

Name: _____ Hour: _____

Exploration: For Gold, Glory, and God

Historically, most explorations began as searches for new trade routes. However, the discovery of the Americas changed all that. It created new desires in the hearts of kings, emperors and explorers. Land was hard to get in Europe as populations grew. Every bit of it had already been claimed. The prospect of vast open lands in the Americas excited the sailors to action. The lands were also reportedly full of rich resources. The bountiful land also encouraged rulers to put up the money for sailing expenses in the hopes of receiving far more wealth in return.

Religion was another reason for exploration and colonization. When Protestants rebelled against the Catholic Church, calling for its reform, the Catholic Church launched the Counter Reformation. This was a time when Catholic nations did everything they could to convert new believers to Catholicism. Establishing a new colony was an opportunity for the church to convert the natives.

Each time another explorer went to seek his fortunes, to convert natives to his religion or to make a name for himself as a brave adventurer, the face of the world changed again. Cartographers, the people who make maps, struggled to keep up with the new discoveries. In their hurry to publish “newer” and “better” maps, unknown areas were often filled in with things the cartographer imagined. Sometimes the cartographer decorated it with angels, spirits or demons to represent the unknown.

The world became a smaller place with each exploration. Finally, in 1519, Ferdinand Magellan began his historic voyage. He became the first explorer to realize the original dream of sailing west to Asia. In the name of Spain, Magellan’s crew did something else remarkable in the process, as well. They were the first people ever to circumnavigate the globe. Circumnavigation means to sail completely around the entire world. Sadly, Magellan did not live to see the three year journey completed. He died during battle with natives in Asia in 1521. Only one of his five ships and 18 of his 250 men returned home in 1522.

Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1) Do you think it was moral for European nations to claim lands in the Americas that were already inhabited by natives? Why or why not?

2) Why do cartographers add artistic pictures like angels, to their maps?

3) God, Gold, and Glory were three reasons for exploration. Which of these might motivate you to go exploring? Explain.

4) Considering that so many died, was Magellan's voyage a success? Why or why not?

5) What does circumnavigate mean?