mapmaking. Spain gained enormous prestige (influence) by having sponsored the first expedition around the earth. This prestige, combined with Spain's military power and Christian missionaries, made Spain the strongest power in Europe at the time. Spain could make sure that only Spanish ships traded in many of the ports on important sea routes and that only Spanish priests spread the Christian religion to these port cities. Eventually, Spain was able to control more of the trade between Asia and Europe. By controlling this trade, Spain, its king, and its merchants became extremely wealthy.

Stop here
and discuss



- What paid for the cost of Magellan's journey?
- In what ways did Magellan's expedition change the way people saw the world?
- How did Spain benefit from the investment in Magellan's trip?

Magellan and his crew met many native inhabitants on their journey. In Tierra del Fuego, at the southernmost tip of South America, native inhabitants came to welcome the Europeans. The weather was cold, so they rubbed fish oil on their skin to keep off the rain and frost. They wore jewelry made from animal teeth and bones. They offered to trade colorful parrots or their plentiful supply of fish in exchange for rare European objects, such as mirrors, bells, leather laces, and pocketknives. In the Philippines, friendly locals wore beautiful gold and ivory jewelry when they came to greet Magellan's ships. They agreed to take a pound of iron for a pound of gold when the crew acted uninterested in the native peoples' gold. The native inhabitants taught the crew many of their words, including the names of their villages, islands, mountains, rivers, and seas. However, these names were ignored, and most places were renamed by the visiting Europeans. Most native inhabitants practiced a religion based on spirits in the nature around them. When they refused to convert to Christianity, they were either baptized (made members of the Church) forcibly or killed. By increasing Spain's power and control over the distant lands, Magellan's expedition led to the destruction of some native ways of life.

Stop here
and discuss



- What were some customs native inhabitants had?
- How did Magellan and his crew treat the native peoples they met?
- What happened when the people of the Philippines refused to convert to Christianity?

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Ferdinand Magellan

Ferdinand Magellan was a Portuguese explorer who, while in the service of Spain, led the first European voyage to circumnavigate the globe.

Magellan was born Fernao de Magalhaes into Portuguese nobility in 1480. He grew up serving as the page of the Portuguese queen and entered the Portuguese Navy in 1505. On his first voyage, he sailed around the Cape of Good Hope. He later journeyed twice to the Malayan spice port of Malacca, assisting in its conquest for Portugal, and was injured in a fight against the Moors in 1513. When he returned to Portugal in 1517, he asked the king for a rise in rank but was accused of poor conduct, and his request was denied. He was cleared of any wrongdoing, but it was suggested he should offer his services to another nation. Along with his friend cartographer Ruy Faleiro, Magellan traveled to Seville and offered his services to King Charles V of Spain.



In 1494, the Treaty of Tordesillas separated the world into two spheres. Everything from Brazil east to the East Indies belonged to Portugal; Spain was open to discover and conquer everything from Brazil westward. Magellan believed that some of the Spice Islands lay within the Spanish sphere of influence, and he proposed an expedition to Charles V to discover if his belief was true. After much negotiation, Magellan was granted command of an expedition of 560 men and five ships: *San Antonio*, *Trinidad*, *Concepción*, *Victoria*, and *Santiago*. Faleiro intended to go along as co-commander but withdrew from the expedition. In his place, Juan de Cartagena was appointed.

Magellan's fleet left Spain on September 20, 1519 and reached Rio de Janeiro in Brazil on December 13. It explored the South American coastline extensively, hoping to find a river that would connect with the western ocean. The fleet finally decided to winter in the bay of San Julián from March to August 1520. During this stay, the sailors encountered a group of natives they called *patagoes*, meaning "big feet," from which the region got the name Patagonia. Also during this stay, the captains of the four other ships quarreled with Magellan because he refused to consult with them on any decisions. A mutiny ensued, and Magellan and his crew killed three of the captains in defense. The *Santiago* was wrecked, and the crew was taken aboard the four remaining ships.

In August 1520, the fleet left San Julián, heading south. In October, the fleet entered the island-strewn waterway between the tip of South America and Antarctica, presently known as the Strait of Magellan. On November 28, after a stormy, month-long passage through the strait, Magellan reached the western ocean with three ships, as the *San Antonio* had independently decided to turn back to Spain. In contrast to the choppy seas they left behind, this western ocean seemed calm and peaceful, and so the explorers named it the Pacific.

The fleet sailed north through the Pacific until it reached present-day Guam on March 6, 1521. Many members of the crew became ill, particularly from scurvy, a disease caused by a lack of vitamin C. Many sailors died from hunger and thirst before the fleet could resupply in Guam. Sailing farther west, Magellan reached the present-day Philippines and claimed them for the Spanish Empire. On the island of Cebu, Magellan befriended a leader who wished to become a vassal of Spain. Taking a force of 60 men, Magellan went to another island to force its ruler

to recognize the sovereignty of the chief of Cebu. An army of 1,000 men fought Magellan's crew and killed Magellan and several of his men on April 27, 1521.

Although Magellan had failed to reach his intended destination of the Spice Islands, his crew intended to complete the voyage. Before they left, their elected captain and 30 more men were killed by the leader of Cebu. The survivors boarded the *Trinidad* and the *Victoria* and continued on their journey, finally reaching the Moluccas on November 8, 1521. The ships took on loads of cloves, a very valuable spice, and set sail. The *Trinidad* was forced to turn back for repairs, and so the *Victoria* set out alone on December 21, 1521, continuing to sail west and carefully avoiding Portuguese ships, which considered these trade routes their own. The *Victoria* made its way around the Cape of Good Hope, and the crew arrived in Seville on September 8, 1522, having become the first Europeans to circumnavigate the globe.

Further Reading

Guillemard, F. H. H., *The Life of Ferdinand Magellan*, 1890; Hildebrand, Arthur Sturges, *Magellan*, 1924; Nowell, Charles E., *Magellan's Voyage Around the World: Three Contemporary Accounts*, 1962; Pigafetta, Antonio, *A Narrative Account of the First Circumnavigation*, 1969.

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MLA

"Ferdinand Magellan." *World History: The Modern Era*. ABC-CLIO, 2013. Web. 1 May 2013.

Entry ID: 304851



Biographical Briefing on Vasco da Gama

Directions: Each group member should read a section of this handout and lead a discussion on the “Stop Here and Discuss” questions. This information should be used to help you create monuments to Vasco da Gama from the European and native inhabitants’ perspectives.

Vasco da Gama was born in about 1460 in Sines, a coastal town in Portugal. Though his grandfathers and father had been in the army, Vasco da Gama wanted to be a sailor and ~~find new trading routes~~. Italian cities and Arab traders had become rich by trading overland with Asia, and ~~Portugal wanted to gain some of these riches by finding a sea route to Asia~~. Da Gama prepared for the sailing life by studying mathematics and navigation. Finally, at the age of 15, he was hired to be part of a crew on a ship that sailed and traded on the western coast of Africa. He was hardworking and not afraid of the hardships (difficulties) of sea travel, such as wild storms, illnesses from lack of fresh food, long hours on duty, and tales of sea monsters. By the time he was in his ~~early twenties~~, da Gama had become the ~~captain of his own ship~~.

Stop here
and discuss



- *When and where was Vasco da Gama born?*
- *Why did Portugal want to become more involved in trade?*
- *How did da Gama become a captain?*

Portugal’s King John asked da Gama to head an expedition to sail around the southern tip of Africa to India. No European had had the courage to sail this uncharted route. Da Gama designed and built ~~four strong ships~~, ~~gathered a crew of 150 sailors~~, and set out on July 8, 1497. He sailed south from Portugal, heading for the west coast of Africa. He stopped along the way at the Canary Islands, then went southeast to the Cape Verde Islands to take on fresh food and water. Da Gama then headed southwest, out into the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, so he could catch the trade winds (winds that blow constantly in one direction) to carry him south of the African continent. On November 25 he landed on the Cape of Good Hope. Next, da Gama headed northward, along Africa’s east coast. He stopped to trade in the Arab ports of Mozambique, Mombasa, and Malindi in March of 1498. The following month, he left the safety of the African coastline and sailed east, ~~across the Indian Ocean, to India~~. Twenty-three days later, da Gama landed in ~~Calicut and became the first European to sail from Portugal to India~~. After loading his ships with spices such as nutmeg, cumin, ginger, cloves, and pepper, the crew headed home, sailing west across the Indian Ocean. Da Gama arrived home in ~~Portugal on September 9, 1499~~.

Stop here
and discuss



- How did da Gama prepare for this expedition to India?
- Where did da Gama stop before arriving in India?
- How long did the entire trip take?

On his journey, da Gama was ~~unable to negotiate trade agreements with the Arab merchants~~ who ruled the trading centers he visited. This did not discourage the king of Portugal. The king knew that the voyage itself was a great feat (accomplishment) and opened up the possibility of more ships sailing to India. He was also confident that Portugal would eventually sign trade treaties with India. In return for da Gama's exploration, ~~the king made him a nobleman, gave him a pension~~ (reward payments) for life, and named him the Admiral of India. On a later voyage, da Gama was able to convince the Arab traders to agree to trade with Portugal. Because of the treaty, ~~India could not sell its spices, cloth, and gold unless it was sent on Portuguese ships and sold by Portuguese merchants in Europe.~~ As a result, ~~Portugal~~ became a superpower and controlled the sea route between Asia and Europe.

Stop here
and discuss



- What did da Gama try to get from the Arab merchants?
- How did the King reward da Gama?
- What were the consequences of da Gama's voyage for Portugal?

During da Gama's first journey to India, he made enemies at many ports. At the Cape of Good Hope, welcoming African hunters ran off when da Gama ordered his men to meet them with weapons. In Mozambique, the educated, wealthy, and cultured Arab traders were suspicious of da Gama. They did not know if they could trust him to be friendly, so they did not allow his crew to come on land. At night the city was bombed, and many Arabs and Africans died from the cannon fire from da Gama's ships. A member of the da Gama expedition wrote that da Gama later tortured two Muslims to get information about Arab military power. On da Gama's second voyage, his bad reputation grew worse. ~~He threatened to burn towns unless their leaders paid him tribute money~~ (bribes). In one port, a boat full of Muslim men, women, and children returning from a pilgrimage to Makkah (Mecca) was stopped by da Gama. When the passengers and crew refused to cooperate with his demands to hand over their cargo, da Gama committed piracy: he took the cargo by force, locked the passengers in the hold (below deck), and set the ship on fire. Even though they tried to escape, "Our Lord did not allow them to succeed, because they were unbelievers," wrote a da Gama crew member. ~~As Europeans after da Gama began to take control over trade in parts of Africa and Asia, native peoples increasingly lost economic and political power.~~

Stop here
and discuss



- What reputation did da Gama have in the ports where he stopped?
- How did da Gama treat the people he encountered?
- What were the consequences of da Gama's exploration for people living in Africa and Asia?

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Vasco da Gama 1498

Portuguese navigator Vasco da Gama was the first to sail from Portugal to India and opened up major trading routes for spices and gems.

The son of the governor of the Portuguese state of Sines, da Gama was born in Sines in 1460. He was probably well educated and went into the service of King Joao II. In 1492, da Gama seized French ships as payment for piratical raids on Portuguese ships.

By 1494, Portuguese navigator Bartolomeu Dias had already navigated around the Cape of Good Hope, and Christopher Columbus had sailed to the New World. King Manuel I of Portugal entered into a treaty with Ferdinand V and Isabella I of Spain to divide up this world the two nations were discovering. Portugal would take Africa and points east; Spain would be free to take the Americas.



Manuel I hoped to send an expedition to India in order to wrest control of the spice trade from Muslim traders and launch a crusade against Islam. He turned to da Gama to lead the first voyage to India. After several months of planning, da Gama set sail on July 8, 1497 with a fleet of four ships: *Sao Gabriel*, *Sao Rafael*, *the Berrio*, and a storeship.

The fleet rounded the Cape of Good Hope on November 22 and began to sail up the eastern coast of Africa. At Mossel Bay on November 25, they bartered with Hottentots for cattle. Although the relations with the Hottentots began in a friendly manner, they turned sour by the time da Gama's fleet left. The fleet divided the storeship's supplies and crew between the other ships, broke up the storeship, and sailed on.

Farther north on the African coast, da Gama's fleet met and bartered for supplies with friendly natives at the mouth of what they named the Copper River. On January 25, 1498, da Gama's fleet sailed into Mozambique, which was controlled by Muslims. The sultan of Mozambique came on board the ship in friendship but soon realized his new friends were not Muslims but hated Christians. He gave da Gama two pilots in order to get rid of him. When one of the pilots escaped, relations between the sultan and da Gama soured, and da Gama ordered a bombardment of the city. News of this traveled north, and when da Gama's fleet reached Malindi, the sultan there cooperated with da Gama in order to avoid a similar incident. He provided the Portuguese with an Indian pilot who helped guide them to Calicut, India's most important trading center.

Da Gama and his crew believed that Indians were Christians, and King Manuel I had hoped to make them allies in a future crusade against Islam. When they were taken to a temple to worship Devaki, mother of the god Krishna, da Gama's men realized they were dealing with no ordinary Christians. The relationship took another hit when the zamorin ruler of Calicut saw the gifts his Portuguese friends had brought. They were cheap trinkets compared with the wealth he knew. The products the Portuguese had brought with them met an equally chilly reception in the market. After a chilly standoff and negotiations that included da Gama taking several hostages, da Gama finally sailed from India with ships laden with precious jewels and spices and a letter promising to trade spices and gems for gold, silver, coral, and scarlet cloth. Da Gama's fleet sailed from India in August 1498,

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enduring a difficult passage back during which many sailors died. Da Gama finally made it back to Lisbon on September 9, 1499.

Upon his return, da Gama was hailed as a hero. King Manuel granted him titles and estates and a healthy pension. Another voyage to exploit the commercial possibilities of India left Portugal in 1500.

Two years later, da Gama returned to Calicut with a fleet of 20 ships. This time, he bombarded Calicut to force the zamorin to sign a treaty with Portugal. The Portuguese fleet easily defeated a Muslim navy, and da Gama continued on to sack and force treaties on other Indian trading centers. In February 1524, King Joao III, son of Manuel, named da Gama viceroy of Portuguese India, and da Gama made one last voyage around the Cape of Good Hope. Just a few months after his arrival, da Gama died, on December 24, 1524. His remains were returned to Portugal.

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Entry ID: 302912



Biographical Briefing on Christopher Columbus

Directions: Each group member should read a section of this handout and lead a discussion on the “Stop Here and Discuss” questions. This information should be used to help you create monuments to Christopher Columbus from the European and native inhabitants’ perspectives.

Christopher Columbus was born in 1451, probably in ~~Genoa~~, a town in ~~northwest Italy~~. He was the oldest son of five children. His father was a weaver, and his mother educated her children at home. Genoa was an important trading town, so Columbus went to sea when he was about 12, selling his father’s wool and cloth. This experience taught him important sailor’s skills such as setting sails, steering a ship, hauling in an anchor, judging long distances by eye, and navigation. On Columbus’s first long-distance voyage, to England in 1476, the ship he was on was attacked by pirates off the coast of Portugal. Columbus jumped overboard and swam 6 miles to shore, clinging to a wooden oar. For the next few years, he sailed between Portugal and England, Africa, and even Iceland. He decided from his sailing experience that the Ocean Sea (their name for the Atlantic Ocean) was only about 3,000 miles wide and could easily be crossed as a quick sea route to Asia. Columbus had to find someone to finance his expedition across the Ocean Sea.

Stop here
and discuss



- *When and where was Columbus born?*
- *Where did Columbus travel to become an experienced sailor?*
- *How wide did Columbus’ think the Ocean Sea was?*

Columbus asked the rulers of Portugal and Spain to finance his trip. He knew they had the money to afford such an expensive expedition and were considered the “owners” of all the sea routes. Finally, Queen Isabella of Spain agreed to give Columbus three ships and about 100 crewmen. If his expedition were successful, she promised him important noble titles and “gold, silver, pearls, gems, and spices.”

The journey began on ~~August 3, 1492~~, when Columbus and his crew left Palos, on Spain’s southwest coast. They sailed in a southwesterly direction, passing between Madeira and the Canary Islands in the Atlantic Ocean. Then Columbus changed course to go west. About halfway across the Atlantic, Columbus turned slightly southwest again, then straightened his course to go west. As days passed with no land in sight, the crew became angry and threatened to mutiny (rebel against Columbus) and turn back. To calm the crew, Columbus promised a reward to the first person to sight land. ~~Finally, on October 12, 1492, they reached an island Columbus named San Salvador in what is now the Bahamas, off the coast of Florida.~~

Stop here
and discuss



- *Who did Columbus ask to finance his trip? Who agreed to sponsor it?*
- *What was Columbus told he would earn if his expedition succeeded?*
- *How did the crew react to the long voyage?*

Columbus discovered the island had raw materials, which could be taken back to Spain, such as ~~gold, lumber, cocoa beans, and cinnamon~~. He hurried back to Spain, bringing Arawaks (the island's native people), ~~spices, and gold to impress the Queen~~. In return, she gave him 17 ships, filled with grain and grape seeds, dogs, sheep, goats, geese, hogs, and horses, as well as 1,200 men, to set up a permanent settlement on San Salvador. In the late summer of 1493, Columbus set sail again for what he still thought was Asia. With a permanent presence on the island, the Spanish began to take over. They made the Arawaks mine for gold, overworking them to death to find very little gold. ~~They gathered groups of Arawak and Taino (another native people) and sent them to Europe as slaves~~. In the meantime, Columbus made many voyages around the area to find Japan and China, where he thought more wealth could be found. When he was unsuccessful, Columbus became bitter and angry. Queen Isabella became furious when the promised riches of Asia did not appear, and she refused to grant Columbus the titles she had offered him. So at first Spain did not receive much wealth from the investment in Columbus's journeys. Later, however, because of Spain's claim to new sea routes in a westerly direction, Spain had control, for a time, over all the lands in Central and South America.

Stop here
and discuss



- *What riches did Columbus find on the island of San Salvador?*
- *What did Queen Isabella give Columbus for his next trip?*
- *Why did Queen Isabella become angry with Columbus?*
- *How were Columbus's expeditions valuable for Spain in the long run?*

When the Arawak and Taino people first met Columbus and his crew, they came to the shore in friendship and without weapons. They traded their food, cotton, thread, and gold for rare European objects, such as glass and leather. They taught the sailors to make hammocks, their own invention. Though Arawak and Taino people were friendly to the visitors, they must have soon regretted their goodwill. They easily caught common European diseases, like measles, and died in great numbers. Forced to mine for jewels and gold, they died from exertion (physically difficult tasks) and malnutrition. The gold jewelry they made was taken from them and melted into bars and coins in Spain. The refreshing rain that came daily in their rain forests stopped falling when lumber was cut down and sent to Europe. When the Arawak and Taino refused to cooperate with the Spanish demands, they were tortured and killed. The original native population of San Salvador, ~~about 300,000 in 1492, was reduced to only 500 by 1548~~. The takeover of the "New World" by Spain began the destruction of the native inhabitants of North, Central, and South America.

Stop here
and discuss



- *What objects did the Arawaks and Taino trade with Columbus?*
- *What problems did the Europeans bring to or cause in San Salvador?*
- *How did the European takeover impact the native peoples' way of life?*

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Christopher Columbus

Navigator of the first recorded European expedition to cross the Atlantic Ocean in search of the elusive route to Asia, Christopher Columbus landed instead on islands in the Caribbean Sea. His voyage, which was well publicized in Europe, stimulated exploration of what was for 15th-century Europeans an undiscovered world, the Americas. Although Columbus' discovery of the Americas presented undreamed of opportunities for Europeans, it also marked the beginning of several centuries of famine, disease, dislocation, and violence for the Native American peoples already living in the Western Hemisphere.



Columbus was born Cristoforo Colombo in Genoa, Italy in 1451 to Domenico Colombo, a master weaver and part-time wine shop owner, and Suzanna Fontanarossa. He received little or no formal education in his youth. He never wrote in Italian but did learn to read and write in Spanish and Portuguese. Columbus spent much of his youth working as an apprentice to his father's trade, but by his own account, he took to the sea at a "tender age." His earliest trading voyages were likely to have been to collect supplies of wool or wine.

At the age of 19, Columbus made his first trading voyage in the Aegean Sea. In his early twenties, he began to make longer voyages to Marseilles and Tunis, as well as to the Greek island of Chios (then a Genoese colony). In 1476, Columbus set out for Flanders and England, but his vessel was sunk by French privateers. He landed penniless in Portugal and was taken in by one of many Genoese living in Lisbon, which was then the principal European center of overseas exploration. At Lisbon, Columbus acquired most of his knowledge of navigation.

In 1479, Columbus married Felipa Perestrello e Moniz, the daughter of a widow of a distinguished family who had inherited property in Madeira and an interest in the hereditary captaincy of the island of Porto Santo. By that marriage, he had a son, Diego, who was born in 1480. In Madeira, Columbus learned about island discovery and settlement and caught the optimistic enthusiasm for charting new islands that was characteristic of the time.

Columbus' idea of sailing west to the Indies seems to have been inspired by three sources: Florentine cosmographer Paolo Toscanelli, Cardinal Pierre d'Ailly's *Image of the World*, and Marco Polo's account of the Far East. Columbus theorized that the world was predominately covered in land and that the distance to Asia was much shorter than previously thought. Although he clearly sought adventure, his primary motivations were most likely the pursuit of honor and wealth. When the king of Portugal rejected Columbus' proposal to finance the voyage, he turned to Spain, where he received high praise and royal patronage for his proposed adventure.

In April 1492, King Ferdinand V and Queen Isabella I of Spain agreed to sponsor the expedition. On the first voyage, Columbus commanded three ships: the *Santa Maria*, the *Pinta*, and the *Niña*. The fleet departed on August 3, 1492 from Palos, Spain. The length of the voyage tested the will of the new explorers, but on October 12, the expedition sighted Guanahaní, an island in the Bahamas. Columbus renamed the island San Salvador and claimed it for Spain. The expedition also landed on Cuba and Española (later called Hispaniola, which is now the Dominican Republic and Haiti), where Columbus left 40 men before returning to Spain to an enthusiastic

welcome in 1493.

On his return, Isabella commanded Columbus to sail again immediately. Columbus embarked on a second expedition with 17 ships and 1,000 colonists in September 1493. Upon returning to Española, he discovered that the men he had left behind had been killed by the natives. On that second voyage, Columbus landed on the islands of Dominica, Guadeloupe, and Antigua and established the first European settlement in the Americas—the colony of Isabella, near what is now Cape Isabella, in the Dominican Republic. He explored the coast of Cuba in the spring of 1494 and before returning to Spain in June 1496, established a new capital on Española that he called Santo Domingo. It was at the end of that second voyage that many colonists who had sailed with him and then returned to Spain began to express criticism of Columbus and his ventures, but the queen continued to support him.

In May 1498, Columbus set out on his third expedition. He landed on the island of Trinidad and sighted what is now Venezuela, discovering South America. When he arrived in Santo Domingo, Columbus found the colony of Española in revolt. Across the Atlantic in Spain, discontented colonists finally managed to persuade the reigning monarchs that Española demanded a new governor. The king and queen removed Columbus in May 1499 and appointed Francisco de Bobadilla to establish order in the colony. Columbus was subsequently arrested and sent back to Spain in chains. On his return, the queen pardoned Columbus but refused to restore his office as governor of Española.

In May 1502, Columbus ventured on his fourth and final expedition. Hampered by hurricane damage to the fleet, he managed to reach Honduras and searched in vain for nearly six months along the Central American coast for the passage across the continent to Asia. In January 1503, Columbus landed at Panama and established a colony. In June of that same year, his fleet became marooned near Jamaica. Columbus summoned help from Española, but the stranded expedition waited nearly one year for rescue.

After returning to Spain in 1504, Columbus found he had lost not only his title as governor of the Indies, but his chief support in the person of Isabella, who had died earlier that year on November 26. Suffering from arthritis, humiliated, and frustrated by the elusive fame and wealth that he so fiercely sought through his discoveries, Columbus died in Valladolid on May 20, 1506. His remains were ultimately laid to rest, alongside his son Diego, at the cathedral of Santo Domingo in 1542.

Columbus was not the first European to land in the Americas. Navigators from Norway, Iceland, or Greenland had settled briefly in Newfoundland in the late 10th or early 11th century. Evidence also exists to suggest that English fishermen may have sighted some part of North America prior to Columbus' first voyage. Columbus' discovery, however, is distinguished from that of other adventurers by its consequences, mainly that Columbus' discoveries in the Western Hemisphere were followed by rapid, widespread, and permanent European settlement.

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Biographical Briefing on Vasco Nuñez de Balboa

Directions: Each group member should read a section of this handout and lead a discussion on the “Stop Here and Discuss” questions. This information should be used to help you create monuments to Vasco Nuñez de Balboa from the European and native inhabitants’ perspectives.

Vasco Nuñez de Balboa was born in 1475 in the Spanish town of Jerez de los Caballeros. Although Balboa’s family was not wealthy, it did belong to the Catholic nobility and had once been very powerful. Balboa was sent to a noble household to learn the skills of a knight. While Balboa was still a teenager, Columbus made his famous voyage of exploration under the sponsorship of Spain. Naturally, the excitement caused by Columbus’s adventures made overseas exploration very popular in Spain, especially with the sons of the lower nobility. Balboa was around 25 years old when he joined the voyage of Rodrigo de Bastidas as an *escudero*, a fighting man valued for his ability to use a sword. It was due to his fighting skill and handsome looks that Balboa became popular. People who watched Balboa in sword fights described him as very graceful. As a member of Bastidas’s crew, Balboa left Spain around 1500 on a voyage headed for Venezuela.

Stop here
and discuss



- *What kind of family did Balboa come from?*
- *What likely influenced Balboa’s decision to explore overseas?*
- *What was Balboa admired for?*

Balboa sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to the Caribbean Sea. After sailing along the coast of present-day Columbia, the ship finally landed in Hispanola (present-day Haiti and the Dominican Republic). There Balboa settled and worked as a farmer. He used native inhabitants for slave labor and spent much time searching for gold. When his farming was unsuccessful, Balboa hid on board a ship to escape his debts. This ship landed at San Sebastian, a Spanish colony in present-day Columbia. Balboa convinced Spanish settlers there to move with him to Darien (present-day Panama), where they founded a Spanish town called Santa Maria de la Antigua. King Ferdinand of Spain named Balboa the governor of the new town. Soon Balboa was told by the native inhabitants that to the south there was a huge sea. Balboa set out to find it. He traveled along the Panamian coast and eventually inland through jungles, rivers, swamps, and mountains. Finally, in September of 1513, he stood on a peak in Darien and saw the Pacific Ocean. After this discovery, Balboa governed Darien and other areas of Spanish settlement that he had founded. However, Balboa was under the supervision of the Spanish nobleman Pedrarias, and the relationship between them was often hostile and full of conflict. Eventually Pedrarias conspired to get rid of Balboa. ~~After Balboa had been declared guilty of rebellion, treason, and mistreatment of native peoples in a corrupt (unfair) trial, he was beheaded (executed) in January of 1519 in Darien.~~

Stop here
and discuss



- *What did Balboa do when he arrived in Hispañola?*
- *How did Balboa discover the Pacific Ocean?*
- *How did Balboa die?*

Balboa's discoveries were tremendously helpful to Spain. ~~As the first European ever to see the Pacific Ocean,~~ Balboa claimed for Spain the honor of having discovered a new sea. The Spanish settlements he founded and governed helped bring more Spaniards to the Americas, a region Europeans called the New World. The Spaniards who traveled to the Americas came for many different reasons. Some were patriots who wanted to give Spain and its king and queen the honor of owning colonies to create a great Spanish empire. Others were noblemen who had the opportunity to become governors of colonies in the Americas. Still others were ambitious young men who wanted to make their fortune in gold. Additionally, Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand had offered to free prisoners—many of whom had ears cut off as a sign of their status as criminals—if they would leave Spain and help settle Spanish colonies overseas. Isabella and Ferdinand received a percentage of the gold, pearls, and other riches that explorers found where they landed. European settlers in the Americas developed cities and exported many products, including animal skins, bacon, and sugar.

Stop here
and discuss



- *What honor did Balboa's travels give to Spain?*
- *Who settled the new Spanish colonies?*
- *How were the colonies beneficial to Spain?*

While Balboa's explorations had positive results for Spain, his explorations had negative consequences for the native peoples he encountered. As the governor of Darien, Balboa frequently hunted for gold and native inhabitants to be taken as slaves. This usually meant forcing the native peoples to give up their gold and their freedom to work for the Spanish settlers. To accomplish this, Balboa used many tactics, including trading with the locals and befriending certain indigenous (native) groups so that he could more easily fight against others. At times, Balboa and his men tortured native inhabitants into giving him information he wanted. This torture included using vicious war dogs to tear people to pieces. Balboa's own dog, named Little Lion, became famous for hunting and murdering indigenous people, and the dog was even given his own soldier's share of the goods he helped Balboa steal from them. Many Spanish settlers became feudal landlords who forced native people to work the land like serfs (poor farmers). Often, they were forced to work so hard that they died. As more and more Spanish *conquistadores* (conquerors) like Balboa took over and settled lands in the Americas, native inhabitants lost control of their lands. Eventually some native populations and their cultures were destroyed.

Stop here
and discuss



- *What were two of Balboa's activities as governor?*
- *How did Balboa accomplish his goals?*
- *What happened to many of the native peoples Balboa encountered?*

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Vasco Núñez de Balboa

Vasco Núñez de Balboa was the first European to see the eastern coast of the Pacific Ocean, which he called the South Sea. In late September 1513, he claimed the entire ocean for Spain. He pacified the natives of Panama and was the first white man to establish a permanent settlement in the New World.



Balboa was born in 1475 in Jerez de los Caballeros, Extremadura, Spain. His patrician father, Don Nuño Aria de Balboa, was not rich but was of royal lineage. His mother was a lady from Badajoz. Balboa had three brothers. As a youngster, he became a page in the household of Don Pedro Puertocarrero in the southwestern Spanish port of Moguer. Balboa grew to be a handsome man with an extraordinary reputation as a swordsman.

In 1500, Balboa sailed on an expedition under Cmdr. Rodrigo de Bastidas and Chief Pilot Juan de la Cosa. They sailed in the Gulf of Urabá and along the northern coast of present-day Colombia to search for gold and pearls. Bad planning ended the unsuccessful venture. The leaky ship had to be abandoned in Hispaniola (present-day Haiti).

Balboa was penniless and ended up trying to earn a living on a pig farm in Hispaniola. He failed at that and during the next few years accumulated heavy debts. Then, in 1510, Balboa and his dog Leoncico stowed away on a ship bound for Colombia. That expedition under the command of Martín Fernández de Enciso was carrying supplies to a new settlement at San Sebastian. When they reached the settlement, they found it abandoned due to lack of food and danger from Indians. Balboa convinced those with him to proceed southwest to Darién on the Isthmus of Panama, a place he had seen on his previous journey. There, they founded the town of Santa María de la Antigua (present-day Acandí), the first permanent settlement in the New World.

A power struggle ensued between Enciso and Diego de Nicuesa, who had been ordered to Darién by King Ferdinand V. Balboa was instrumental in charging Enciso with usurpation. Enciso was banished and returned to Spain, where he sought redress with the king. Ferdinand appointed Balboa as interim governor in 1511; he became supreme commander of the colony in 1513. Upon his arrival in Europe, Enciso brought the same charges of usurpation against Balboa. In the meantime, Balboa led expeditions from Darién into present-day Panama. He conquered some Indians and made agreements with others nearby. The colony thrived under his leadership.

As early as 1511, Indians had told Balboa about a great sea on the western side of the isthmus. He was also told stories about a wealthy empire (the Inca Empire) that lay further south. In early September 1513, Balboa led a huge expedition of Spaniards, some 1,000 Indian slaves, and a large pack of dogs to find the sea. The 25-day journey across the Isthmus of Panama proved difficult. Swamps, violent natives, dense jungles, and mountain terrain all contributed to a horrendous experience. Balboa befriended some Indians. Others were captured or tortured. Extensive looting gave Balboa substantial treasure.

On September 25, Indian guides informed Balboa that he could see the big sea by climbing a mountain. He

climbed on his own, then asked others to join him. They erected a cross and christened the great sea Mar del Sur, or "South Sea," because it lay on the south side of the isthmus. On September 29, 1513, Balboa waded into the water in full armor and claimed the South Sea and all of its shores for God and King Ferdinand.

The expedition's return trip proved interesting as well. Balboa captured Indian chief Tubanama and received a huge ransom for him. They also fought and defeated numerous other tribes without losing any of their own members. The group found huge hoards of gold and pearls. They also found slaves. Hunger was a problem, however. Instead of carrying adequate provisions, they preferred carrying loot. Consequently, members of the group suffered from starvation.

On January 18, 1514, Balboa was back in Darién. He sent the treasures he had found to King Ferdinand. While he was away, however, his enemies had denounced him to the king. As a result, in 1514, King Ferdinand appointed a new governor, elderly nobleman Pedrarias Arias Dávila, later known as "Pedrarias the Cruel." Once Ferdinand learned about the discovery of the South Sea, he directed Balboa to serve under Dávila as governor of Panama. Balboa commenced on a new venture building ships on the South Sea coast. He only made one expedition, to the Pearl Islands, but was unsuccessful due to unfavorable winds.

Balboa was extremely popular, which made Dávila jealous. Dávila grew to fear Balboa's influence over the colony and betrothed his daughter Maria to him in 1516 to ensure his trust. Nonetheless, tension between the two men mounted. In December 1518, Dávila and some others framed Balboa on false charges of disobedience and treason. He was arrested by Francisco Pizarro, who had been with Balboa on his discovery of the South Sea. Dávila aggravated that miscarriage of justice with a speedy trial. Balboa was found guilty and sentenced to death. Along with four others, Balboa was decapitated in January 1519 in Acla, an old Spanish settlement.

Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan sailed across the South Sea while on voyages for Spain in 1520 and 1521. He renamed it *Pacífica*, meaning peaceful. It is known today as the Pacific Ocean.

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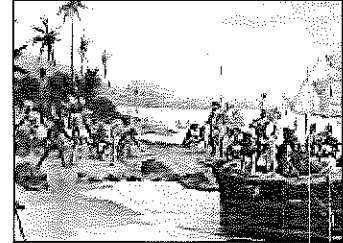
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Pedro Cabral

Pedro Álvares Cabral was the Portuguese navigator who discovered Brazil in 1500. While on an expedition to settle permanent trading posts in India, his fleet was blown off course, bringing him to the coast of Brazil.



Very little is known about Cabral's life before the expedition that made him famous. He was born around 1467, probably in the city of Belmonte, Portugal. Cabral was the second son of Fernão Cabral, a nobleman who was governor of Beira and Belmonte and a close associate of King Manuel I. Due to his father's connections with the court, Cabral was able to marry Isabel de Castro, the daughter of Fernando de Noronha, a prestigious and wealthy merchant.

In 1500, King Manuel recognized Cabral's ability as a sea captain and entrusted him with the second Portuguese expedition to India. Vasco da Gama had earlier established the first sea route to the source of the spices and wealth of the East. Cabral's mission was to establish permanent trading outposts in India, which would ensure Portugal's ability to corner the profitable trade between the East and Europe, until then in the hands of Muslim traders. The expedition was a large one. King Manuel entrusted Cabral with a fleet of 13 ships and 1,500 men. The trip proved far more important than either the king or Cabral expected.

The fleet left Belém, on the outskirts of Lisbon, on March 9, 1500. With Cabral was Bartolomeu Dias, who had been the first to cross the Cape of Good Hope on the southernmost tip of Africa, and his brother, Diogo Dias. Nicolau Coelho, one of the commanders on da Gama's expedition, was also part of the crew. The expedition met with its first disaster when one of the 13 ships went missing off the coast of Cape Verde, never to be found. Then, as the fleet proceeded to navigate down the coast of Africa, winds and currents forced it to cut a wide circle to the west, bringing it into contact with the coast of Brazil. There, they were met by friendly natives who showed no fear of the strange men wearing armor and colorful hats. The men spent about 10 days on shore, taking on supplies and surveying the land. Cabral ordered Pero Vaz de Caminha to write a complete report of what they found and sent him back to Portugal to inform the king of the new discovery. Cabral called the land Terra da Vera Cruz, Land of the True Cross.

Now reduced to 11 ships, the fleet sailed to India on May 2. Cabral lost four more ships to storms, one of which was captained by Bartolomeu Dias. The goal of the expedition was to establish trading posts, by free agreement or by force if necessary. After stopping in Melinde to take in supplies, the remaining ships arrived in India on September 13. The negotiations did not go smoothly with the Muslim merchants of Calicut, who distrusted the Portuguese and did not want any competition. The Portuguese then sailed to Cochin, where the local prince granted them houses by the water where they could establish a trading post. Cabral next took his ships to Ceylon, where they loaded spices and other riches. The fleet arrived back in Portugal the following year, the mission accomplished and with a profitable cargo.

Little is know about Cabral after he returned to Portugal. He settled in Santarém, northeast of Lisbon, and seems to have been ignored by the king, who was perhaps displeased with the loss of close to half the fleet. The king did invite Cabral to take part in a second expedition in 1502, but on the condition that he share the command with

another captain, appointed by the Crown. Cabral refused and was forgotten by the king he had served so well and at such great peril.

Cabral received a second pension from the Crown in 1518 for his discovery of the Land of the True Cross. He died about two years later and was buried in the church of Graça, in a plain grave.

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Giovanni da Verrazano

UXL Biographies, 2003

Born: 1485

Died: 1528

Giovanni da Verrazano, a native of Italy, sailed for the king of France and was the first European to sight New York Bay, Narragansett Bay, and other places along the eastern coast of North America.

The name Verrazano is familiar to many in North America because of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, which spans from Brooklyn to Staten Island, crossing over the entrance ("the Narrows") of New York Bay. One of the longest suspension bridges in the world, it was named after Giovanni da Verrazano, an Italian explorer, who in 1524 became the first European to sight New York Bay and many other points along the eastern coast of North America. He also wrote the earliest account of Native American life in that region. Verrazano had been commissioned by the king of France to explore the eastern coast from Florida to Newfoundland with the goal of finding a passage to Asia.

Voyage to North America

Giovanni da Verrazano was born in 1485 into an aristocratic family in the Chianti region of Tuscany, Italy. Pursuing a career as a mariner, he moved in 1506 or 1507 to Dieppe, a port on the northwestern coast of France. From Dieppe he sailed to the eastern Mediterranean and may have traveled to Newfoundland in 1508.

In 1523 a group of Italian merchants in the French cities of Lyons and Rouen convinced the French king, François I, to sponsor Verrazano's voyage to North America. Accompanied by his younger brother Girolamo, who was a mapmaker, Verrazano embarked on the ship *La Dauphine* from Dieppe in early 1524. After crossing the Atlantic Ocean, Verrazano sighted land on March 1, 1524, at or near the site of present-day Cape Fear, North Carolina.

The Verrazano expedition sailed southward for a short distance and then turned back north. The ship landed near what is now Cape Hatteras on the Outer Banks, a sand bar separated from the mainland by Pamlico Sound. Unable to see the mainland from this vantage point, Verrazano assumed that the body of water on the other side of the sandbar was the Pacific Ocean. He concluded that he had found the route to China because Girolamo's maps showed North America as a vast continent tapering to a narrow strip of land near the coast of North Carolina.

Discovery of New York Bay

Unable to find a passage through what he thought was an isthmus, Verrazano sailed north along the coast, probably stopping at the present site of Kitty Hawk, where he encountered a group of Native Americans. He continued north but missed the entrance to both Chesapeake and Delaware bays. On April 17, however, Verrazano sailed into the upper reaches of New York Bay, which he described in his journal: "We found a very pleasant place, situated amongst certain little steep hills; from amidst which hills there ran down into the sea a great stream of water [the Hudson River], which within the mouth was very deep, and from the sea to the mouth

of same, with the tide, which we found to rise 8 foot, any great vessel laden may pass up." He anchored *La Dauphine* at the Narrows, which was later named for him.

Leaving New York Bay, Verrazano sailed up the coast to the entrance of Narragansett Bay and named one of the islands Rhode Island because it had the shape of Rhodes, the Greek island in the eastern Mediterranean. (More than a hundred years later, Roger Williams would take the name Rhode Island for the new English colony he had founded on the mainland off Narragansett Bay.) Verrazano anchored his ship in present-day Newport Harbor, giving his crew a rest for a couple of weeks. Exploring parties from the ship went as far inland as the site of Pawtucket. From Rhode Island Verrazano sailed up the coast of Maine, proceeding north around Nova Scotia to Newfoundland before returning to Dieppe on July 8, 1524.

Final voyages

Immediately after landing in France, Verrazano wrote a report of his expedition for François I. This report gives the earliest firsthand information about the eastern coast of North America and the Native Americans who lived there. Verrazano's next expedition, in 1527, was sponsored in part by Philippe de Chabot, admiral of France, because King François I was preparing for war in Italy and could not spare any ships. On this trip Verrazano traveled to the coast of Brazil and brought back a valuable cargo of logwood, which is used for making textile dyes.

In 1528 Verrazano undertook another voyage to North America to renew his search for a passage to the Pacific, which he still thought could be found just south of Cape Fear. Leaving France in the spring of 1528, his party apparently reached the West Indies, where it followed the chain of islands northward. After landing at one of the islands, probably Guadeloupe, Verrazano was captured and killed by members of the hostile Carib tribe. His ships then sailed south to Brazil, where they obtained another cargo of logwood and returned to France.

- Verrazano, Giovanni
- United States

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Amerigo Vespucci

UXL Biographies, 2003

Born: March 09, 1451 in Florence, Italy
Died: February 22, 1512 in Seville, Spain
Nationality: Italian
Occupation: Explorer

Amerigo Vespucci was an Italian merchant who led expeditions to the Americas, which were later named in his honor.

Amerigo Vespucci was the first person to determine that South America was a separate, previously unknown continent that was not a part of Asia. He also worked out a system for calculating exact latitude that enabled him to produce a nearly correct estimate of the circumference of the earth. These two discoveries, which caused a revolution in geography and mapmaking, assured Vespucci a place in history; yet he is perhaps better known as the explorer for whom America was named. Since the time Vespucci claimed to have discovered the continent, scholars have been debating whether he or Christopher Columbus should be honored for the achievement.

Joins Medici firm

Vespucci was born on March 18, 1454, in Florence, Italy. His studies were supervised by an uncle who instilled in him an interest in astronomy and the study of the universe. In addition to being trained in business, Vespucci studied philosophy at the University of Pisa. He served as secretary to his uncle, who was the Florentine ambassador to France, before returning to Florence where he became the manager of a trading firm. The business was owned by the Medici family, the rich and powerful rulers of Florence who had business contacts all over Europe. In 1492 Vespucci was sent to Seville to help with the Medici company, which supplied provisions for Spanish ships sailing out of Seville on their great voyages of discovery. He outfitted the second and third expeditions led by Columbus to the New World.

Takes expedition to New World

Historians are not certain about whether Vespucci went on an expedition to the New World in 1497; however, there is evidence in May 1499 he was able to interest the court in his own expedition to the newfound lands across the Atlantic. He sailed from Cadiz in southern Spain with a fleet of four ships commanded by Alonso de Ojeda, who had sailed with Columbus on his second voyage; Vespucci was the representative of the financial interests backing the current expedition.

When the fleet reached the northern coast of South America after a quick crossing of 24 days, Ojeda and Vespucci went separate ways. Vespucci headed south, becoming the first person to sight the coast of Brazil on June 27, 1499; he was also the first to explore the mouth of the Amazon River. Sailing north to Trinidad, he traveled along the coast of Venezuela to the Spanish colony of Santo Domingo where he replenished his supplies. During the return trip to Cadiz he stopped in the Bahamas and kidnapped 200 Native Americans to take back to Spain as slaves. He arrived in Cadiz in June 1500.

Makes important discoveries

Convinced that there still might be a passage to Asia through the New World, Vespucci sailed again in May 1501, this time in the service of Portugal. During his crossing he met the ships of the Portuguese navigator Pedro Cabral returning from a voyage to Brazil and India. On this second trip Vespucci reached land near the eastern tip of Brazil and entered the harbor of Rio de Janeiro. He is considered the discoverer of the Río de la Plata.

According to Vespucci's account he went as far south as present-day Argentina, a claim that has caused debate among scholars. During his explorations in South America Vespucci developed a system for calculating longitude, which had previously been done simply by dead reckoning, or guesswork. Using this system he correctly estimated the circumference of the earth to within 50 miles of its actual measurement.

Continent named for Vespucci

When Vespucci returned to Lisbon in June 1502 he proclaimed that although his party had not explored the islands off the coast of Asia they had discovered a continent between Europe and Asia that was previously unknown to Europeans. His letter about this discovery, titled *Mundus Novus* (New World), caused a sensation and was translated into Latin, French, Italian, and German.

Vespucci's name was given to North and South America because of an account of his travels, published at St. Dié in Lorraine, France, in 1507, in which he is represented as having discovered and reached the mainland in 1497. It led the geographer Martin Waldseemüller to regard him, rather than Columbus, as the discoverer of the great landmass in the west and to suggest that it be called America in honor of his expeditions.

In 1505 Vespucci was naturalized as a Spanish subject. Three years later he was appointed pilot major of the kingdom, a prestigious position that put him in charge of training and examining pilots and gave him control of the master map. On February 22, 1512, in Seville, Vespucci died of malaria, from which he had suffered during his voyages; he had been planning another trip of exploration to South America.

The question of whether Vespucci made two or four voyages to the New World has long kept scholars occupied. For instance, some historians say he traveled to the continent only twice, in 1499 and 1501, while others believe his accounts of an earlier trip in 1497 and another in 1503. The question of the 1497 voyage is especially important: if Vespucci did discover the new continent before Columbus, he would have had to make that trip, during which he said he reached the mainland. Columbus did not explore the mainland until 1498, when he went ashore on the Paria Peninsula in present-day Venezuela. Some twentieth-century historians tend to believe Vespucci's claims about his discoveries.

- Vespucci, Amerigo
- South America

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Francisco Vásquez de Coronado

Francisco Vásquez de Coronado, who sought mythical cities of gold, led a treacherous two-year expedition through Sonoran Mexico and into the territory that eventually became the states of Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas. His soldiers were the first Europeans to see the Grand Canyon and navigate the Colorado River.



Coronado seemed destined to poverty; he was born in 1510 as the second son of four children and inherited nothing from his father's entailed estate in Salamanca, Spain. However, he luckily made rich and powerful friends, as he traveled to Mexico in 1535 with the newly appointed viceroy of New Spain, Antonio de Mendoza. That personal connection helped Coronado advance his position. He married the wealthy Beatriz de Estrada, daughter of the treasurer of New Spain, and in 1539, Mendoza appointed Coronado governor of New Galicia in northern Mexico.

Soon after he took office, rumors reached Coronado of rich cities of gold to the north. The Spaniards believed those cities were seven mythical cities of gold called the Seven Cities of Cibola. Hernando Cortés and other conquistadores competed for the chance to discover a new rich empire like Mexico. As the viceroy's favorite, in 1540, Coronado was granted the title captain general of the Seven Cities of Cibola and any people he might find there, including the Hopi, Acoma, and Zuni civilizations. With the help of his wife and Mendoza, Coronado personally financed an army of 336 men, along with three Franciscan friars and 1,000 slaves taken from the already conquered population of central Mexico; almost all had horses. He set out with that army to conquer the territories to the north and to convert to Christianity the indigenous peoples they encountered.

By the time they crossed into present-day Arizona, many men and horses had died of starvation because the journey was far longer than the Spaniards had estimated. Coronado divided the group. Some turned west, eventually encountered the Grand Canyon, and navigated a portion of the Colorado River.

Coronado led a second group, which traveled east. They found the first of the seven cities, a Zuni town or pueblo of 500 families. There, Coronado suffered injuries in a battle with the Zuni. The Spaniards admired the well-built city with its secure multistoried houses constructed of adobe. However, they found no wealth there, only much-needed food, which included corn and turkeys.

The Spaniards spent the winter of 1540-1541 with the Zuni near Albuquerque and lived off their resources, which included literally taking the clothes off their backs. Coronado tried to find information about richer cities while he attempted to establish military domination over the Zuni. Finally, the Zuni rebelled, and several pueblos were destroyed. The Spaniards moved east toward a settlement on the site of present-day Taos.

As the Spaniards moved further east, they met a man they called the Turk. He told Coronado of a city called Quivira, which straddled a huge river full of enormous fish. The Turk pointed out the Spaniards' gold ornaments and said they were common in Quivira. He offered those temptations to the Spaniards to encourage them to leave the region and end the destruction of the pueblos.

Following the rumors of wealth spread by the Turk, Coronado and his soldiers followed their indigenous guide to the southeast through what is today Texas and Oklahoma, and the group survived off the meat of massive buffalo herds on the way. After much futile searching for wealthy cities, the Spaniards began to distrust the Turk. A nomadic people following the buffaloes finally disabused the Spaniards. The Turk maintained that Quivira supposedly existed further to the north in Kansas. What the Spaniards did not know was that the duplicitous guide had been entrusted by his people to lead the Spaniards astray since he knew they could not survive on the barren plains. Once the Spaniards became convinced of the Turk's treachery, they strangled him to death.

The discouraged army went north and found more poor mud villages where only the chief possessed a bronze necklace. Although the Spaniards neglected to make good maps of their wanderings, they traveled more than 2,500 miles. By a direct route, they were only half that distance from Mexico, but they had explored much of the Great Plains of North America.

After suffering a debilitating fall from his horse, Coronado lost control of his followers. He discovered a mutinous petition that the Spanish soldiers had drawn up demanding their return to Mexico. In 1542, Coronado was carried on a stretcher as he returned to Mexico with fewer than 100 men. He left the friars behind to work to convert the indigenous populations to the north. Mendoza treated the expedition as a complete failure and investigated Coronado for corruption and mistreatment of the Zuni.

Coronado's injuries and the loss of his fortune on the expensive expedition made him a poverty-stricken invalid. He suffered in disgrace until 1551, when he was finally given an estate and a seat on the governmental council in Mexico City. He died on September 22, 1554.

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Henry Hudson

Henry Hudson was an explorer who helped influence the Dutch colonization of America with his extensive journeys to the unknown land.

Very little is known about Hudson's background. As one recent historian noted, "Everything we know about Hudson's career took place within a four-year period." Between April 19, 1607 and June 23, 1611, Hudson lived in England and married a woman named Katherine, who bore him three sons—Oliver, John (who accompanied his father on his voyages), and Richard. Katherine died in 1624.



Believing that a northern passage must exist around the globe, Hudson spent much of his time exploring the northern hemisphere in an attempt to locate a short route from Europe to the Orient. He embarked on four major voyages, the first one in 1607, when he was hired by the Muscovy Company (a consortium of 100 London merchants) to seek the Northwest Passage by way of the North Pole. Heading the *Hope-well*, Hudson left England on May 1, 1607. He traveled north to the island of Spitzbergen (part of Norway) and came within just under 600 miles of the North Pole. Treacherous weather prevented further exploration and the *Hope-well* headed south back to England, arriving on September 15, 1607. Hudson failed to find the route he was looking for, but he did establish that there was far too much ice in the northern realms to pursue a passage over the North Pole to the Far East.

Hudson set off on his second voyage in 1608 again under the Muscovy Company. He decided to seek a northeastern passage by sailing along the northern coast of Siberia to the Pacific. He and his crew, once again on the *Hope-well*, left London on April 22, 1608. They traveled north along the coastline of Norway and into the Barents Sea and attempted to reach the Kara Sea, but only made it as far as the island of Novaya Zemlya. Once again, the inhospitable climate, characterized by ice and storms, prevented the crew from traveling any further. They turned back to England, arriving on August 26, 1608 with nothing to show for their efforts except walrus hides, tusks, and blubber.

Hudson's third voyage began in 1609 under the auspices of a company in Holland, the newly formed Dutch East India Company. By 1609, England's interest in finding the Northeast Passage had dissipated, but Holland was vastly interested in exploration. The company hired Hudson on January 8, 1609 to head a new expedition. His assignment was to sail around the northern shores of Novaya Zemlya and then head south in search of the Northeast Passage. Hudson and his crew embarked on their journey on March 25, 1609 aboard the ship the *Half Moon*. They made it as far as the North Cape (the northern tip of Norway), but tumultuous weather forced them to turn back.

Instead of returning back to Holland, however, Hudson decided to ignore the Dutch East India Company's direct orders and sail to the Atlantic coast of America, convinced that the way to the Far East was through the northwest, not the northeast. Hudson was also persuaded by a mutiny on the part of his Dutch crew, who had little desire to explore the extremely cold and icy regions of the north. Once Hudson and his men reached North America, they started their investigation of the coastline around the Chesapeake Bay and proceeded to move

north. On September 12, the *Half Moon* entered a river leading to the future site of Albany, New York; the river would later be named the Hudson River. On November 7, 1609, Hudson and his crew returned to England.

Hudson's fourth and last journey was once again under English employers. This time, he was given the go-ahead for seeking the Northwest Passage across the North American continent. He took command of a newer and bigger ship, the *Discovery*, and with 23 men, headed west on April 17, 1610. Sailing under the southern tip of Greenland and across the Davis Strait, Hudson and his crew sailed into what would later be known as the Hudson Strait (under the southern shores of Baffin Island) and into Hudson Bay. It was a treacherous journey down the western coast of Quebec, and the crew battled for months against the gigantic floating islands of ice as well as huge icebergs.

They wintered on the shores of James Bay but faced severe food shortages and fierce winter storms. Under this stress, and without proper food and supplies, the sailors became extremely ill with scurvy and frostbite. On June 22, 1611, the crew launched a mutiny against Hudson and eight other crew members, including Hudson's son, Richard. The sailors bound Hudson, set him and eight crew members aboard a small boat, and set them adrift. The remaining crew sailed back to England where they were tried and acquitted.

No clear evidence remains as to what happened to Hudson and the eight crew members, although a number of captains and fur traders reported spying the ruins of a house suspected to be built by one of the crew members, a carpenter. It is uncertain, however, whether their tales were true.

Further Reading

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