

## Explorers and Trade



Magellan - The first person to sail around the world.

There were many famous explorers who paved the way for others to follow their route and make large profits from trade goods. The desire to learn more about the world and the desire to spread Christianity are often described as the reasons to explore, but profit, the ability to make more money in a single trip than a person could in a lifetime was another powerful motivation. Monarchs would quickly come to realize that huge profits could be taxed when these trading explorers came home, so it was in the interests of both the Monarchs and the explorers to seek out new lands and new trading partners.

### Asia and the Spice Trade

Since the Crusades, Europeans had been exposed and developed a taste for many of the spices that could be found overseas. Although the Crusades took Europeans to the Middle East, there existed in the Middle East overland trade routes such as the famous "**Silk Road**" that brought exotic spices and trade items like silk from Asia. The Europeans became aware of where these items came from and sought sea routes. If the Europeans could find their own sea routes to China and India, they could avoid the overland traders, deal directly with Asian traders and carry much larger amounts of freight. A trading ship could carry freight measured in tons where an overland trader, such as someone who travelled over the Silk Road, relied upon animals like camels to carry goods that were measured in kilos.

In addition to dealing directly in large volumes, the traditional overland route was closed to many Europeans when the city of Constantinople, the gateway to east, was closed to Europe after it fell to the Turkish army in 1453. However, by this time, Europeans had grown accustomed to Asian goods and money was to be made if they could only get to Asia by themselves.

### Portugal Leads the Way

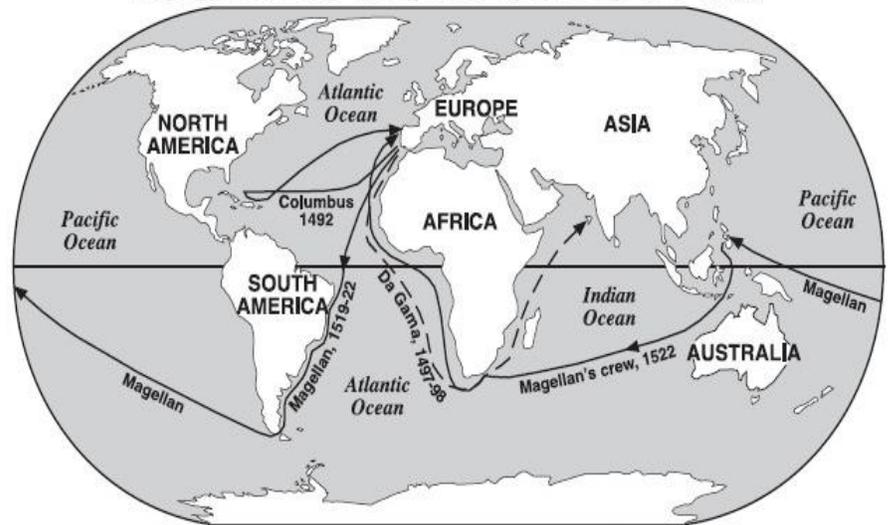
Portuguese traders and explorers were supported by their Prince Henry. Henry was a devote Catholic who saw exploration as a way to spread Christianity while making money along the way. The Portuguese had been sailing south to Africa, getting closer and closer to the equator. Sailing past the equator was a big leap for early explorers because sailing past the equator would result in losing the stars that they relied upon to find their way home. For many, sailing past the equator was a huge unknown, and to many, they believed that the equator literally marked the "end of the world". Henry would use science and learning to push the Portuguese around the tip of Africa and into the Indian Ocean. Henry would set up schools that taught the latest in navigation and the **logistics** of sailing at sea for long periods of time. Although Henry would never sail to Africa or Asia himself, his very important support for exploration would earn him the nickname "Henry the Navigator".

**Silk Road**- the overland trade route from Asia to the Mid-East

**Logistics** - the detailed planning of supplying and preparing a ship for long voyages away from home.

## Voyages of Early European Explorers (1492–1522)

The Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama would be the first European to do what many thought was impossible, he travelled by sea around the tip of South Africa. This tip would later come to be known as the **Cape of Good Hope**, and along with the **Cape Horn** which rounds the tip of South America are the two sea routes out of the Atlantic and into the Indian and Pacific oceans. Once word of da Gama's considerable feat of sailing past the equator and around the Cape into the Indian Ocean spread around Europe, other explorers would follow.



### European Explorers Travel Afar

Spain was quick to see the benefit of exploring and trading overseas. The King and Queen of Spain would sponsor many expeditions that would not only discover new lands for the Europeans, but also bring back many trade goods that were then sold for huge profits. The Spanish would even sponsor foreign explorers like the Italian Christopher Columbus to "discover" new lands for Spain. In 1492 Columbus "sailed the ocean blue" and he bumped into North America in an attempt to find a western route to Asia. By this time, most Europeans were finally listening to the great scientists of Europe who were saying the world was round and a person could reach Asia by going either East or West. Columbus was convinced that he could find a western route to Asia, but because his calculations as to how large the globe is resulted in him "bumping into" the continents of North and South America without ever reaching Asia.

Ferdinand Magellan was another foreign explorer that sailed for Spain. Magellan was Portuguese and Magellan would be the first person to **circumnavigate** the world. He would leave Spain, head west and return home from the East. Magellan's biggest feat on this trip would be to sail "around the Horn" or sail around the southern tip of South America. The southern tip of South America is particularly dangerous, and his route through the islands that dot that region came to be known as the Straits of Magellan and even today the Straits of Magellan are some of the most dangerous sea routes in the world.

Magellan's route around the Horn would be closely guarded secret for many years because by keeping that route secret, it allowed the Spanish to explore and exploit all of western South and North America without interference from any other European country. The Spanish dominance of the North and South American trade would make Spain extremely wealthy and the most powerful nation in Europe. That is, more powerful than any other nation until the British and the British pirates started terrorizing the seas.

**Cape of Good Hope** - The southernmost part of Africa and the entrance to the Indian Ocean coming from the south Atlantic.

**Cape Horn** - The southernmost part of South America and the entrance to the Pacific from the south Atlantic.

**Circumnavigate** - to sail around the world.

## Explorers and Trade

**Directions:** READ the handout entitled; "Explorers and Trade" and then answer the following questions:

1. Use your handout to provide definitions for the following terms: (1 mark each)

Silk Road	Logistics	Cape of Good Hope
Cape Horn	Circumnavigate	

2. On a separate piece of paper, answer the following questions using **COMPLETE SENTENCES**:

- a. In your own words, describe how Europeans got their hands on trade goods from Asia before the explorers. Describe a benefit of the sailing explorers had by finding their own routes to Asia. (2 marks for quality of response and inclusion of details)
- b. In your own words describe how the Portuguese monarch Henry earned the nickname "Henry the Navigator". What Portuguese explorer would eventually round the Cape of Good Hope and lead the way for Europeans to find their way to Asia to trade. (2 marks for the quality of your response and evidence of thought and effort)
- c. In your own words, describe who would be the first person to circumnavigate the world. Why would his route to the Pacific from the Atlantic be such a closely guarded secret? (2 marks for quality of response and evidence of insight)

3. Map - Use colour and label the following map that outlines the major exploratory routes of the early European explorers of Columbus, De Gama and Magellan (use textbook p. 255).

You will be marked out of 5 for proper labelling, quality of work and evidence of effort.

Total: \_\_\_\_ /16

## Voyages of Early European Explorers (1492–1522)

