# Motives at Sea

Trace the reasons behind Spain's Atlantic voyages.

**SS24.8.11b** "Explain the economic, political, and religious factors that fostered exploration, including mercantilism."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline details about wealth and trade, circle details about rivalry and power, and number details about religion. Some details may fit more than one motive.

### Why Spain Sailed West

1. In 1492, Spain's rulers paid for Christopher Columbus to sail west across the Atlantic. They hoped he would find a sea route to Asian markets, where spices and other goods could bring high profits. Portuguese sailors had already explored routes around Africa, so Spain's rulers did not want to fall behind a rival kingdom. Columbus reached islands in the Caribbean instead of Asia. Although he had not found the route he promised, his voyage led Spain to claim lands and sponsor more Atlantic expeditions.

2. Spain's rulers also hoped Atlantic voyages would bring gold and other valuable resources under their control. As Spain established colonies in the Americas, its officials sought precious metals and required colonists to trade in ways that benefited Spain. Under a system called mercantilism, rulers aimed to increase their kingdom's wealth and power by controlling colonial resources and trade. Spanish mines later produced large amounts of silver, often through the forced labor of Indigenous people. The desire for wealth helped fund further voyages and strengthen Spain's position against European rivals.

3. Religion also shaped Spain's plans. Spain's Catholic rulers wanted Christianity to spread in lands reached by their ships. Priests traveled with later expeditions, and missionaries tried to convert Indigenous communities. Some conversions were forced, and many Indigenous people resisted Spanish control. For the rulers, religious goals could support political claims: they argued that spreading Christianity justified expanding Spanish authority. Exploration was not driven by just one motive. A voyage could offer profits, increase a kingdom's influence, and advance its rulers' faith at the same time.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did competition with Portugal help persuade Spain's rulers to fund Columbus's voyage?

2. Why did controlling colonial resources and trade matter under mercantilism?

3. How could Spain's religious goal also support its political goal?

4. Why might Spain's rulers fund an expedition that could bring home valuable resources and carry priests? Explain two different motives.

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise a European ruler during the Age of Exploration. In four sentences, propose an Atlantic expedition and explain how its goals could serve economic, political, and religious interests; include how controlling trade or resources fits mercantilism.

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## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline details about wealth and trade, circle details about rivalry and power, and number details about religion. Some details may fit more than one motive. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How did competition with Portugal help persuade Spain's rulers to fund Columbus's voyage? | **Portugal had explored routes around Africa, and Spain's rulers did not want to fall behind. They hoped Columbus would find another route to profitable Asian markets.** |
| 2 | Why did controlling colonial resources and trade matter under mercantilism? | **Rulers believed that controlling resources and trade would increase their kingdom's wealth and power.** |
| 3 | How could Spain's religious goal also support its political goal? | **Spain's rulers argued that spreading Christianity justified expanding Spanish authority.** |
| 4 | Why might Spain's rulers fund an expedition that could bring home valuable resources and carry priests? Explain two different motives. | **Valuable resources could increase Spain's wealth, while priests could help spread Christianity. Both were goals Spain's rulers connected to exploration.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I propose an Atlantic voyage to find a harbor where our ships could stop and trade. If our kingdom controlled trade through that harbor, valuable goods could bring it wealth, which fits mercantilism. Access to the harbor might also give our ruler an advantage over rival kingdoms. The ruler could send missionaries to share Christianity, although local people should be free to decide what to believe.

Accept other passage-based explanations that connect motives to decisions to explore. For Part 3, look for a proposed expedition and distinct economic, political, and religious goals, including a clear link between mercantilism and control of trade or resources.