

Across the Atlantic

Reasons and risks shaped early European voyages.

SS3H2.a "Describe the reasons for and obstacles to the exploration of North America."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each reason Europeans explored North America, and circle each obstacle that made exploration difficult.

Why Sail West?

- ① In the late 1400s, European rulers paid for voyages across the Atlantic Ocean. They wanted new trade routes to Asia, where people sold spices, silk, and other valuable goods. Some hoped to find gold and claim land for their country. Explorers also wanted fame. Christopher Columbus sailed west in 1492, believing he could reach Asia by crossing the ocean.
- ② The ocean voyage was dangerous and uncertain. Sailors faced huge waves, strong winds, storms, and days with little wind. Wooden ships could leak or break. Food and fresh water could run low, and sickness could spread in the crowded ships. Crews did not have modern weather reports or accurate ways to measure their exact location at sea.
- ③ Explorers reached places already home to many American Indian nations. These nations had their own languages, homes, and trade networks. Some newcomers traded and learned from Native people, but other meetings led to fighting. Even after a voyage succeeded, explorers still had to travel through unfamiliar forests and rivers. Their journeys changed the lives of people on both sides of the Atlantic.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Why did European rulers want new routes to Asia?

2 Name two dangers or problems sailors faced on an ocean voyage.

3 What information or tools did crews not have that made finding their location hard?

4 How could meetings with Native people be helpful or harmful to newcomers?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a four-sentence ship journal entry from a sailor on an early voyage west. Include one reason for the voyage, two different obstacles, and one sentence explaining how an obstacle changes the crew's plans.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each reason Europeans explored North America, and circle each obstacle that made exploration difficult. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did European rulers want new routes to Asia?	They wanted valuable goods from Asia, such as spices and silk.
2	Name two dangers or problems sailors faced on an ocean voyage.	Answers may include huge waves, strong winds, storms, little wind, leaking or breaking ships, low food or fresh water, and sickness.
3	What information or tools did crews not have that made finding their location hard?	They did not have modern weather reports or accurate ways to measure their exact location at sea.
4	How could meetings with Native people be helpful or harmful to newcomers?	Meetings could be helpful because newcomers traded and learned from Native people. They could be harmful because some meetings led to fighting.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

We sail west because our rulers want a new trade route to Asia. Today, a storm tossed our wooden ship across huge waves. Our fresh water is running low, so we must use it carefully. The storm slows us down, and everyone worries about when we will reach land.

Accept reasons and obstacles stated in the passage. For the journal entry, check for four sentences that include a reason, two distinct obstacles, and a reasonable effect on the crew's plans.