

Hello, fellow teacher!

Below is your reading passage; I hope it serves you well. Print it out and it's ready to use. Or, if you want to differentiate for struggling students, use the highlight feature on the PDF to annotate what you want the kiddos to focus on.

I named my website and Teachers Pay Teachers store "Teach 'n Thrive" because I truly want to help teachers enjoy their jobs and still have time, energy and brain bandwidth for the other things in life. Hope this helps. Don't forget to check back to the site regularly and see what has been added!

Warmest Wishes,
Joan

If you're interested in an entire done-for-you lesson check out my 3 Day Unit for the American Revolution [here](#)

The American Revolution In 3 Days



Modified Reading Passages
& Activities

If you haven't discovered my word puzzles on the site, there are dozens of them ready for download. See your choices [here](#).

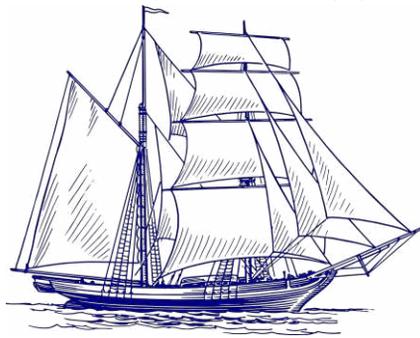


The Spanish & Portuguese Reach America

Prologue

From the 15th to 17th Centuries, there was an "Age of Discovery" or "Age of Exploration" in European history in which overseas exploration and expansion took special significance. Part of this process included European settlement in the Americas.

In 1453, the Ottoman Empire captured Constantinople, closing off many profitable trade overland and sea routes to India and China. This included the Silk Road linking Europe and Asia and enabling the silk and spice trades. Both were very profitable. Spices were particularly important for the flavoring and preservation of food in the age before modern refrigeration. European powers thus had an added incentive to seek an alternative means to reach Asia. Spain and Portugal led the way in the early years.



Portugal

Portugal borders the Atlantic Ocean and sailing, navigation (science of ship travel) and ocean-based trade was of particular interest. Prince Henry, eventually known as Prince Henry the Navigator, in the early 15th Century had an important role in organizing and promoting maritime trade and discoveries. This included expeditions to Western Africa and mapping (cartography) of the area. Also, the development of a new ship called a "caravel" that was able to travel faster and longer distances.

The Portuguese established various commercial settlements and traded in gold, ivory, and African slaves. This was also the beginning of the development of black slave plantations run by European powers. In 1488, Portuguese explorer Bartolomeu Dias was the first European to sail around the southern tip of Africa and into the Indian Ocean. Ten years later, Vasco da Gama found a trade route around the southern tip of Africa and to India.

In 1494, the Treaty of Tordesillas was signed with Spain dividing newly discovered lands between the two countries. Spain received most of the Americas while Portugal obtained control of what later became Brazil (country on the west coast of South America), India, and Asia. This led to the settlement of the Portuguese in Brazil in the early 15th Century. The name "Brazil" came from the Portuguese name for a red colored tree ("brazilwood") found in the area. The first colonies were settled in the 1530s with sugar being the primary basis of the economy ("sugar age") along with tobacco and cotton with slave labor (first Native Americans, then Africans) used for production.



Spain

The unification of Spanish powers provided a means for a stronger Spanish Empire to focus on overseas exploration. In 1492, it funded an expedition of the Italian navigator, Christopher Columbus, to find a non-Portuguese route to India, this time going west across the Atlantic Ocean instead of around the coast of Africa. Instead, on October 12, 1492, the islands of the modern day Bahamas were discovered. Thinking this was part of India, this group of islands were eventually named the "West Indies" and those indigenous (natives) to the area named "Indians."

Spanish exploration of the Americas and conquest of the indigenous settlers occurred in the early 1500s with Hernán Cortés leading the defeat of the Aztec Empire in Mexico and Francisco Pizarro conquering the Incas in Peru. "Conquistadors" (conquerors) is the name given to such people. The Spanish Empire in the "New Spain" would eventually include the Caribbean, Central and South America (except for Brazil), Mexico and the southwestern portion of the modern day United States (including California) and Florida. The basic unit of government was a "vicerealty."

Spain became rich from the gold and silver discovered in the Americas. The Catholic religion was also very important, resulting in the formation of many missions. Along with missions, a basic part of Spanish settlements were military forts or "presidios." The Spanish exploited the indigenous population as laborers and eventually introduced black slavery, including on sugar plantations.

Spanish Empire at its Largest (1790)

