

**Subject : Junior Cycle History**  
Teacher : Niall Lenehan

**LESSON 7**  
**The Age of Explorations  
and Conquest**

**LO: 3.2:** Evaluate the impact of conquest and colonisation on people, with particular reference to Portuguese and Spanish exploration.

**LO: 3.10:** Explore the significance of genocide, including the causes, course and consequences of the Holocaust

## We will learn

1. The causes, events and consequences of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century voyages of discovery.
2. The scientific and technological changes that made exploration possible.
3. The impact that Spanish and Portuguese activities had on the Americas.

## Key words - Define these

Conquest

Colonization

Scurvy

Empire

Caravel

Conquistador

Genocide

Navigation

## Why did countries begin to explore?

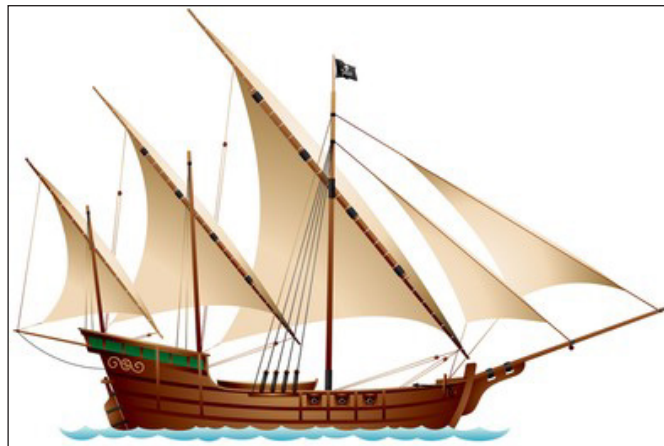
1. **Trade** - particularly with the East, and the demand for spices and silk.
  - A sea route was needed following the closure of the Great Silk Road after the Turks captured Constantinople.
2. **National pride and glory** - countries wanted to control colonies to increase wealth and national standing - the desire to build empires drove many European monarchs to sponsor exploratory voyages.



3. **Spreading the Christian religion** – the idea that explorers might bring Christianity to areas of the world where people still practised 'heathen' faiths.
4. **Developments in ship building and navigation**– made exploration of the oceans possible.
5. **Stories of Marco Polo** – Italian merchant Marco Polo travelled throughout Asia and documented his travels. He Would inspire many voyages during the age of explorations.

### How did technology aid the Age of Explorations?

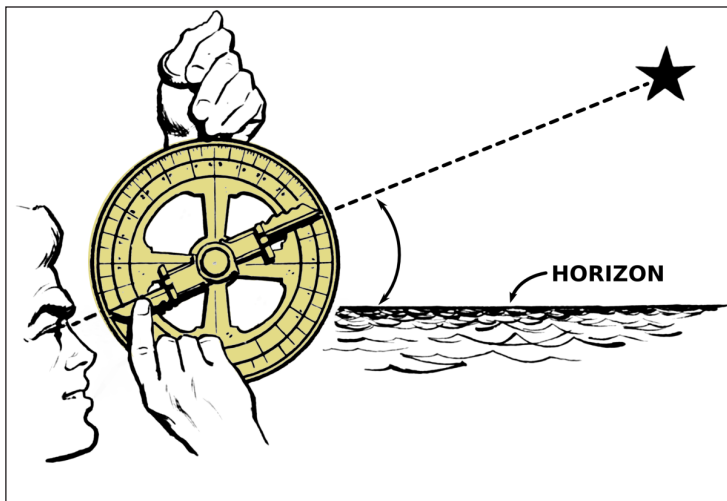
1. The **Caravel Ship** was developed.
  - They were **carvel-built**. This meant the boards on the ships hull were laid down edge to edge.
  - They had **square and lateen sails**. This meant the caravel could sail both with and against the wind.
  - They had **rudders** which aided steering.
  - They had raised watchtower structures called **castles**, allowing them to spot enemy ships.



2. **The compass** allowed sailors to tell the direction in which they were sailing in.
3. **Astrolabes and quadrants** allowed sailors to work out how far north or south of the equator they were.



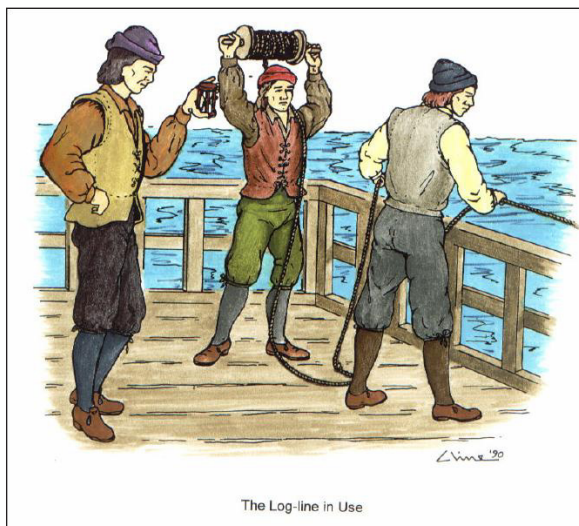
Compass



olabe

Astr

4. **Maps** began to become more and more detailed. The size, shape and area of landmasses and coastal areas began to become far more accurate on modern maps.
5. **The log and line** measured a ships speed. A long was thrown into the sea which was attached to a line (rope) which had knots tied in it. The speed was determined by counting the amount of knots which passed through a sailors hand over a period of time.



The Log-line in Use

Using the log and line



Map from before the Age of explorations





New Portolan chart map after the Age of Explorations

### Recap Exercise 7.1

- Q1. What items did Europeans want to get from trading with Asia?
- Q2. Why were countries willing to sponsor voyages?
- Q3. Why did Europeans want to spread the Christian religion?
- Q4. Who was Marco Polo and what did he do?
- Q5. Explain how two new pieces of technology allowed sailors to go on voyages of discovery.

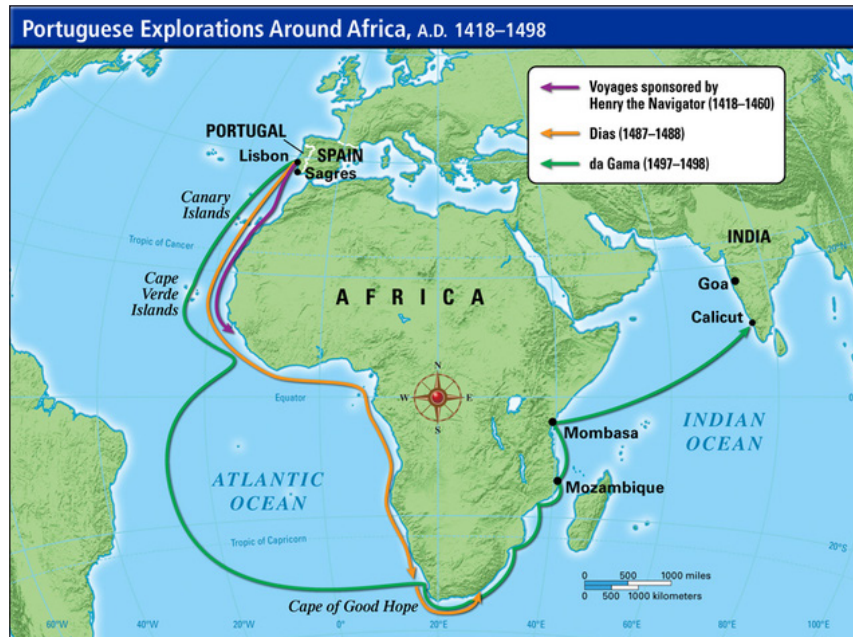
### The Portuguese Explorations

- The Portuguese became the first nation to begin long distance voyages of discovery in **1419**.
- **Prince Henry the Navigator**
- sponsored and encouraged many explorers to try and find new trade routes.
- Henry wanted to find a new trade route to India and to convert Muslims to Christianity along the way.



Prince Henry the navigator

- **Bartolomeu Dias** – the first European sailor to find the southern cape of Africa (1487).
- **Vasco da Gama** – the first European to sail from Europe to India – opened up trade routes that made Portugal rich.



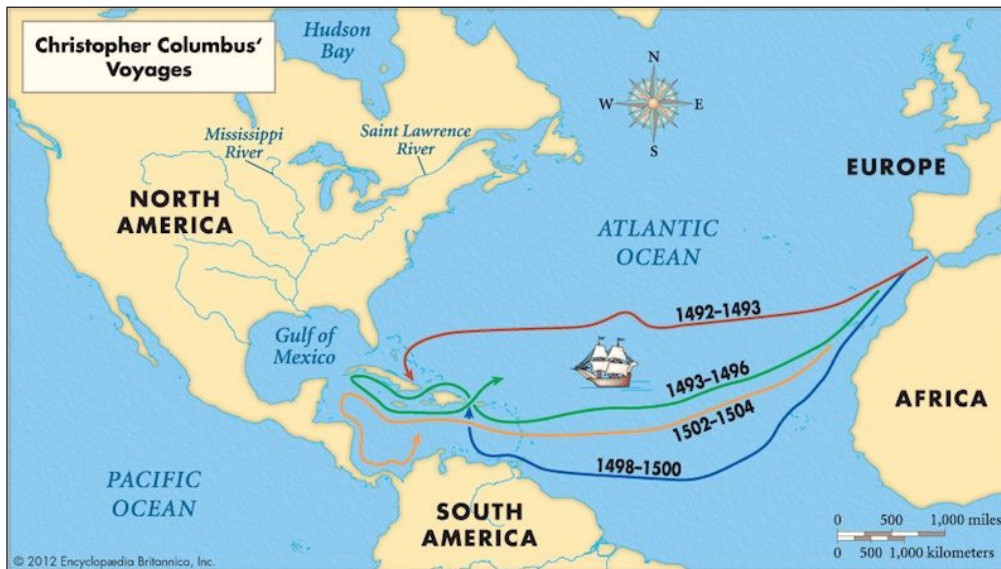
## The Spanish Explorations

### Christopher Columbus

- The Spanish explorations were led by an Italian sailor called **Christopher Columbus**.
- He approached King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain for sponsorship.
- They granted him three ships: The **Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Maria**.
- **In August 1492**, Columbus set sail from the port of Palos. Columbus believed that by sailing west, he would find a new route to the Spice islands in Asia.
- **In October 1492**, Columbus and his crew reached landfall. He thought he had reached the Spice Islands in India but he had actually discovered a new continent: the Americas.
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- This would become known as the **New World**. Columbus would go on to make three more voyages to the Americas.



Christopher Columbus



Columbus' voyages

## The Spanish conquistadors

- The conquistadors were Spanish explorers who conquered parts of South America.
- **Hernando Cortes** conquered the Aztecs in Mexico.
- **Francisco Pizarro** conquered the Incas in Peru.



Mexico: Green & Peru: Orange

## Hernando Cortes

- **Hernando Cortés** was a Spanish conquistador who overthrew the **Aztec empire in Mexico**.
- Cortés began his voyage in February 1519 with a fleet of 11 ships.
- He landed in Mexico about one month later. When he landed, **he burned his ships** so that none of his men could turn back.
- Cortés befriended local tribespeople who had themselves been driven off their land by the Aztecs.
- When Cortés arrived in the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan, they were greeted by the Aztec emperor, **Montezuma**.
- Cortés was invited into the city as the Aztec's believed Cortés was a god who was due to return.
- Cortés seized this chance and took Montezuma hostage while his soldiers **raided the city**.
- Cortés and his men were soon driven back by an Aztec rebellion. Aztec emperor **Montezuma was killed**.
- Cortés returned in July 1520 with a force of **over 100,000 men** he had recruited from neighboring local tribes



who were enemies of the Aztecs.

- Cortés captured Tenochtitlan and its population. He **enslaved the population** and put them to work as miners and farm laborers.
- He also renamed Tenochtitlan, **Mexico City** and made himself governor.



Hernando Cortes



Cortes conquers the Aztec empire

## The impact of conquest and colonization

1. **Death of native peoples** - About 42 million Americans died following two centuries of colonization by Europeans.
  - Diseases such as smallpox and measles which Native Americans had no immunity to.
  - Murder and mistreatment at the hands of colonizers resulted in millions of deaths.
  - It is estimated that 90% of the native populations would eventually die.



Native people succumbed to smallpox

2. **The beginning of the slave trade** - A new workforce was needed to work on these newly conquered lands.

Europeans turned to **Africa** to get this workforce. Between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, 13 million people would be forcibly taken from Africa and sold as slaves in the Americas.





3. **The Replacement of local cultures** with European ones was widespread. Indigenous (local) groups such as the Aztecs and Incas were wiped out along with their cultures, language and way of life.

These were replaced with European cultures. Spanish is spoken in Peru and Mexico today.

4. **The Rise of Christianity** – The Christian religion was brought in by European settlers. Christianity gradually replaced local Aztec and Incan religions.



The arrival of Christian missionaries into the Americas

5. **Wars** often broke out between nations who competed for resources.

To avoid this, the **Treaty of Tordesillas** was signed between Spain and Portugal. This divided up the land between both nations.



Treaty of Tordesillas

## 7.2 Exam focus – Try this for homework

Read the diary entries from a sailor on a voyage of discovery and answer the following questions

### November 15, 1492

*We are now in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Our masts are not failing and At least 15 people from each ship have died from sickness, or loss of food. There was a storm last night and 5 soldiers fell overboard and drowned. Everyone is in a panic, but we have to believe when we get there everything will be okay. That all of these sacrifices were worth it. Captain from the civilian ship predicts about 2 more weeks until we reach Puerto Rico. People are starting to drop like flies. However, we have a sizeable amount of people, but we have great grief for those who have lost their lives. The king is not going to like this. At least we still have plenty of supplies to last us.*

**-Enrique Alberto**

### November 30, 1492

*I think I spoke too soon when I said we have plenty of supplies. Another storm hit and half of our food was washed out...Although we have finally reached Puerto Rico. We will rest here for about 3 weeks, stock up on supplies, and let the people rest and get healed if necessary. We have been progressing pretty well. We have not faced any dangerous things yet and I hope we won't. Farewell for now.*

**- Enrique Alberto**

### January 18, 1493

**WE CAN SEE IT! THE NEW WORLD IS UPON US!**

*The land is green and vacant. We have hoped to stay for 2 months, but sadly the Captain passed away and we don't have an extra Captain. So we might be held up here for a while. This experience here has been amazing. Thankfully one of our explorers have realized that it will take about 5 weeks to arrive in the northern part of the land. Sadly, the children on the voyage have not been doing as well as we hoped. But there are still about 10 kids remaining. Off to discover!*

- a. Using evidence from the diary entries, what do we learn about the voyages which sailors undertook during the age of explorations?

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d. What were the impacts of conquest and colonization on native peoples in the New World?

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**7.3 Homework Correction**

**Q1. What is Vesalius widely referred to as?**

*He is widely referred to as 'the founding father of the modern human anatomy.'*

**Q2. What was his greatest achievement?**

*'his greatest achievement was that of reintroducing human anatomy and its importance to the people.'*

**Q3. What did Vesalius believe was the best way to study the human body?**

*He believed using real corpses was the best way to study the human body. 'he became certain that it was absolutely essential to analyse real corpses to study the human body.'*

**Q4. Using evidence from the text, why do you think his discoveries were considered to be so important?**

*I think that his discoveries were considered to be important because they helped to increase our overall understanding of the human body. He says how 'the book laid down a solid understanding of human anatomy' and 'proved to be the most extensive and accurate description of the human body of its time.'*

*His discoveries also led to advances in medicine which would have saved many human lives. 'He revolutionized the study of biology and the practice of medicine by his careful description of the anatomy of the human body'*

**Q5. Name two other discoveries/developments in art, science and/or literature during the Renaissance and explain the impact of these.**

*The invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg had a major impact on literature. Printed books became much cheaper and literacy levels increased. Writing in vernacular languages (native languages) replaced the use of Latin. It allowed new ideas to spread quickly.*

*The influence of the Catholic Church declined as people became more aware of abuses within the church.*

*Literature became more popular. Writers such as William Shakespeare rose to prominence as a result of the printing press.*

*Major developments also occurred in art. The use of perspective gave paintings depth and made them look 3-dimensional. This was one of the most important developments in Renaissance art. Previous paintings were 2-dimensional, looked flat and were unrealistic as a result. Linseed oil was used to make paint. This dried slowly and allowed shading and detail to be added.*

*Renaissance paintings became more realistic. Features such as muscles, veins, hair, and wrinkles were now included in Renaissance art. The study of anatomy (human body) help artists to achieve this. Emotions were also visible through this detail.*

