

Exploration, Colonization & the Atlantic Slave Trade

Review Sheet

Motives for exploration - They wanted to sail west across the Atlantic in search of an alternate trade route to Asia and its riches, such as gold. This started with Christopher Columbus for Spain.

Technological Advances - During the 1200s, it would have been nearly impossible for a European sea captain to cross 3,000 miles of ocean and return again. The main problem was that European ships could not sail against the wind. In the 1400s, shipbuilders designed a new vessel, the caravel. The caravel was sturdier than earlier vessels. In addition, triangular sails adopted from the Arabs allowed it to sail effectively against the wind. Europeans also improved their navigational techniques. To better determine their location at sea, sailors used the astrolabe, which the Muslims had perfected. The astrolabe was a brass circle with carefully adjusted rings marked off in degrees. Using the rings to sight the stars, a sea captain could calculate latitude, or how far north or south of the equator the ship was. Explorers were also able to more accurately track direction by using a magnetic compass, a Chinese invention.

Spain vs. Portugal - They both desired a direct sea route to Asia. In 1492, an Italian sea captain, Christopher Columbus, convinced Spain to finance a bold plan: finding a route to Asia by sailing west across the Atlantic Ocean. In October of that year, Columbus reached an island in the Caribbean. The immediate impact of Columbus's voyage, was to increase tensions between Spain and Portugal. The Portuguese believed that Columbus had reached Asia and that he had claimed lands for Spain that Portuguese sailors might have reached first. The rivalry between Spain and Portugal grew more tense.

Solution: In 1493, Pope Alexander VI stepped in to keep peace between the two nations. He suggested an imaginary dividing line, drawn north to south, through the Atlantic Ocean. All lands to the west of the line, known as the Line of Demarcation, would be Spain's. These lands included most of the Americas. All lands to the east of the line would belong to Portugal. Portugal complained that the line gave too much to Spain. So it was moved farther west to include parts of modern-day Brazil for the Portuguese. In 1494, Spain and Portugal signed the Treaty of Tordesillas, in which they agreed to honor the line. The era of exploration and colonization was about to begin in earnest.

Christopher Columbus - Competition for wealth in Asia among European nations was fierce. This competition prompted a Genoese sea captain named Christopher Columbus to make a daring voyage for Spain in 1492. Instead of sailing south around Africa and then east, Columbus sailed west across the Atlantic in search of an alternate trade route to Asia and its riches. Columbus never reached Asia. Instead, he stepped onto an island in the Caribbean. That event would bring together the peoples of Europe, Africa, and the Americas. His voyage would open the way for European colonization of the Americas—a process that would forever change the world. Scholars believe he landed instead on an island in the Bahamas in the Caribbean Sea. The natives there were not Indians, but a group who called themselves the Taino. Nonetheless, Columbus claimed the island for Spain. He named it San Salvador, or “Holy Savior.” Columbus, like other explorers, was interested in gold. Finding none on San Salvador, he explored other islands, staking his claim to each one. “It was my wish to bypass no island without taking possession,” he wrote.

Francisco Pizarro: Peru, Atahualpa - In 1532, Francisco Pizarro, marched a small force into South America. Pizarro and his army of about 200 met the Incan ruler,

Atahualpa (AH•tuh•WAHL•puh), near the city of Cajamarca. Atahualpa, who commanded a force of about 30,000, brought several thousand mostly unarmed men for the meeting. The Spaniards waited in ambush, crushed the Incan force, and kidnapped Atahualpa. Atahualpa offered to fill a room once with gold and twice with silver in exchange for his release. However, after receiving the ransom, the Spanish strangled the Incan king. Demoralized by their leader's death, the remaining Incan force retreated from Cajamarca. Pizarro then marched on the Incan capital, Cuzco. He captured it without a struggle in 1533. As Cortés and Pizarro conquered the civilizations of the Americas, fellow conquistadors defeated other native peoples. Spanish explorers also conquered the Maya in Yucatan and Guatemala. By the middle of the 16th century, Spain had created an American empire. It included New Spain (Mexico and parts of Guatemala), as well as other lands in Central and South America and the Caribbean.

Hernando Cortes: Aztec, Montezuma II - He was a Spanish conquistador, who landed on the shores of Mexico. The Spanish were the first European settlers in the Americas. Soon after landing in Mexico, Cortés learned of the vast and wealthy Aztec Empire in the region's interior. Cortés and his force of roughly 600 men reached the magnificent Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán (teh•NAWCH•tee•TLAHN). The Aztec emperor, Montezuma II, was convinced at first that Cortés was a god wearing armor. He agreed to give the Spanish explorer a share of the empire's existing gold supply. The conquistador was not satisfied. Cortés admitted that he and his comrades had a "disease of the heart that only gold can cure." In the late spring of 1520, some of Cortés's men killed many Aztec warriors and chiefs while they were celebrating a religious festival. In June of 1520, the Aztecs rebelled against the Spanish intruders and drove out Cortés's forces. The Spaniards, however, struck back. Despite being greatly outnumbered, Cortés and his men conquered the Aztecs in 1521. Several factors played a key role in the stunning victory. First, the **Spanish had the advantage of superior weaponry.** Aztec arrows were no match for the Spaniards' muskets and cannons. Second, **Cortés was able to enlist the help of various native groups.** With the aid of a native woman translator named Malinche, **Cortés learned that some natives resented the Aztecs.** They **hated their harsh practices, including human sacrifice.** Through Malinche, Cortés convinced these natives to fight on his side. Finally, and most important, the natives could do little to stop the invisible warrior that marched alongside the Spaniards—disease. Measles, mumps, smallpox, and typhus were just some of the diseases Europeans were to bring with them to the Americas. Native Americans had never been exposed to these diseases. Thus, they had developed no natural immunity to them. As a result, they died by the hundreds of thousands. By the time Cortés launched his counterattack, the Aztec population had been greatly reduced by smallpox and measles. In time, European disease would truly devastate the natives of Central Mexico, killing millions of them.

Conquistador - (Conquerors) Cortés and the many other Spanish explorers who followed him .

Colonies - Lands that are controlled by another nation. The Spanish intended to transform the islands of the Caribbean into colonies. Over the next two centuries, other European explorers began sailing across the Atlantic in search of new lands to claim.

Mestizo - A mixed Spanish and Native American population. This was created because the Spanish settlers to the Americas were mostly men. As a result, relationships between Spanish settlers and native women were common.

Exploration and exploitation of the America's - In building their new American empire, the Spaniards drew from techniques used during the reconquista of Spain. When conquering the Muslims, the Spanish lived among them and imposed their Spanish culture upon them. The Spanish settlers to the Americas, known as peninsulares, were mostly men. As a result, relationships between Spanish settlers and native women were common. These relationships created a large mestizo population. Although the Spanish conquerors lived among the native people, they also oppressed them. In their effort to exploit the land for its precious resources, the Spanish forced Native Americans to work within a system known as *encomienda*. Under this system, natives farmed, ranched, or mined for Spanish landlords. These landlords had received the rights to the natives' labor from Spanish authorities. The holders of *encomiendas* promised the Spanish rulers that they would act fairly and respect the workers. However, many abused the natives and worked many laborers to death, especially inside dangerous mines.

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Colonization: motives, effects - European nations, such as England, France, and the Netherlands, soon became interested in obtaining their own valuable colonies. The Treaty of Tordesillas, signed in 1494, had divided the newly discovered lands between Spain and Portugal. However, other European countries ignored the treaty. They set out to build their own empires in the Americas. **Effects:** This resulted in a struggle for North America.

Jamestown - The explorations of the Spanish and French inspired the English. In 1606, a company of London investors received from King James a charter to found a colony in North America. In late 1606, the company's three ships, and more than 100 settlers, pushed out of an English harbor. About four months later, in 1607, they reached the coast of Virginia. The colonists claimed the land as theirs. They named the settlement Jamestown in honor of their king. **The Settlement at Jamestown:** The colony's start was disastrous. The settlers were more interested in finding gold than in planting crops. During the first few years, seven out of every ten people died of hunger, disease, or battles with the Native Americans. Despite their nightmarish start, the colonists eventually gained a foothold in their new land. Jamestown became England's first permanent settlement in North America. The colony's outlook improved greatly after farmers there discovered tobacco. High demand in England for tobacco turned it into a profitable cash crop.

French, Dutch, and British in North America - As they expanded their settlements in North America, the nations of France, England, and the Netherlands battled each other for colonial supremacy. To the English, New Netherland separated their northern and southern colonies. In 1664, the English king, Charles II, granted his brother, the Duke of York, permission to drive out the Dutch. When the duke's fleet arrived at New Netherland, the Dutch surrendered without firing a shot. The Duke of York claimed

the colony for England and renamed it New York. With the Dutch gone, the English colonized the Atlantic coast of North America. By 1750, about 1.2 million English settlers lived in 13 colonies from Maine to Georgia. **England Battles France:** The English soon became hungry for more land for their colonial population. So they pushed farther west into the continent. By doing so, they collided with France's North American holdings. As their colonies expanded, France and England began to interfere with each other. It seemed that a major conflict was on the horizon.

French and Indian War - In 1754 a dispute over land claims in the Ohio Valley led to a war between the British and French on the North American continent. The conflict became known as the French and Indian War. The war became part of a larger conflict **known as the Seven Years' War.** Britain and France, along with their European allies, also battled for supremacy in Europe, the West Indies, and India. In North America, the British colonists, with the help of the British Army, defeated the French in 1763. The French surrendered their North American holdings. As a result of the war, the British seized control of the eastern half of North America.

Mercantilism - Definition: An economic policy, which said that a country's power, depended mainly on its wealth. **Information:** Wealth, after all, allowed nations to build strong navies and purchase vital goods. As a result, the goal of every nation became the attainment of as much wealth as possible.

Columbian Exchange - Definition: The global transfer of foods, plants, and animals during the colonization of the Americas. **Information:** Ships from the Americas brought back a wide array of items that Europeans, Asians, and Africans had never before seen. They included such plants as tomatoes, squash, pineapples, tobacco, and cacao beans (for chocolate). And they included animals such as the turkey, which became a source of food in the Eastern Hemisphere. Perhaps the most important items to travel from the Americas to the rest of the world were corn and potatoes. Both were inexpensive to grow and nutritious. Potatoes, especially, supplied many essential vitamins and minerals. Over time, both crops became an important and steady part of diets throughout the world. These foods helped people live longer. Thus they played a significant role in boosting the world's population.

Favorable Balance of Trade - Definition: When a nation sells more goods than it buys. **Information:** According to the theory of mercantilism, a nation could increase its wealth and power in two ways. (First, it could obtain as much gold and silver as possible.) Second, it could establish a favorable balance of trade. A nation's ultimate goal under mercantilism was to become self-sufficient, not dependent on other countries for goods.

Joint Stock Company - Definition: Worked much like the modern-day corporation, with investors buying shares of stock in a company. It involved a number of people combining their wealth for a common purpose. **Information:** Because joint-stock companies involved numerous investors, the individual members paid only a fraction of the total colonization cost. If the colony failed, investors lost only their small share. If the colony thrived, the investors shared in the profits.

Growth of capitalism - One aspect of the European economic revolution was the growth of **capitalism** (**Definition:** an economic system based on private ownership and the investment of resources, such as money, for profit.). No longer were governments the only owners of great wealth. Due to overseas colonization and trade, numerous merchants had obtained great wealth.

Triangular Trade - Africans transported to the Americas were part of a transatlantic trading network known as the triangular trade. Over one trade route, Europeans transported manufactured goods to the west coast of Africa. There, traders exchanged

these goods for captured Africans. The Africans were then transported across the Atlantic and sold in the West Indies. Merchants bought sugar, coffee, and tobacco in the West Indies and sailed to Europe with these products. On another triangular route, merchants carried rum and other goods from the New England colonies to Africa. There they exchanged their merchandise for Africans. The traders transported the Africans to the West Indies and sold them for sugar and molasses. They then sold these goods to rum producers in New England.

Middle Passage - The voyage that brought captured Africans to the West Indies and later to North and South America was known as the middle passage. It was considered the middle leg of the transatlantic trade triangle. Sickening cruelty characterized this journey. In African ports, European traders packed Africans into the dark holds of large ships. On board, Africans endured whippings and beatings from merchants, as well as diseases that swept through the vessel. Numerous Africans died from disease or physical abuse aboard the slave ships. Many others committed suicide by drowning. Scholars estimate that roughly 20 percent of the Africans aboard each slave ship perished during the brutal trip.

Atlantic Slave Trade: causes, effects, slavery across time -

Puritans - This group, known as Puritans also sought religious freedom from England's Anglican Church, ten years after the Pilgrims. They established a larger colony at nearby Massachusetts Bay. The Puritans wanted to build a model community that would set an example for other Christians to follow. Although the colony experienced early difficulties, it gradually took hold. This was due in large part to the numerous families in the colony, unlike the mostly single, male population in Jamestown.

Pilgrims - In 1620, a group known as Pilgrims founded a second English colony, Plymouth, in Massachusetts. Persecuted for their religious beliefs in England, these colonists sought religious freedom.

Economic changes and European society - The economic changes that swept through much of Europe during the age of American colonization also led to changes in European society. The economic revolution spurred the growth of towns and the rise of a class of merchants who controlled great wealth. The changes in European society, however, only went so far. While towns and cities grew in size, much of Europe's population continued to live in rural areas. And although merchants and traders enjoyed social mobility, the majority of Europeans remained poor. More than anything else, the economic revolution increased the wealth of European nations. In addition, mercantilism contributed to the creation of a national identity.

Colonial products -

