

Exploration and Contact

- A. Why Europe?
 - a. If one were to gamble in the 15th Century on which civilization would discover and exploit the riches of the New World, Europeans would not have been likely candidates.
 - b. Other Empires
 - i. China – a large and powerful Empire which had more resources and had already moved into the Indian Ocean
 - ii. Mogul Empire of India
 - iii. The Ottoman Empire – would have been the best bet for expansion.
 - c. Europe was politically fragmented
 - i. Germany and Italy were not created until the 19th century and were divided into city-states and small principalities.
 - ii. France and England had contended with civil wars
 - iii. Only Portugal and Spain had emerged as nations and they were small.
 - d. Factors for Success
 - i. Europe's political fragmentation created immense competition
 - ii. Europe produced the most dynamic economic system, capitalism as in its early stages, things like private property, legally binding contracts, consolidation of trade networks and double entry bookkeeping
 - iii. The culture of Europe – the Judeo-Christian worldview (a linear world view) and the emergence of modern science.
 - iv. Europe put to use all of the modern technological inventions, much of it gained from the East, to move across the oceans.
 - v. Most importantly, the creation of the Nation-State as a political structure organized and directed the resources, from which came standing armies capable of operating thousands of miles from the centers of power.
- B. Early European Exploration
 - a. The East
 - i. Beginning in the 13th century Missionaries were traveling East
 - ii. Marco Polo
 - 1. In the Late 13th century he lived with the Great Khan in China.
 - 2. This revived East-West Trade which declined and nearly disappeared since the Roman Empire
 - iii. The Silk Road
 - 1. The Silk Road was a combination of land and sea routes from China and India to Europe
 - 2. Silks, stones and spices were traded through many hands before reaching Europe.
 - 3. On the European end the Italian cities states picked trade goods up from the Eastern Mediterranean.
 - iv. Muslim Expansion
 - 1. The expansion of Islam disrupted Europe's Silk Road trade.
 - 2. The Fall of Constantinople in 1453 was particularly detrimental to European access to silk and spices.

- b. The West
 - i. Vikings
- C. Advances in Technology
 - a. By 1500 it was common knowledge that the world was round.
 - b. Imago Mundi – 1410
 - i. A book combining spiritual references, legends and traveler’s tales.
 - c. Ships
 - i. In the Early 15th century Eastern ships were of better design than European ships.
 - ii. By the end of the 15th century European ships had better combinations of carrying capacity and weaponry.
 - d. Naval Technology
 - i. Sextant
 - ii. Compass
 - iii. Advances in Cartography
 - iv. Lateen Sails
 - e. Gunpowder
 - i. Gunpowder was brought from China in the 13th century
 - ii. The Chinese primarily used gunpowder as an explosive
 - iii. Europeans combined the metal work involved in making bells and used gunpowder as a propellant.
 - iv. Europeans were the first to put guns on ships, first on the bow of the ship and then later on the broadside.
- D. The Portuguese and Spanish
 - a. These two kingdoms consolidated early.
 - b. Both were militant and aggressive in the spread of Christianity
 - c. Their Islamic eras, had put them ahead of other Europeans in science and technology for navigation.
 - d. Prince Henry the Navigator
 - i. Establish a Naval school at the city of Sarges
 - ii. He led the first efforts at explorations of the West African Coast
 - e. Cuerta
 - i. The first European Colony
 - ii. Est. 1415
 - f. Further Exploration
 - i. The Portuguese established a monopoly on the African Gold Coast
 - ii. They establish trading post but would not colonize like the Spanish in the Americas.
 - iii. Their long-term goal was to reach China.
- E. The Impact of Discovery
 - a. The discovery of the New World was a turning point in world history, it brought the “Old World” and the “New World” together.
 - i. Both were biologically and culturally isolated for thousands of years
 - b. Consequences

- i. It would lead to invasion, conquest and decimation of the peoples of the Americas
 - ii. It was the beginning of the process of European hegemony
 - iii. The biological exchange of plants, animals and disease reshaped the world ecologically and culturally.
- F. Christopher Columbus
 - a. Early Life
 - i. He was born in Genoa, Italy in 1451 who began sailing at a young age.
 - ii. In the 1470's, he took up residence in Lisbon
 - b. The Enterprise of the Indies
 - i. His plans to reach Asia by sailing West
 - 1. Two flaws – underestimating the circumference of the Earth and overestimating the size of Asia.
 - 2. He believed that the voyage was 2400 miles, capable for ships at the time.
 - ii. Columbus was driven by the pursuit of gold, glory and the spread of Christianity
 - c. The Voyage
 - i. The Spanish crown partially financed the voyage, with Columbus and other private citizens contributing the rest.
 - ii. He left August of 1492 and arrived in October.
 - iii. He made several other voyages, always believing that he was in the East.
 - d. The discovery of America was at first a disappointment, it was an obstacle to reaching the Orient.
 - i. Later expeditions tried to find a way around.
 - 1. Magellan (1598) sailed around South America and discovered that the voyage was considerably longer than previously supposed.
 - 2. Balboa crossed the Isthmus of Panama
 - 3. The Northwest Passage
 - ii. When no path appeared, the attentions of the state turned elsewhere, which encouraged freebooters or filibusterers, looking for treasure in America.
- G. Other Explorations
 - a. Ponce de Leon – explored Cuba and later Florida
 - b. Cabeza de Vaca – shipwrecked during the Narvaez Expedition and went on an 8 year trek through the American Southwest
 - c. Hernan de Soto – died on an exploration of the Mississippi valley in 1542