The Age of Exploration
1500–1800

Key Events
As you read this chapter, look for the key events of the Age of Exploration.
• Europeans risked dangerous ocean voyages to discover new sea routes.
• Early European explorers sought gold in Africa then began to trade slaves.
• Trade increased in Southeast Asia, and the Dutch built a trade empire based on spices in the Indonesian Archipelago.

The Impact Today
The events that occurred during this time period still impact our lives today.
• European trade was a factor in producing a new age of commercial capitalism that was one of the first steps toward today’s world economy.
• The consequences of slavery continue to impact our lives today.
• The Age of Exploration led to a transfer of ideas and products, many of which are still important in our lives today.

1630
English found Massachusetts Bay Colony

1650
Dutch occupy Portuguese forts in Indian Ocean trading areas

1700
English establish colonial empire in North America

1767
Burmese sack Thai capital
Magellan Sails Around the World

Ferdinand Magellan convinced that he could find a sea passage to Asia through the Western Hemisphere, the Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan persuaded the king of Spain to finance his voyage. On September 20, 1519, Magellan set sail on the Atlantic Ocean with five ships and a Spanish crew of about 250 men.

After reaching South America, Magellan’s fleet moved down the coast in search of a strait, or sea passage, that would take them through America. His Spanish ship captains thought he was crazy: “The fool is obsessed with his search for a strait,” one remarked.

At last, in November 1520, Magellan passed through a narrow waterway (later named the Strait of Magellan) and emerged in the Pacific Ocean, which he called the Pacific Sea. Magellan reckoned that it would be a short distance from there to the Spice Islands of the East.

Week after week he and his crew sailed on across the Pacific as their food supplies dwindled. At last they reached the Philippines (named after the future King Philip II of Spain). There, Magellan was killed by the native peoples. Only one of his original fleet of five ships returned to Spain, but Magellan is still remembered as the first person to sail around the world.

Why It Matters

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, European adventurers launched their small fleets into the vast reaches of the Atlantic Ocean. They were hardly aware that they were beginning a new era, not only for Europe but also for the peoples of Asia, Africa, and the Americas. These European voyages marked the beginning of a process that led to radical changes in the political, economic, and cultural life of the entire non-Western world.

History and You Create a map to scale that shows Spain, South America, and the Philippines. Draw the route Magellan took from Spain to the Philippines. If the voyage took about 20 months, how many miles each day, on average, did Magellan travel? How long would a similar sea voyage take today?
In a letter to the treasurer of the king and queen of Spain, Christopher Columbus reported on his first journey:

"Believing that you will rejoice at the glorious success that our Lord has granted me in my voyage, I write this to tell you how in thirty-three days I reached the Indies with the first fleet which the most illustrious King and Queen, our Sovereigns, gave me, where I discovered a great many thickly-populated islands. Without meeting resistance, I have taken possession of them all for their Highnesses. . . . When I reached [Cuba], I followed its coast to the westward, and found it so large that I thought it must be the mainland—the province of [China], but I found neither towns nor villages on the seacoast, save for a few hamlets."

—Letters from the First Voyage, edited 1847

To the end of his life, despite the evidence, Columbus believed he had found a new route to Asia.

Motives and Means

The dynamic energy of Western civilization between 1500 and 1800 was most apparent when Europeans began to expand into the rest of the world. First Portugal and Spain, then later the Dutch Republic, England, and France, all rose to new economic heights through their worldwide trading activity.
For almost a thousand years, Europeans had mostly remained in one area of the world. At the end of the fifteenth century, however, they set out on a remarkable series of overseas journeys. What caused them to undertake such dangerous voyages to the ends of the earth?

Europeans had long been attracted to Asia. In the late thirteenth century, Marco Polo had traveled with his father and uncle to the Chinese court of the great Mongol ruler Kublai Khan. He had written an account of his experiences, known as The Travels. The book was read by many, including Columbus, who were fascinated by the exotic East. In the fourteenth century, conquests by the Ottoman Turks reduced the ability of westerners to travel by land to the East. People then spoke of gaining access to Asia by sea.

Economic motives loom large in European expansion. Merchants, adventurers, and state officials had high hopes of expanding trade, especially for the spices of the East. The spices, which were needed to preserve and flavor food, were very expensive after being shipped to Europe by Arab middlemen. Europeans also had hopes of finding precious metals. One Spanish adventurer wrote that he went to the Americas “to give light to those who were in darkness, and to grow rich, as all men desire to do.”

This statement suggests another reason for the overseas voyages: religious zeal. Many people shared the belief of Hernán Cortés, the Spanish conqueror of Mexico, that they must ensure that the natives “are introduced into the holy Catholic faith.”

There was a third motive as well. Spiritual and secular affairs were connected in the sixteenth century. Adventurers such as Cortés wanted to convert the natives to Christianity, but grandeur, glory, and a spirit of adventure also played a major role in European expansion.

“God, glory, and gold,” then, were the chief motives for European expansion, but what made the voyages possible? By the second half of the fifteenth century, European monarchies had increased their
power and their resources. They could now turn their energies beyond their borders. Europeans had also reached a level of technology that enabled them to make a regular series of voyages beyond Europe. A new global age was about to begin.

**Reading Check**  
What does the phrase “God, glory, and gold” mean?  

**The Portuguese Trading Empire**

**Portugal** took the lead in European exploration. Beginning in 1420, under the sponsorship of Prince Henry the Navigator, Portuguese fleets began probing southward along the western coast of Africa. There, they discovered a new source of gold. The southern coast of West Africa thus became known to Europeans as the Gold Coast.

Portuguese sea captains heard reports of a route to India around the southern tip of Africa. In 1488, Bartholomeu Dias rounded the tip, called the Cape of Good Hope. Later, **Vasco da Gama** went around the cape and cut across the Indian Ocean to the coast of India. In May of 1498, he arrived off the port of Calicut, where he took on a cargo of spices. He returned to Portugal and made a profit of several thousand percent. Is it surprising that da Gama’s voyage was the first of many along this route?

Portuguese fleets returned to the area to destroy Muslim shipping and to gain control of the spice trade, which had been controlled by the Muslims. In

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### Sea Travel in an Age of Exploration

**European voyagers acquired much of their knowledge about sailing from the Arabs. For example, sailors used charts that Arab navigators and mathematicians had drawn in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Known as portolani, these charts recorded the shapes of coastlines and distances between ports. They were very valuable in European waters. Because the charts were drawn on a flat scale and took no account of the curvature of the earth, however, they were of little help on overseas voyages.**

Only as sailors began to move beyond the coasts of Europe did they gain information about the actual shape of the earth. By 1500, cartography—the art and science of mapmaking—had reached the point where Europeans had fairly accurate maps of the areas they had explored.

Europeans also learned new navigational techniques from the Arabs. Previously, sailors had used the position of the North Star to determine their latitude. Below the Equator, though, this technique was useless. The compass and the astrolabe (also perfected by the Arabs) greatly aided exploration. The compass showed in what direction a ship was moving. The astrolabe used the sun or a star to ascertain a ship’s latitude.

Finally, European shipmakers learned how to use lateen (triangular) sails, which were developed by the Arabs. New ships, called caravels, were more maneuverable and could carry heavy cannon and more goods.  

**Evaluating**  
*Which one advance was the most important for early explorers? Why?*
1509, a Portuguese fleet of warships defeated a combined fleet of Turkish and Indian ships off the coast of India. A year later, Admiral Afonso de Albuquerque set up a port at Goa, on the western coast of India.

The Portuguese then began to range more widely in search of the source of the spice trade. Soon, Albuquerque sailed into Melaka on the Malay Peninsula. Melaka was a thriving port for the spice trade. For Albuquerque, control of Melaka would help to destroy Arab control of the spice trade and provide the Portuguese with a way station on the route to the Moluccas, then known as the Spice Islands.

From Melaka, the Portuguese launched expeditions to China and the Spice Islands. There, they signed a treaty with a local ruler for the purchase and export of cloves to the European market. This treaty established Portuguese control of the spice trade. The Portuguese trading empire was complete. However, it remained a limited empire of trading posts. The Portuguese had neither the power, the people, nor the desire to colonize the Asian regions.

Why were the Portuguese the first successful European explorers? Basically it was a matter of guns and seamanship. Later, however, the Portuguese would be no match for other European forces—the English, Dutch, and French.

Reading Check Explaining Why did Afonso de Albuquerque want control of Melaka?

Voyages to the Americas

The Portuguese sailed eastward through the Indian Ocean to reach the source of the spice trade. The Spanish sought to reach it by sailing westward across the Atlantic Ocean. With more people and greater resources, the Spanish established an overseas empire that was quite different from the Portuguese trading posts.
The Voyages of Columbus  An important figure in the history of Spanish exploration was an Italian, Christopher Columbus. Educated Europeans knew that the world was round, but had little understanding of its circumference or of the size of the continent of Asia. Convinced that the circumference of Earth was not as great as others thought, Columbus believed that he could reach Asia by sailing west instead of east around Africa.

Columbus persuaded Queen Isabella of Spain to finance an exploratory expedition. In October 1492, he reached the Americas, where he explored the coastline of Cuba and the island of Hispaniola.

Columbus believed he had reached Asia. Through three more voyages, he sought in vain to find a route through the outer islands to the Asian mainland. In his four voyages, Columbus reached all the major islands of the Caribbean and Honduras in Central America—all of which he called the Indies.

A Line of Demarcation  By the 1490s, then, the voyages of the Portuguese and Spanish had already opened up new lands to exploration. Both Spain and Portugal feared that the other might claim some of its newly discovered territories. They resolved their concerns by agreeing on a line of demarcation, an imaginary line that divided their spheres of influence.

According to the Treaty of Tordesillas (tawr•duh•SEE•yuhs), signed in 1494, the line would extend from north to south through the Atlantic Ocean and the easternmost part of the South American continent. Unexplored territories east of the line would be controlled by Portugal, and those west of the line by Spain. This treaty gave Portugal control over its route around Africa, and it gave Spain rights to almost all of the Americas.

Race to the Americas  Other explorers soon realized that Columbus had discovered an entirely new frontier. Government-sponsored explorers from many countries joined the race to the Americas. A Venetian seaman, John Cabot, explored the New England coastline of the Americas for England. The Portuguese sea captain Pedro Cabral landed in South America in 1500. Amerigo Vespucci (veh•SPOO•chee), a Florentine, went along on several voyages and wrote letters describing the lands he saw. These letters led to the use of the name America (after Amerigo) for the new lands.
Europeans called these territories the New World, but the lands were hardly new. They already had flourishing civilizations made up of millions of people when the Europeans arrived. The Americas were, of course, new to the Europeans, who quickly saw opportunities for conquest and exploitation.

The Spanish Empire

The Spanish conquerors of the Americas—known as conquistadors—were individuals whose guns and determination brought them incredible success. The forces of Hernán Cortés took only three years to overthrow the mighty Aztec Empire in Central Mexico. By 1550, the Spanish had gained control of northern Mexico. In South America, an expedition led by Francisco Pizarro took control of the Incan Empire high in the Peruvian Andes. Within 30 years, the western part of Latin America, as these lands in Mexico and Central and South America were called, had been brought under Spanish control. (The Portuguese took over Brazil, which fell on their side of the line of demarcation.)

By 1535, the Spanish had created a system of colonial administration in the Americas. Queen Isabella declared Native Americans (then called Indians, after the Spanish word Indios, “inhabitants of the Indies”) to be her subjects. She granted the Spanish encomienda, or the right to use Native Americans as laborers.

The Spanish were supposed to protect Native Americans, but the settlers were far from Spain and largely ignored their rulers. Native Americans were put to work on sugar plantations and in gold and silver mines. Few Spanish settlers worried about protecting them.

Forced labor, starvation, and especially disease took a fearful toll on Native American lives. With little natural resistance to European diseases, the native peoples were ravaged by smallpox, measles, and typhus, and many of them died. Hispaniola, for example, had a population of 250,000 when Columbus arrived. By 1538, only 500 Native Americans had survived. In Mexico, the population dropped from 25 million in 1519 to 1 million in 1630.

In the early years of the conquest, Catholic missionaries converted and baptized hundreds of thousands of native peoples. With the arrival of the missionaries came parishes, schools, and hospitals—all the trappings of a European society. Native American social and political structures were torn apart and replaced by European systems of religion, language, culture, and government.

Reading Check

Examine Why did the Spanish and Portuguese sign the Treaty of Tordesillas?

Reading Check

Evaluate What was the impact of the Spanish settlement on the Native Americans?

Economic Impact and Competition

International trade was crucial in furthering a Commercial Revolution, a new age of commercial capitalism, one of the first steps in developing a world economy.

Spanish conquests in the Americas affected not only the conquered but also the conquerers. This was especially true in the economic arena. Wherever they went, Europeans sought gold and silver. One Aztec commented that the Spanish conquerers “longed and lusted for gold. Their bodies swelled with greed; they hungered like pigs for that gold.” Rich silver deposits were found and exploited in Mexico and southern Peru (modern Bolivia).

Colonists established plantations and ranches to raise sugar, cotton, vanilla, livestock, and other products introduced to the Americas for export to Europe. Agricultural products native to the Americas, such as potatoes, cocoa, corn, and tobacco, were also shipped to Europe. The extensive exchange of plants and animals between the Old and New Worlds—known as the Columbian Exchange—transformed economic activity in both worlds.

At the same time, Portuguese expansion in the East created its own economic impact. With their Asian trading posts, Portugal soon challenged the Italian states as the chief entry point of the eastern trade in spices, jewels, silk, and perfumes. Other European nations soon sought similar economic benefits.

New Rivals Enter the Scene

By the end of the sixteenth century, several new European rivals had entered the scene for the eastern trade. The Spanish established
themselves in the Philippine Islands, where Ferdinand Magellan had landed earlier. They turned the Philippines into a major Spanish base for trade across the Pacific. Spanish ships carried silver from Mexico to the Philippines and returned to Mexico with silk and other luxury goods.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, an English fleet landed on the northwestern coast of India and established trade relations with the people there. Trade with Southeast Asia soon followed.

The first Dutch fleet arrived in India in 1595. Shortly after, the Dutch formed the East India Company and began competing with the English and the Portuguese.

The Dutch also formed the West India Company to compete with the Spanish and Portuguese in the Americas. The Dutch colony of New Netherland stretched from the mouth of the Hudson River as far north as Albany, New York. Present-day names such as Staten Island, Harlem, and the Catskill Mountains are reminders of Dutch influence.

After 1660, however, rivalry with the English and the French brought the fall of the Dutch commercial empire in the Americas. The English seized the colony of New Netherland and renamed it New York.

During the 1600s, the French colonized parts of what is now Canada and Louisiana. English settlers, meanwhile, founded Virginia and the Massachusetts Bay Colony. By 1700, the English had established a colonial empire along the eastern seaboard of North America. They also had set up sugar plantations on various islands in the Caribbean Sea.

**Trade, Colonies, and Mercantilism**

Led by Portugal and Spain, European nations in the 1500s and 1600s established many trading posts and colonies in the Americas and the East. A colony is a settlement of people living in a new territory, linked with the parent country by trade and direct government control.

With the development of colonies and trading posts, Europeans entered an age of increased international trade known as the Commercial Revolution. Colonies played a role in the theory of mercantilism, a set of principles that dominated economic thought in the 1600s: According to mercantilists, the prosperity of a nation depended on a large supply of bullion, or gold and silver. To bring in gold and silver payments, nations tried to have a favorable balance of trade. The balance of trade is the difference in value between what a nation imports and what it exports over time. When the balance is favorable, the goods exported are of greater value than those imported.

To encourage exports, governments stimulated export industries and trade. They granted subsidies, or payments, to new industries and improved transportation systems by building roads, bridges, and canals. By placing high tariffs, or taxes, on foreign goods, they tried to keep these goods out of their own countries. Colonies were considered important both as sources of raw materials and markets for finished goods.

**Checking for Understanding**

1. **Define** conquistador, colony, mercantilism, balance of trade.
2. **Identify** Vasco da Gama, Christopher Columbus, John Cabot, Amerigo Vespucci, Francisco Pizarro, Ferdinand Magellan.
3. **Locate** Portugal, Africa, Melaka, Cuba.
4. **Explain** why the Spanish were so hungry for gold.
5. **List** the institutions of European society that were brought to the Americas by European missionaries.

**Critical Thinking**

6. **Describe** identify and briefly describe the negative consequences of the Spanish encomienda system. Were there any positive consequences?

7. **Identifying Information** Use a web diagram like the one below to list motives for European exploration.

**Analyzing Visuals**

8. **Examine** the photograph of the Incan mask shown on page 194 of your text. How could artifacts such as this have increased the European desire to explore and conquer the Americas?

**Writing About History**

9. **Descriptive Writing** Research one of the expeditions discussed in this section. Write a journal entry describing your experiences as a sailor on the expedition. Provide details of your daily life on the ship and what you found when you first reached land.
ON RETURNING FROM HIS VOYAGE TO THE Americas, Christopher Columbus wrote a letter describing his experience. In this passage from the letter, he tells of his arrival on the island of Hispaniola.

"The people of this island and of all the other islands which I have found and of which I have information, all go naked, men and women, as their mothers bore them. They have no iron or steel or weapons, nor are they fitted to use them. This is not because they are not well built and of handsome stature, but because they are very marvelously timid. They have no other arms than spears made of canes, cut in seeding time, to the end of which they fix a small sharpened stick.

They refuse nothing that they possess, if it be asked of them; on the contrary, they invite any one to share it and display as much love as if they would give their hearts. They are content with whatever trifle of whatever kind they may be given to them, whether it be of value or valueless. I forbade that they should be given things so worthless as fragments of broken crockery, scraps of broken glass and lace tips, although when they were able to get them, they fancied that they possessed the best jewel in the world. So it was found that for a leather strap a soldier received gold to the weight of two and half castellanos, and others received much more for other things which were worthless. . . . I gave them a thousand handsome good things, which I had brought, in order that they might conceive affection for us and, more than that, might become Christians and be inclined to the love and service of Your Highnesses [king and queen of Spain], and strive to collect and give us of the things which they have in abundance and what are necessary to us.

They practice no kind of idolatry, but have a firm belief that all strength and power, and indeed all good things, are in heaven, and that I had descended from thence with these ships and sailors, and under this impression was I received after they had thrown aside their fears. Nor are they slow or stupid, but of very clear understanding; and those men who have crossed to the neighbouring islands give an abominable description of everything they observed; but they never saw any people clothed, nor any ships like ours."

—Christopher Columbus, The Journal of Christopher Columbus

Analyzing Primary Sources

1. Why did Columbus give the peoples of Hispaniola “a thousand handsome good things”?
2. How did the explorers take advantage of Native Americans?
Europeans seeking gold in Africa soon became involved in the slave trade. One Dutch trader noted:

“As the slaves come down to Fida [a port on the west coast of Africa] from the inland country, they are put into a booth, or prison, built for that purpose, near the beach, all of them together; and when the Europeans are to receive them, they are brought out into a large plain, where the surgeons examine every part of them, men and women being all stark naked. Such as are found good and sound are set on one side. Each of those which have passed as good is marked... with a red-hot iron, imprinting the mark of the French, English, or Dutch companies, so that each nation may distinguish its own and prevent their being changed by the natives for worse.”

—Documents Illustrative of the Slave Trade to America, Elizabeth Dorman, ed., 1930

The exchange of slaves became an important part of European trading patterns.

The Slave Trade

Traffic in slaves was not new, to be sure. As in other areas of the world, slavery had been practiced in Africa since ancient times. In the fifteenth century, it continued at a fairly steady level.

The primary market for African slaves was Southwest Asia, where most slaves were used as domestic servants. Slavery also existed in some European countries.
During the last half of the fifteenth century, for example, about a thousand slaves were taken to Portugal each year. Most wound up serving as domestic servants. The demand for slaves changed dramatically, however, with the discovery of the Americas in the 1490s and the planting of sugarcane there.

Cane sugar was introduced to Europe from Southwest Asia during the Middle Ages. During the sixteenth century, plantations, large agricultural estates, were set up along the coast of Brazil and on islands in the Caribbean to grow sugarcane. Growing cane sugar demands much labor. The small Native American population, much of which had died of diseases imported from Europe, could not provide the labor needed. Thus, African slaves were shipped to Brazil and the Caribbean to work on the plantations.

**Growth of the Slave Trade** In 1518, a Spanish ship carried the first boatload of African slaves directly from Africa to the Americas. During the next two centuries, the trade in slaves grew dramatically and became part of the triangular trade that marked the emergence of a new world economy. The pattern of triangular trade connected Europe, Africa, and Asia, and the American continents. European merchant ships carried European manufactured goods, such as guns and cloth, to Africa, where they were traded for a cargo of slaves. The slaves were then shipped to the Americas and sold. European merchants then bought tobacco, molasses, sugar, and raw cotton and shipped them back to Europe to be sold in European markets.

An estimated 275,000 African slaves were exported during the sixteenth century. Two thousand went every year to the Americas alone. In the seventeenth century, the total climbed to over a million and jumped to six million in the eighteenth century. By then the trade had spread from West Africa and Central Africa to East Africa. Altogether, as many as ten million African slaves were brought to the Americas between the early sixteenth and the late nineteenth centuries.

One reason for these astonishing numbers, of course, was the high death rate. The journey of slaves from Africa to the Americas became known as the Middle Passage, the middle portion of the triangular trade route. Many slaves died on the journey. Those who arrived often died from diseases to which they had little or no immunity.

Death rates were higher for newly arrived slaves than for those born and raised in the Americas. The new generation gradually developed at least a partial immunity to many diseases. Owners, however, rarely encouraged their slaves to have children. Many slave owners, especially on islands in the Caribbean, believed that buying a new slave was less expensive than raising a child from birth to working age.

**Sources of Slaves** Before the coming of Europeans in the fifteenth century, most slaves in Africa were prisoners of war. When Europeans first began to take part in the slave trade, they bought slaves from local African merchants at slave markets on the coasts in return for gold, guns, or other European goods.
At first, local slave traders obtained their supplies of slaves from the coastal regions nearby. As demand increased, however, they had to move farther inland to find their victims.

Local rulers became concerned about the impact of the slave trade on the well-being of their societies. In a letter to the king of Portugal in 1526, King Afonso of Congo (Bakongo) said, “so great is the corruption that our country is being completely depopulated.”

Protests from Africans were generally ignored by Europeans, however, as well as by other Africans. As a rule, local rulers who traded slaves viewed the slave trade as a source of income. Many sent raiders into defenseless villages in search of victims.

**Effects of the Slave Trade** The effects of the slave trade varied from area to area. Of course, it always had tragic effects on the lives of individual victims and their families. The slave trade led to the depopulation of some areas, and it deprived many African communities of their youngest and strongest men and women.

The desire of local slave traders to provide a constant supply of slaves led to increased warfare in Africa. Coastal or near-coastal African leaders and their followers, armed with guns acquired from the trade in slaves, increased their raids and wars on neighboring peoples.

Only a few Europeans lamented what they were doing to traditional African societies. One Dutch slave trader remarked, “From us they have learned strife, quarrelling, drunkenness, trickery, theft, unbridled desire for what is not one’s own, misdeeds unknown to them before, and the accursed lust for gold.”

The slave trade had a devastating effect on some African states. The case of Benin in West Africa is a good example. A brilliant and creative society in the sixteenth century, Benin was pulled into the slave trade.

As the population declined and warfare increased, the people of Benin lost faith in their gods, their art deteriorated, and human sacrifice became more common. When the British arrived there at the end of the nineteenth century, they found a corrupt and brutal place. It took years to discover the brilliance of the earlier culture destroyed by slavery.

**Political and Social Structures**

The slave trade was one of the most noticeable effects of the European presence in Africa between 1500 and 1800. Generally, European influence did not extend beyond the coastal regions. Only in a few areas, such as South Africa and Mozambique, were there signs of a permanent European presence.

**Traditional Political Systems** In general, traditional African political systems continued to exist. By the sixteenth century, monarchy had become a common form of government throughout much of the continent. Some states, like the kingdom of Benin in West Africa, were highly centralized, with the king regarded as almost divine.

Other African states were more like collections of small principalities knit together by ties of kinship or other loyalties. The state of Ashanti on the Gold Coast was a good example. The kingdom consisted of a number of previously independent small states linked together by kinship ties and subordinated to the king. To provide visible evidence of this unity, each local ruler was given a ceremonial stool of office as a symbol of the kinship ties that linked the rulers.

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Slaves were kept in the ship’s cargo deck, called the hold.
Nevertheless, the Europeans were causing changes, often indirectly. Europeans introduced new food products—sweet potatoes, maize (corn), and peanuts—to Africa in the sixteenth century. In the western Sahara, Europeans caused trade routes to shift toward the coast. This led to the decline of the Songhai trading empire.

Morocco had long hoped to expand its influence into the Sahara in order to seize control over the trade in gold and salt. In 1591, after a 20-week trek across the desert, Moroccan forces defeated the Songhai army and then occupied the great trading center of Timbuktu. Eventually, the Moroccans were forced to leave, but Songhai was beyond recovery. Its next two centuries were marked by civil disorder.

Foreigners also influenced African religious beliefs. Here, however, Europeans had less impact than the Islamic culture. In North Africa, Islam continued to expand. Muslim beliefs became dominant along the northern coast and began to spread southward.

Although their voyages centered on trade with the East, Europeans were also interested in spreading Christianity. The Portuguese engaged in some missionary activity, but the English, the Dutch, and the French made little effort to combine their trading activities with the Christian message. Except for a tiny European foothold in South Africa and the isolated kingdom of Ethiopia, Christianity did not stop the spread of Islam in Africa.

Foreign Influences  Many African political systems, then, were affected little by the European presence.

together. The king had an exquisite golden stool to symbolize the unity of the entire state.

Many Africans continued to live in small political units in which authority rested in a village leader. For example, the Ibo society of eastern Nigeria was based on independent villages. The Ibo were active traders, and the area produced more slaves than practically any other in the continent.

**Foreign Influences**  Many African political systems, then, were affected little by the European presence.

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**People In History**

**King Afonso I**  c.1456–c.1545—African king

Afonso I was the greatest king of Congo (present-day Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo). He was born Mvemba Nzinga, son of the king of Congo. After the Portuguese arrived in the kingdom, Mvemba converted to Catholicism and changed his name to Afonso. After he became king in 1506, Afonso sought friendly relations with the Portuguese. In return for trade privileges, the Portuguese sent manufactured goods, missionaries, and craftspeople to Congo. Afonso soon found, however, that the Portuguese could not be trusted. They made more and more raids for African slaves and even attempted to assassinate King Afonso when they thought that the king was hiding gold from them. Afonso remained a devout Christian, building churches and schools.

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**Critical Thinking**

6. **Analyze**  Why did Africans engage in slave trade? Did they have a choice?

7. **Compare and Contrast**  Use a table like the one below to compare and contrast the political systems of Benin, the state of Ashanti, and the Ibo peoples.

<table>
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<th>Benin</th>
<th>Ashanti</th>
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After establishing control of the island of Java, the Dutch encountered a problem in ruling it. One observer explained:

“...the greatest number of the Dutch settlers in Batavia [present-day Jakarta, Indonesia], such as were commonly seen at their doors, appeared pale and weak, and as if laboring with death. ... Of the fatal effects of the climate upon both sexes, however, a strong proof was given by a lady there, who mentioned, that out of eleven persons of her family who had come to Batavia only ten months before, her father, brother-in-law, and six sisters had already died. The general reputation of the unhealthiness of Batavia for Europeans, deter most of those, who can reside at home with any comfort, from coming to it, notwithstanding the temptations of fortunes to be quickly amassed in it.”


Such difficult conditions kept Southeast Asia largely free of European domination.

### Emerging Mainland States

In 1500, mainland Southeast Asia was a relatively stable region. Throughout mainland Southeast Asia, from Burma in the west to Vietnam in the east, kingdoms with their own ethnic, linguistic, and cultural characteristics were being formed.
Conflicts did erupt among the emerging states on the Southeast Asian mainland. The Thai peoples had secured their control over the lower Chao Phraya River valley. Conflict between the Thai and the Burmese was bitter until a Burmese army sacked the Thai capital in 1767, forcing the Thai to create a new capital at Bangkok, farther to the south. Across the mountains to the east, the Vietnamese had begun their “March to the South.” By the end of the fifteenth century, they had subdued the rival state of Champa on the central coast. The Vietnamese then gradually took control of the Mekong delta from the Khmer. By 1800, the Khmer monarchy (the successor of the old Angkor kingdom—see Chapter 3) had virtually disappeared.

The situation was different in the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian Archipelago. The area was gradually penetrated by Muslim merchants attracted to the growing spice trade. The creation of an Islamic trade network had political results as new states arose along the spice route. Islam was accepted first along the coast and then gradually moved inland. The major impact of Islam, however, came in the fifteenth century, with the rise of the new sultanate at Melaka. Melaka owed its new power to its strategic location astride the strait of the same name, as well as to the rapid growth of the spice trade itself. Within a few years, Melaka had become the leading power in the region.

**Reading Check** Examining How did Muslim merchants affect the peoples of Southeast Asia?

### The Arrival of Europeans

In 1511, the Portuguese seized Melaka and soon occupied the Moluccas. Known to Europeans as the Spice Islands, the Moluccas were the chief source of the spices that had originally attracted the Portuguese to the Indian Ocean.

The Portuguese, however, lacked the military and financial resources to impose their authority over broad areas. Instead, they set up small settlements along the coast, which they used as trading posts or as way stations en route to the Spice Islands.

**A Shift in Power** The situation changed with the arrival of the English and Dutch traders, who were better financed than were the Portuguese. The shift in

**Gunpowder and Gunpowder Empires**

Gunpowder and guns were invented in China in the tenth century and spread to Europe and Southwest Asia in the fourteenth century. However, the full impact of gunpowder was not felt until after 1500. Between 1500 and 1650, the world experienced a dramatic increase in the manufacture of weapons based on gunpowder. Large-scale production of cannons was especially evident in Europe, the Ottoman Empire, India, and China. By 1650, guns were also being made in Korea, Japan, Thailand, Iran, and, to a lesser extent, in Africa.

Firearms were a crucial element in the creation of new empires after 1500. Spaniards armed with firearms devastated the civilizations of the Aztec and Inca and carved out empires in Central and South America. The Ottoman Empire, the Mogul Empire in India, and the Safavid Empire in Persia also owed much of their success in creating and maintaining their large empires to the use of the new weapons. Historians have labeled these empires the “gunpowder empires.”

The success of Europeans in creating new trade empires in the East owed much to the use of cannons as well. Portuguese ships, armed with heavy guns that could sink enemy ships at a distance of 100 yards (91 m) or more, easily defeated the lighter fleets of the Muslims in the Indian Ocean.

Although gunpowder was invented in China, it was the Europeans who used it most effectively to establish new empires. Evaluate the reasons why this occurred. In your explanation, be sure to include the historical impact of European expansion throughout the world.
power began in the early 1600s when the Dutch seized a Portuguese fort in the Moluccas and then gradually pushed the Portuguese out of the spice trade.

During the next 50 years, the Dutch occupied most of the Portuguese coastal forts along the trade routes throughout the Indian Ocean, including the island of Ceylon (today’s Sri Lanka) and Melaka. The aggressive Dutch traders drove the English traders out of the spice market, reducing the English influence to a single port on the southern coast of Sumatra.

The Dutch also began to consolidate their political and military control over the entire area. They tried to dominate the clove trade by limiting cultivation of the crop to one island and forcing others to stop growing and trading the spice. Then the Dutch turned their attention to the island of Java, where they established a fort at Batavia in 1619. The purpose of the fort was to protect Dutch possessions in the East. Gradually the Dutch brought the entire island under their control.

**Impact on the Mainland** Portuguese and then Dutch influence was mostly limited to the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian Archipelago.

The arrival of the Europeans had less impact on mainland Southeast Asia. The Portuguese established limited trade relations with several **mainland states** (part of the continent, as distinguished from peninsulas or offshore islands), including Thailand, Burma, Vietnam, and the remnants of the old Angkor kingdom in Cambodia. By the early seventeenth century, other European nations had begun to compete actively for trade and missionary privileges. In general, however, the mainland states were able to unite and drive the Europeans out.

In Vietnam, a civil war temporarily divided the country into two separate states, one in the south and one in the north. After their arrival in the mid-seventeenth century, the European powers began to take sides in local politics. The Europeans also set up trading posts for their merchants.

By the end of the seventeenth century, however, it had become clear that economic opportunities were limited. Most of the posts were abandoned at that time. French missionaries tried to stay, but their efforts were blocked by the authorities, who viewed converts to Catholicism as a threat to the prestige of the Vietnamese emperor.

Why were the mainland states better able to resist the European challenge than the states in the Malay Peninsula and the Indonesian Archipelago? The mainland states of Burma, Thailand, and Vietnam had begun to define themselves as distinct political entities. They had strong monarchies that resisted foreign intrusion.

In the non-mainland states, there was less political unity. Moreover, these states were victims of their own
Religious and Political Systems

Religious beliefs changed in Southeast Asia during the period from 1500 to 1800. Particularly in the non-mainland states and the Philippines, Islam and Christianity were beginning to attract converts. Buddhism was advancing on the mainland, where it became dominant from Burma to Vietnam. Traditional beliefs, however, survived and influenced the new religions.

The political systems in Southeast Asian states evolved into four styles of monarchy. Buddhist kings, Javanese kings, Islamic sultans, and Vietnamese emperors all adapted foreign models of government to local circumstances.

The Buddhist style of kingship became the chief form of government in the mainland states of Burma, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. In the Buddhist model, the king was considered superior to other human beings, and served as the link between human society and the universe.

The Javanese style of kingship was rooted in the political traditions of India and shared many of the characteristics of the Buddhist system. Like Buddhist rulers, Javanese kings were believed to have a sacred quality, and they maintained the balance between the sacred and the material world. The royal palace was designed to represent the center of the universe. Rays spread outward to the corners of the realm.

Islamic sultans were found on the Malay Peninsula and in the small coastal states of the Indonesian Archipelago. In the Islamic pattern, the head of state was a sultan. He was viewed as a mortal, although he still possessed some special qualities. He was a defender of the faith and staffed his bureaucracy (a body of nonelective government officials) mainly with aristocrats.

In Vietnam, kingship followed the Chinese model. Like the Chinese emperor, the Vietnamese emperor ruled according to the teachings of Confucius. He was seen as a mortal appointed by Heaven to rule because of his talent and virtue. He also served as the intermediary between Heaven and Earth.

Reading Check Evaluating Why were Europeans so interested in Southeast Asia?

Reading Check Comparing How did the Javanese style of kingship compare to the Buddhist style of kingship?

Critical Thinking
6. Evaluate Why did the Malay world fall to foreign traders, while the countries of mainland Southeast Asia retained their independence?

7. Categorizing Information Use a table like the one below to describe the four types of political systems that developed in Southeast Asia.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Political System</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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8. Examine the picture of the Thai king shown above. How does this picture reflect the Buddhist model of kingship practiced in Southeast Asian states such as Thailand?

Writing About History
9. Expository Writing Pretend that you are a Portuguese merchant trying to establish trade relations with Southeast Asia. Write a letter to the authorities in Portugal explaining the particular difficulties you are encountering in Southeast Asia.
Making Inferences and Drawing Conclusions

Why Learn This Skill?

While driving, you hear a news report about a fire downtown. As you approach downtown, traffic is very heavy. You cannot see any smoke, but you infer that the traffic is caused by the fire.

To infer means to evaluate information and arrive at a conclusion. When you make inferences, you draw conclusions that are not stated directly.

Learning the Skill

Follow the steps below to help make inferences and draw conclusions:

- Read carefully to determine the main facts and ideas.
- Write down the important facts.
- Consider any information you know that relates to this topic.
- Determine how your own knowledge adds to or changes the material.
- What inferences can you make about the material that are not specifically stated in the facts that you gathered from your reading?
- Use your knowledge and reason to develop conclusions about the facts.
- If possible, find specific information that proves or disproves your inference.

Practicing the Skill

Read the passage below, then answer the questions that follow.

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The situation changed with the arrival of the English and Dutch traders, who were better financed than were the Portuguese. The shift in power began in the early 1600s, when the Dutch seized a Portuguese fort in the Moluccas and drove out the Portuguese.

During the next fifty years, the Dutch occupied most of the Portuguese coastal forts along the trade routes throughout the Indian Ocean. The aggressive Dutch traders also drove the English traders out of the spice market, reducing the English influence to a single port on the southern coast of Sumatra.

1 What events does the writer describe?
2 What facts are presented?
3 What can you infer about the Dutch traders during this period?
4 What conclusion can you make about the spice market, other than those specifically stated by the author?

Applying the Skill

Scan the newspaper or a magazine for a political cartoon. Paste the cartoon on a piece of paper or poster board. Underneath, list three valid inferences based on the work.

Glencoe’s Skillbuilder Interactive Workbook, Level 2, provides instruction and practice in key social studies skills.
Using Key Terms

1. A set of principles that dominated economic thought in the seventeenth century was called _____.
2. ____ were Spanish conquerors who were motivated by religious zeal and the desire for glory and riches.
3. A body of nonelective government officials is called a _____.
4. Many Africans were removed from their homes and shipped to large landed estates in the Americas called _____.
5. States that form part of a continent are called _____.
6. The _____ is the difference in value between what a nation imports and what it exports.
7. A settlement in a new territory, linked to the parent country, is called a _____.
8. ____ is the route between Europe, Africa, and America.
9. The journey of slaves from Africa to America on the worst portion of the triangular trade route was called the _____.

Reviewing Key Facts

10. History What did the Europeans want from the East?
11. History Who was the conquistador who overthrew the Aztec Empire? Who conquered the Inca?
12. Economics What did Europeans want from the Americas?
13. Geography What was the name of the city located on the Malay Peninsula that was the central point in the spice trade?
14. Economics When Vasco da Gama reached India, what cargo did he bring back? How profitable was his voyage?
15. History How did most Africans become slaves?
16. History What European country conquered Brazil?
17. Science and Technology How did the Portuguese make effective use of naval technology?
18. Geography What did Christopher Columbus believe about the size and shape of Earth?
19. History Why were European diseases devastating to the peoples of America?

Chapter Summary

Listed below are the major European explorers of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Marco Polo is the one explorer listed who predates the Age of Exploration.
Analyzing Maps and Charts
Study the chart on the opposite page to answer the following questions.

27. Approximately how many years separated the explorations of Marco Polo and those of Vasco da Gama?

28. Which countries sponsored the most explorations?

29. The voyages of discovery began in Europe. What continents did the explorers visit?

Critical Thinking

20. Drawing Conclusions What might have resulted from the fact that many slave owners believed it was more economical to buy a new slave than to raise a child to working age?

21. Making Generalizations Describe the impact on history of the voyages of Christopher Columbus.

Writing About History

22. Informative Writing Write an essay in which you analyze the reasons why Native Americans in both North and South America might be offended by the term *New World*. What does the use of the term suggest about European attitudes toward the rest of the world? Refer to the Treaty of Tordesillas and use other specific examples.

Analyzing Sources

Read the following comment by an Aztec describing the Spanish conquerors:

"[They] longed and lusted for gold. Their bodies swelled with greed, and their hunger was ravenous; they hungered like pigs for that gold."

23. Based on this quote, what might the Aztec have inferred about the Spaniards and their civilization?

24. What do you think is meant by “they hungered like pigs for that gold”?

Applying Technology Skills

25. Using the Internet Search the Internet for additional information about early European explorers and their achievements. Organize your information by creating a spreadsheet. Include headings such as name, regions of exploration, types of technology used, and contributions.

Making Decisions

26. Pretend that you are the leader of a country and must decide whether or not to explore outer space. What are the benefits and risks involved in undertaking space exploration? Compare and contrast modern space explorations with European voyages of exploration. Consider the technologies used, the ways explorations were funded, and the impact of these ventures on human knowledge.