

Why Sail Far?

Read how European goals and new knowledge supported ocean exploration.

7.2a "Social, economic, and scientific improvements helped European nations launch an Age of Exploration."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each economic, political, or religious goal for exploration. Circle each tool or scientific understanding that made ocean travel easier, so you can see how goals and improvements worked together.

Launching Ocean Voyages

- ① In the 1400s, European rulers and merchants looked beyond familiar trade routes. Spices, silk, and other Asian goods were valuable in Europe, but overland routes were long and costly. Merchants hoped that a sea route to Asia could bring goods more directly. Rulers wanted new sources of wealth and greater power than rival kingdoms. Some Europeans also hoped to spread Christianity. These economic, political, and religious goals gave voyages support, money, and a purpose abroad.
- ② New knowledge and tools made long ocean travel less uncertain. The magnetic compass helped sailors keep a direction when land was out of sight. An astrolabe helped navigators estimate latitude by measuring the height of the sun or stars. Shipbuilders developed the caravel, a smaller sailing ship that could travel quickly and make progress toward the wind by tacking, or sailing at angles. Better charts helped route planning. Later, Mercator's 1569 projection let sailors plot constant compass bearings as straight lines, while distorting land sizes.
- ③ In 1492, Christopher Columbus sailed west across the Atlantic for Spain, seeking a route to Asia. He reached islands in the Americas instead. His voyages began lasting contact between Europe and the Americas and helped start the Columbian Exchange of plants, animals, diseases, and people. Later, explorers including Giovanni da Verrazzano, Samuel de Champlain, and Henry Hudson explored parts of North America for European nations. Their voyages reflected the same search for trade, territory, and power.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Why did merchants hope to find a sea route to Asia?

2 What goals gave European rulers a reason to support voyages? Name two.

3 Choose two tools or scientific understandings from the passage. Explain how each one helped explorers travel on the ocean.

4 How did the later voyages of Verrazzano, Champlain, and Hudson connect to the reasons Europeans explored?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Imagine you advise a European ruler in the late 1500s. Write exactly three sentences recommending an ocean voyage. Include one economic, political, or religious goal and explain how one tool or scientific understanding would help.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline each economic, political, or religious goal for exploration. Circle each tool or scientific understanding that made ocean travel easier, so you can see how goals and improvements worked together. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why did merchants hope to find a sea route to Asia?	Overland trade routes were long and costly, so merchants hoped to bring valuable Asian goods more directly.
2	What goals gave European rulers a reason to support voyages? Name two.	Rulers wanted new sources of wealth and greater power than rival kingdoms. The passage also names spreading Christianity as a goal for some Europeans.
3	Choose two tools or scientific understandings from the passage. Explain how each one helped explorers travel on the ocean.	Answers may name any two: the magnetic compass kept direction; the astrolabe helped estimate latitude; the caravel traveled quickly and tacked toward the wind; charts and the Mercator projection helped sailors plan routes.
4	How did the later voyages of Verrazzano, Champlain, and Hudson connect to the reasons Europeans explored?	Their voyages reflected the continuing search for trade, territory, and power for European nations.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I recommend funding a voyage because a direct sea route could increase our kingdom's trade wealth. A caravel would help sailors travel quickly and tack toward the wind. A magnetic compass would help the crew keep its direction when land was out of sight.

Accept answers that accurately connect a stated European goal to exploration and accurately explain a tool or scientific understanding from the passage. For the open response, accept different valid goals and tools if the student writes exactly three sentences.