

Name: _____
Date: _____

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.

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Fill in the Blanks

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.

*This is a higher order learning question. You will earn credit for any reasonable answer.

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