Europeans Explore the World

In the second half of the 15th century, European sailors began to plan voyages that would take them beyond the limits of the world they knew. The new interest in the world came in part from the Renaissance, but the main reason was to set up new trading links with spice-producing lands in Asia.

Spices were an essential part of everyday life for the Europeans. Refrigeration had not yet been invented, so the only way to preserve meat was to salt it. Adding spices helped to hide the salty taste. The spices also concealed the taste of meat that had gone bad.

The Turks defeated the Byzantine Empire in 1453, cutting the land link between Europe and Asia. If spices were to reach Europe, a sea route to Asia had to be found. Prince Henry the Navigator of Portugal set up a school for sailors and encouraged the exploration of the African coast. In 1486, Bartholomeu Dias and his crew became the first Portuguese sailors to reach the southern tip of Africa, but he turned back because his crew was unwilling to travel any further. Ten years later, Dias helped another Portuguese sailor, Vasco da Gama, plan a voyage around Africa to India.

Christopher Columbus hoped to reach India by sailing west. When the Portuguese king would not sponsor his voyage, he asked Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. After six years, they agreed. When Columbus reached a group of islands across the Atlantic Ocean in 1492, he was certain he had reached his goal. Columbus called the native people Indians. This is why the Caribbean islands are known as the West Indies. Columbus made three more voyages to the Caribbean, but he never realized his mistake.

Answer in Complete Sentences

1. Why were Europeans motivated to plan voyages beyond the limits of the world they knew?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. Explain why spices were an essential part of everyday life for Europeans.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

*This is a higher order learning question. You will earn credit for any reasonable answer. ©2013 Mike Dowling, www.mrdowling.com, All rights reserved.
In 1453, the T________ defeated the B________________ Empire, cutting off the l______ link between E___________ and A______. Europeans depended on Asian s__________ to h_______ the s_______ taste of p________________, meat and to c___________ the taste of *r________ (bad or stale) meat.

Prince H________ the N________________ of P______________ believed the best s____ route to A______ was around A__________. Henry set up a s__________ for s__________ and e_______________ the e_______________ of the A___________ coast. Bartholomeu D______ reached the s_______________ tip of Africa in 1486. Ten years later, V________ da G______ surpassed D______ by sailing around A___________ to reach I__________.

Christopher Columbus hoped to reach I__________ by sailing w________. When Columbus failed to persuade the king of P______________ to s__________ his v__________, he turned to F_______________ and I_______________ of S_______. Columbus reached a group of i_______________ across the A_______________, and was c___________ he had r_______________ goal. Columbus called the n___________ people “I____________,” which is why the C_______________ islands are known as the West I____________. Columbus made a total of f______ voyages to the C________________, but he died in 1506 not knowing he *d_______________ America.

Answer in Complete Sentences

*3. Which route to Asia was better, the Spanish journey west, or the Portuguese journey around Africa? Defend your answer.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________