THE AGE OF EXPLORATION: Europe Encounters the World

Why did explorations happen when they did? A variety of factors came together to make the time period 1450–1700 the "age of exploration."

The decline of the Mongol Empire in 1400s made goods from China & India harder to get and more expensive. The fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453 was a major roadblock to trade.

What is the easiest way to remember to all? "The Three G's"

- Gold
- Glory
- God

The First G = **GOLD**

Gold was a hot item that explorers were looking for, but remember it was **wealth**, not just literal gold that explorers were after.

Europe needed gold (and **silver**) to fuel the rising **banking system**.

Europe also desired **spices** that were usually found in southern **Asia**.

Other **natural resources** such as timber, **sugar**, **tobacco**, ivory, etc. would come to be sold for profit as well.

This competition would be enhanced by the idea of **mercantilism** that emerges, the idea that there is only so much wealth in the world, and that to make your kingdom strong you must have **more gold and wealth than the other kingdoms**.

The Second G = **GLORY**

Just like the first G, gold, **glory** was relatively a new idea in Europe.

It came out of the **Renaissance** ideal of Humanism, and the focus on individual achievement.

With the rise of the **printing press**, the idea of gaining fame for one's actions was more possible.

Also, individual kings wanted **glory for their kingdom**, so competition spreads.

The Third G = **GOD**

As members of a universalizing religion, Europeans had always viewed spreading **Christianity** as a good thing.

Especially after the reformation, competition among religions would spring up.

**Colonization** would become a race to convert native peoples to a particular brand of **Christianity**.

Jesuits (Catholics) were some of the most active in spreading Christianity.

What were the new technologies that enabled explorations?
The **caravel** was a faster, more maneuverable ship. The compass, **astrolabe**, maps and other technologies from **Islamic** culture all helped make explorations possible.

How did these explorations begin? – The Explorers

The first to encourage new ship explorations was **Prince Henry** of Portugal. He was known as Prince Henry the **Navigator**. Prince Henry wanted to find a **water route** to India to make trade easier.
Prince Henry started an institute for seafaring and exploring. Combined ship technology learned from Islam with new European innovations. Prince Henry also employed cartographers who created the most sophisticated maps of their time. Prince Henry seldom left Portugal but he helped make it possible for the first Europeans to explore Africa. By the time of his death in 1460, Portuguese sailors had sailed as far south as the Gold Coast of West Africa.

- Christopher Columbus
  He determined the Earth was round by studying Ptolemy. He, like Prince Henry, believed that there had to be a shortcut to new lands by sailing west. He first asked the king of Portugal for financing no; in 1484, he asked Spanish monarchs and was rebuffed; in 1492 he persisted with Spain and voyages were financed because the monarch saw both financial and religious advantages. Columbus' 4 trips lasted from 1492 to 1504. He arrived in the Caribbean and thought that he had arrived in the Indies -- actually it was present day Bahamas. Through his four voyages, he landed on present day Central America, South America, Caribbean Islands.

- Ferdinand Magellan
  His sailors tried to mutiny but he crushed it. In 1520 he found a southwest passage that took him around the tip of South America -- he named it the Strait of Magellan. In 1521 he reached the island of Guam where he died. Only one of his 5 ships returned with only 19 crew members and valuable cargo.

- Henry Hudson
  He was commissioned by several trade companies to find a northern water route to Asia. He explored parts of the Arctic Ocean and northeastern North America. His crew mutinied in 1611 -- they put Hudson and his son and sick crew on a boat -- they were never heard from again. The Hudson River, the Hudson Strait, and Hudson Bay are all named for Hudson. He is also credited with finding what is now the location of New York City.

Pattern of European Contact with the World
Begin by trading.
Armed conflict -- Europeans had cannons and guns.
Set up trading partners some stayed to protect partners and Europeans.
Made alliances with local leaders.
Developed mercantilism -- used material from colony to sell finished products from Europe.

Columbian Exchange
The Columbian Exchange was a movement of plants, animals, and diseases between the hemispheres. The transfer of germs -- Native Americans had no immunity to European diseases like smallpox, measles, and influenza. Thus Native American populations decreased by 90%. Europeans brought cattle, pigs and grapes over. The Americas sent tomatoes, pineapples back to Europe.
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**Slave Trade**
Portuguese traded with Africa; first Africans worked in Portugal as servants, then to Brazil to work on plantations. Africans less susceptible to European diseases that Native Americans but the death rate was high; approximately 13-30% died just on the trip over. African middlemen were active – they depopulated entire areas of Africa. Food from Americas did help to increase the birthrate.

**Spice Trade**
Europeans need spices to preserve the meat and make it taste better when it started going bad -- refrigeration had not yet been invented. Portuguese led the way which angered Spain.

Spain and Portugal begin competing for land and trade routes (battles broke out at sea).

**Spain and Portugal**
Treaty of Tordesillas -- Line of Demarcation agreement made by the Pope. Gave Portugal all land east of mid-Atlantic; gave Spain all land west of mid-Atlantic. Then it was modified to give Brazil to Portugal.

**The World Dominated by Europe -- Colonization**
Africa was completely dominated by Europe with only one independent country: Ethiopia.

Southeast Asia: French in Vietnam, British in Burma & Spanish in Philippines, Dutch in Indonesia. In India, the French and British compete -- British wins. However, India was not independent until 1948. In South America the Spanish dominated: Others joined (French, Dutch, British, and Portuguese) too!

**Impact on World by European Contact**
Purpose was to serve the home country: slaves, furs, cotton, fish, spices, tobacco, gold, and silver.

In the Americas: More intermarriage by Spanish/Portuguese and French. Diseases were devastating: measles, influenza, smallpox. Violence common - many people died. Indigenous (native) people suffered; New colonies were settled; Slavery became widespread; Empires were built; Trade was lucrative $$$$$; Diets changed; Maps changed – THE WORLD CHANGED. Now everyone wants a piece of Africa!